



GS4GND | COMMENT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE | Action Kit

WHAT: SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT to the Louisiana Climate Initiative Task Force

WHEN: Deadline is 9AM, Thursday July 29th, 2021

WHERE:

- Comment in person on 7/29, 9AM - 12PM - Committee Room 5 the Capitol in Baton Rouge
- Send comments to climate@la.gov, subject line "7/29 CITF Hearing Comment"

WHY: We're demanding a people-first, community-led vision for climate justice in Louisiana.

Gulf South for a Green New Deal is a regional network of hundreds of organizations across the five Gulf South states (TX, LA, MS, AL, FL) working in alignment for climate justice and a just transition for our region. **In Louisiana we're pushing the Governor's [Climate Initiative Task Force](#) and lifting up community calls for equity and climate justice.**

Send a comment for climate justice to the CITF today!

Key Points:

- [Industry is the primary polluter](#)
- [We can have a strong economy and be sustainable](#)
- [We need real greenhouse gas emissions data to know the scale of the problem](#)
- [We must value frontline voices and community governance](#)
- [We reject false solutions like carbon capture & sequestration](#)

Sample Public Comment:

"To the members of the Climate Initiative Task Force,

My name is _____ and I am based in _____. [Personal statement. Who are you, where do you live, and why are you moved to share your perspective with the Climate Initiative Task Force?]

I urge the Climate Initiative Task Force to remember that ...

I would like the members of the Climate Initiative Task Force to understand ...

To me, climate justice means ...

On April 9th, we visited the steps of the Capitol and made the statement, 'We declare a Gulf South for a Green New Deal.' Today, we return to remind the Climate Initiative Task Force that the residents of Louisiana demand a just climate transition. We demand a Green New Deal rooted in equity, intersectionality, visionary change, and the wisdom of our frontline communities.

Respectfully,

Name



What is the Climate Initiative Task Force?

The Louisiana Climate Initiative Task Force (LA-CITF) is a two-year initiative, established by Governor John Bel Edwards, to reduce carbon emissions from the state of Louisiana to net zero by 2050 ([official website here](#)). The 23 full Task Force members represent the decision-making body; their work is divided across 6 Committees and 4 Advisory Groups, each composed of both task force members and additional relevant expertise. [A full list of all Task Force Committee, and Advisory group members can be found here.](#)

The Task Force & Committee/Advisory members are composed of many long-standing industry leaders in oil/gas extraction and a few strong climate allies, which is creating tense debates on how emission reduction strategies will play out across the state. Furthermore, while the process is open to public comment, the information is often difficult to find, buried in jargon, and not very well publicized. Thus, climate allies across the state are organizing to increase public participation and access to this critical process!

Documents:

[John Bel Edwards Executive Order, creating LA-CITF](#)
[Presentation by David Dismukes, LSU Center for Energy Studies](#)
[LA-CITF June Powerpoint](#)
[LA-CITF Youtube channel documenting past meetings](#)

Gulf South for a Green New Deal:

[These values are our shared accountability](#), and they are as follows:

1. Advance Equity
2. Follow the Frontlines
3. Build Community Wealth & Health
4. Invest in Visionary & Transformative Change
5. Advance Community & Local Control
6. Use an Intersectional Approach
7. Value All Humans Equally.



When, where, and how:

There are two ways to present your comments to the monthly LA-CITF meetings.

The best way to get your comment heard by task force members is to go to the meeting in person. The upcoming meeting will be held on **Thursday July 29th from 9am - 12pm in Baton Rouge**. The meeting will be held in Committee Room 5 at the Capitol. You will have the chance to read your comment to the committee, and they will be required to listen to all of the comments in full.

If you cannot travel to the capitol to deliver your comment, **you can email your statement to climate@la.gov with the subject line, "7/29 CITF Hearing Comment."** Please email your comment before 9am on July 29th. The meeting can be watched remotely on the LA-CITF [YouTube channel](#).

Sample comment structure:

"To the members of the Climate Initiative Task Force,

My name is _____ and I am based in _____. [Personal statement. Who are you, where do you live, and why are you moved to share your perspective with the Climate Initiative Task Force?]

I urge the Climate Initiative Task Force to remember that ...

I would like the members of the Climate Initiative Task Force to understand ...

I believe that ...

To me, climate justice means ...

On April 9th, we visited the steps of the Capitol and made the statement, 'We declare a Gulf South for a Green New Deal.' Today, we return to remind the Climate Initiative Task Force that the residents of Louisiana demand a just climate transition. We demand a Green New Deal rooted in equity, intersectionality, visionary change, and the wisdom of our frontline communities.

Respectfully,

Name



Key Messaging Points:

Industry is the primary polluter:

- In Louisiana, industry is the primary source of CO2 emissions, comprising 66% of overall state emissions. By contrast, Louisiana residents are the lowest emitters of CO2, making up only 1% of overall state emissions.
- In the US as a whole, industry is responsible for only 17% of total CO2 emissions.
- It is clear that in Louisiana industry bears the responsibility for our climate crisis, in a way that is unique from the rest of the country. As such, I demand solutions that transition our energy infrastructure away from extraction and towards renewables like Solar and Wind. I refuse to accept false solutions that risk the health of humans and natural ecosystems or sacrifice one community for another. I demand that Climate Task Force solutions benefit the health and well-being of the people first, prioritizing environmental justice communities who experience greater detrimental impacts at the hands of industrial polluters.

We can have a sustainable future and a good economy:

- For too long, workers in Gulf South communities have been forced into a false choice between good jobs and health. Yet, unencumbered access to energy, clean water, clean air, and healthy food are human rights. **We don't need to sacrifice our people's well-being and the sustainability of our state for a successful economy- we can have both.**
- The field of opportunities for green jobs that increase the health and wealth of our state is endless. Prioritizing sustainable farming practices, remediating toxic soil and reforesting our degraded land, and transitioning our energy infrastructure to renewables like Solar and Wind energy are all economic opportunities that **prepare us for a changing climate and invest in the next generation so that they are equipped to deal with a further changing planet.**
- Louisiana has a decision to make and we are faced with three options. Option 1: We can continue to allow the petrochemical industry to destroy our land and natural resources, threaten the lives of our people, and accelerate the climate crisis. Option 2: We can choose false solutions to the climate crisis that sacrifice marginalized communities, maintain an extractive economic philosophy, and keep decision-making power in the hands of corporations. Option 3: **We can be a national and global leader for transitioning beyond carbon in a way that increases the well-being of all people, advances our economy, centers frontline and indigenous leadership, and brings forth a more just, equitable and sustainable world.** The choice is ours.

A just climate transition needs accurate GHG numbers:

- CITF must make a real and substantive effort to obtain a comprehensive and accurate inventory of the state's GHG emissions — this must include an estimate of emissions from future industrial projects, industrial sites that have been created in the years since



2018, and emissions from abandoned gas wells and pipeline leaks. Any plan created without this vital information will fail to truly achieve the task force's mission: to follow the science and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- The GHG emissions inventory that has been presented by the Climate Initiative Task Force is based on data collected in 2018, and for that reason **does not fully capture the dire reality of Louisiana's increasing carbon emissions.**
- The inventory presented by the LSU Center for Energy Studies does not account for emissions produced by industrial sites that were established in the three years since this data was collected in 2018, or for the industrial sites that have been approved by state agencies, but have yet to be constructed. Emissions associated with permitted and permit-pending industrial projects must be part of all hypothetical portfolios.
- This inventory also does not account for any emissions that are currently releasing carbon into the atmosphere from abandoned gas wells or leaks from oil pipelines.
- One cannot make an effective plan of action without an accurate understanding of the problem. **How can we achieve the CITF mission to drastically reduce Louisiana's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, if we do not have a full and accurate picture of what they really are in 2021?**

Valuing frontline voices and following local governance:

- Communities that are most impacted by climate change, pollution, and sea level rise have historically been excluded from state-level decision making processes. Like oil and gas operations, a disproportionate amount of chemical storage and refining occurs in low-income and predominantly Black and Brown communities. Policies that have valued the promise of profit over human safety or the right to self-determination have made it nearly impossible for these communities to have a say in regulating the industries that come into the state, and even into their own neighborhoods. **The Climate Initiative Task Force must change this pattern and listen to frontline voices — the voices of those who are, and will continue to be, most heavily impacted by climate change.** Corporations with no investment in the health of Louisiana should not have a greater say in the future of our state than the people who call it home. **Louisiana has been treated like a sacrifice zone, but we refuse to sacrifice our future and force these communities to hold the burden for others.**
- The Gulf South region encompasses the sovereign territory of the Seminole, Poarch Creek, Tunica-Biloxi, Houma, Choctaw, LaCombe, Chata, Atakapa-Ishak, Chitimacha, Caddo and Coushatta Peoples, among many more. **A just climate transition must recognize all Indigenous tribes of the Gulf South as sovereign nations, and follow local and Indigenous leadership regarding decisions that affect their communities and sovereign territory.**
- The people of Louisiana are already living with the reality of climate change. As an example, the residents of Lake Charles [endured five major disasters in the last year](#), and



many families are preparing for the uncertainty of another hurricane season before they have even had the opportunity to rebuild their homes. Thousands of Louisiana residents in parishes all over the state live in a similar state of fear, precarity, and loss as a result of climate change. **And yet, residents are responsible for just 1% of the state's overall carbon emissions — Louisiana residents should not bear the greatest burden in curbing climate emissions, and must be included in the state's climate planning process.**

Carbon capture and storage is a false solution:

- The CITF June report showed that the hypothetical portfolio of Carbon Removal, Capture, Use and Storage Intensive was largely ranked as negative or neutral by members of the task force, with the most negative responses associated with the risk for creating institutionalized harm. **We would like to re-emphasize that carbon capture and storage is unproven and untested at scale. It is an expensive, undemonstrated technology that would have to be subsidized with Louisiana's tax-payer's dollars.** Even in the scenario laid out by the hypothetical portfolio, this technology would provide only a fraction of the necessary reductions.
- We should fulfill CITF's stated intent to follow the science and focus on what both scientists and policy makers agree are the most effective and efficient no-regrets solutions. These include: electrification, investment in renewable energy sources, and better housing stock.