

<p>INTRODUCTION</p>	<p>Thank you Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman for this opportunity to address members of the House on this important topic. Addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate change is the single most important issue we face as humanity.</p> <p>I have a deep background in racial justice work. Since my time growing up in Dallas, Texas, I have long been invested in developing solutions to the uneven opportunity landscape that hinders our society from reaching its full potential. I served in the Obama Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation supporting the Department’s work to promote equity in transportation. I am active in the voting rights movement through an organization I founded called the Young Black Lawyers’ Organizing Coalition, or YBLOC. And I bring the same lens to the work I do now to help shift the center of gravity in climate philanthropy.</p> <p>I am pleased to be here to talk about the Donors of Color Network and their Climate Funders Justice Pledge. Time is running out, and we need all hands on deck to win on climate. That means it's critical to better and further resource BIPOC-led, justice-focused organizations fighting on the frontlines – whether around President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative or our own Climate Funders Justice Pledge. The private and public sector must work together to build a winning climate movement rooted in justice.</p>
<p>WHO IS THE DONORS OF COLOR NETWORK?</p> <p>WHAT IS THE CLIMATE FUNDERS JUSTICE PLEDGE?</p>	<p>The Donors of Color Network (DOCN) is the first ever cross-racial community of high net worth donors of color and movement leaders committed to building the collective power of people of color to achieve racial justice and shift the center of gravity in both politics and philanthropy.</p> <p>One year ago, we launched the Climate Funders Justice Pledge (CFJP), a climate justice campaign, to shift the center of gravity in philanthropy towards racial and economic justice, and challenge the nation’s top climate funders to commit publicly to greater transparency and to give at least 30% of their U.S. climate funding to the BIPOC-led justice groups who have an outsized impact in beating back the climate crisis.</p> <p>The CFJP doesn’t ask for perfection. It asks for unflinching accountability and resourcing to people of color doing winning climate work. We aim to drive hundreds of millions of dollars to BIPOC-led organizations over the course of the pledge.</p>
<p>WHAT IS CFJP’S IMPACT TO DATE?</p>	<p>To date, we have spoken to 36 of the top 40 climate funders in the United States. Since our launch, some of the largest climate funders in the country have stepped up to take the pledge - like inaugural pledgers the Kresge Foundation and the Pisces Foundation. So far 26 funders have taken the pledge, including 8 funders who are in the top 40 in terms</p>

	<p>of assets. Every foundation that signs on chips away at the lack of transparency that surrounds philanthropy and begins to shift climate philanthropy towards greater racial and economic justice.</p> <p>In just one year, we project that tens of millions in new resources will have been shifted to BIPOC-led organizations. But there's far too many funders still sitting on the sidelines – many of whom likely think resourcing BIPOC-led organizations is a tangential concern rather than an essential piece of their climate strategy. That has to change.</p>
<p>WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO MOVE RESOURCES TO BIPOC-LED ORGANIZATIONS IN ORDER TO HAVE A WINNING CLIMATE STRATEGY?</p>	<p>A New School Study, in collaboration with Building Equity and Alignment, found that of the \$1.34 billion awarded to 12 national environmental funders, only 1.3% goes to BIPOC-led, justice-focused groups.</p> <p>1.3% isn't just a moral failing – it's an ineffective and losing strategy. Philanthropy funnels countless resources into the same big organizations and strategies, but we haven't moved the needle far enough. It's time to change.</p> <p>We will not win on climate if we leave the power and expertise of leaders and communities of color on the table.</p> <p>No winning social movement has succeeded without the leadership and guidance of a multiracial coalition. BIPOC leaders and organizations have an outsized impact in advancing winning climate policies, programs, and projects, at the local, state, and national level. They are the driving force behind some of the most expansive climate policy in the country – policy that's critical in tackling climate change – as well as some of the biggest wins against Big Oil.</p> <p>If you don't know the movement leaders of color in the climate movement and the vital role they have played, it's because funding also dictates which stories are heard. But the successes are there and they are incredible.</p> <p>Whether it's Indigenous organizers disrupting billions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually or BIPOC organizations driving forward the foremost environmental laws - the New Jersey and California environmental justice laws that preceded President Biden's Justice40 Initiative - our most impactful climate wins are largely led by people of color. And that's <i>despite</i> receiving a grossly inequitable share of funding.</p>

	<p>Moreover, even though we know that the impacts of climate change hit low income communities and communities of color first and worst, most climate efforts are primarily focused on strategies that prioritize the wealthy.</p> <p>The climate movement as it stands generally focuses on a top down approach, but if the goal is to save lives and our planet – <i>now and in the future</i> – then we need to center those on the frontlines of climate disasters. BIPOC justice-focused organizations and leaders are the ones doing that work at scale – and it will be desperately needed in the years to come.</p>
<p>BARRIERS TO ADVANCING JEDI?</p>	<p>Philanthropy is a space that largely lacks meaningful diversity in its leadership ranks. As a result, the funder community has inherent, implicit biases in grant-making that, historically, have meant that communities of color are overlooked and under-resourced.</p> <p>We must push these foundations beyond their biases. Failing to fund BIPOC-led organizations will leave us scrambling to address climate change.</p> <p>The CFJP is a hopeful campaign and we aim to support any pledger who is looking to be a part of this change, whether that funder is far below our 30% threshold or well above it.</p> <p>By and large, the concerns we hear from apprehensive funders can be directly tied to “traditional” or “established” funding practices that limit the scope of their climate response.</p> <p>Funders will say that they don’t know how to find and connect with BIPOC-led organizations or grantees that are outside of their typical funding rotation. Some say they’re not aware of BIPOC-led academic perspectives and policy solutions. Others say they’re not sure how to collect the funding data we ask for in pursuit of transparency.</p> <p>In response, we have compiled an expansive list of BIPOC-led organizations and movement networks, both national and regional in focus; developed the most comprehensive compilation of U.S.-based BIPOC PhDs, who are some of the foremost guiding lights in our climate crisis; and created easy to follow templates for funders to collect their data that literally can be done in minutes.</p>

Written Testimony of Abdul Dosunmu, representing the Climate Funders Justice Pledge of the Donors of Color Network | February 8, 2022

	<p>These hesitations often stem from the belief that BIPOC-led groups are not an essential part of our fight to combat climate change. That is misguided and harmful.</p> <p>Funneling the same hundreds of millions of dollars into the same climate organizations every year is <i>not producing results or building a winning movement</i>.</p> <p>BIPOC-led organizations are the ones who are standing up to the fossil fuel industry and shutting down dangerous power plants and pipelines across the country. Imagine if they were actually spoken to, engaged, funded and supported at the same level as their white counterparts. Imagine if they had the resources to export their work at scale. Imagine if our climate movement was actually holistic instead of grossly disproportionate.</p>
WHAT CAN YOU DO?	<p>With your help in shining a light on the solutions – like getting the largest funders to be transparent about how inclusive their grantmaking is by taking the Climate Funders Justice Pledge – we can ensure those with most at stake are able to scale the already excellent work that they have been doing.</p>
CONCLUSION	<p>The Donors of Color Network realized that the public statements on diversity, equity and inclusion of the largest funders did not match their funding. We wrote to the leadership of all of the top foundations and asked: do you think 1.3% is a winning number? No one says yes.</p> <p>Again, we called on funders to do two things – be transparent, and pledge to be part of the solution. This means honestly answering “<i>What percentage of investments have gone to organizations where communities of color decide the agenda and are focused on justice?</i>” and scaling US grantmaking to BIPOC-led, justice focused organizations to 30%.</p> <p>Change is possible. But we need speed and scale for that, and we need public/private partnership. I and the Donors of Color Network would love to be a resource for you to help expand knowledge of solutions needed on the ground to complement your work building a winning climate strategy. You have the privilege of sitting in decision-making seats. You have the power to bring visibility and resources to BIPOC leaders pioneering amazing solutions. Harnessing that power, is how we tip the scale toward true justice and real progress.</p>