

May 13, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper, Chairman
Committee Members
Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: CONGRESS SHOULD CONFIRM CLIMATE CHAMPIONS TO TVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Chairman Carper and Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we, the undersigned 201 organizations urge you to confirm appointees to the Tennessee Valley Authority (“TVA”) Board who have the skills and experience needed to make TVA a cornerstone of the just energy transition urgently needed to combat the climate emergency. Specifically, we urge you to ensure that the new appointees recently nominated by President Biden are committed to working with Congress and the Biden Administration to develop and implement a plan to provide 100% renewable and just energy to the Tennessee Valley by 2030.

President Biden is calling for the country’s electricity sector to be carbon-free by 2035 and has emphasized the Administration’s policy “to organize and deploy the *full capacity of its agencies* to combat the climate crisis.”¹ As the largest public power provider in the country, with 10 million customers, TVA should foster the kind of innovation that can make TVA carbon free, grow union jobs and reduce energy burden, and will also push private utilities across the country to fulfill their pledges to decarbonize by 2050. With the President’s recent nominations of Kimberly Lewis, Beth Geer, Michelle Moore, and Robert Klein to the TVA Board,² it is now up to the Environment and Public Works Committee to confirm that these are leaders who envision TVA as a national laboratory to engineer a zero emission, distributed energy, and public power system that can serve as a model for utilities across the country.

President Biden’s nominees bring a range of knowledge and expertise, including backgrounds in renewable energy solutions, environmental justice, and labor, to a Board that has unfortunately been driven by fossil fuel and corporate interests. TVA’s current leadership has not championed the necessary renewable and just energy transition that the climate emergency demands. TVA is 45% fossil-fueled and consistently ranks poorly on plans to invest in energy efficiency, retire coal, cease new gas plant construction, and build renewable energy within the next decade.³ Despite repeated public calls for TVA’s

¹ See President Biden Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, Sections 201 and 205(b)(i) (“Biden Order”) (Jan. 27, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>.

² President Biden Announces More Key Administration Nominations, The White House, (Apr. 20, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/20/president-biden-announces-more-key-administration-nominations/>

³ The Dirty Truth About Utility Climate Pledges, Sierra Club, (Jan. 2021), <https://coal.sierraclub.org/the-problem/dirty-truth-greenwashing-utilities>.

rapid decarbonization⁴, TVA recently announced plans to build two new fossil fuel plants⁵ and approved an energy plan where the utility will be generating more than 34 million tons of CO₂ in 2038.⁶ The ongoing Kingston Coal Ash tragedy further reinforces the need for TVA to invest in worker safety and to support environmental justice communities impacted by the utility's continued reliance on fossil fuels.

If confirmed, these nominees will make critical decisions about TVA's energy trajectory, from voting to close heavy-polluting coal plants to building out renewable energy and battery storage technology. The climate emergency and growing energy injustice demand urgent action, and it is therefore imperative that any nominee to the TVA Board of Directors pledges to address these crises by committing to advancing a genuinely renewable and just energy future.

We therefore urge Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee to **ensure that these individuals will commit to providing 100% renewable and just energy to the Tennessee Valley by 2030**. Moreover, these nominees must commit to prioritizing distributed energy resources and community-based solutions in the upcoming TVA Integrated Resource Plan, immediately ceasing all new gas development, and rapidly phasing out coal production. They must also actively represent the needs and interests of people in the Valley by advancing a more democratic energy system. With these commitments, we urge you to approve them for a full Senate vote.

We stand ready to work with you to ensure TVA's success in developing and implementing a plan providing 100% renewable and just energy to the Tennessee Valley by 2030 that creates new jobs, lowers the energy costs for Tennessee Valley residents and businesses, and protects our health.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

[Signatories begin on next page.]

⁴ Center for Biological Diversity, *Press Release: Tennessee Valley Authority Must Commit to 100% Clean Energy, Align with Biden Climate Goal* (Feb. 9, 2020), <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/tennessee-valley-authority-must-commit-to-100-clean-energy-align-with-biden-climate-goal-2021-02-09/>.

⁵ See Paradise and Colbert Combustion Turbine Plants Environmental Assessment (Feb. 2021), <https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/environmental-reviews/nepa-detail/paradise-and-colbert-combustion-turbine-plants>.

⁶ TVA 2019 Environmental Impact Statement, Final EIS at 5-27.

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