

June 2, 2014

Honorable Pat McCrory
Governor of North Carolina
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Governor McCrory,

We are North Carolinians, mothers, women of color, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer), educators, taxpayers, voters, restaurant workers, scientists, health practitioners, and freedom fighters. Our lawmakers need not be afraid to meet us, their constituents. We wish to speak about threats to all North Carolinians. We are universally exposed to toxins and health crises, and our communities with limited resources experience the sharpest edges. All people need access to clean water, clean air, healthy food, and access to quality medical care. We grew up in this beautiful state and some of our families migrated through fire to bring us here. We are morally called to defend this land and its people from violation. Our ancestors stood for justice, and that is what makes it possible for us to bring this letter to you today.

We know a **budget that hurts the most vulnerable will ruin our future**. Last year, our lawmakers turned back the **Medicaid expansion**, rejecting sorely needed funds offered through the Affordable Care Act. Now your colleagues propose dropping nearly 12,000 people from the Medicaid program, the insurance program built to serve children, poor and working families, elders, and people with disabilities. They recommend migrating the state Medicaid office out of the Department of Health and Human Services, which could result in further stripping of essential medical access. When Medicaid access is blocked, **our state economy pays a high price -- increased healthcare costs for all taxpayers, tens of thousands of jobs lost, countless illnesses and disabilities worsened**, and this year alone, the deaths of more than **1,145** NC residents.

We know that fracking fractures our communities, dividing neighbor from neighbor, rupturing our bond with the sacred land where we reside and our commitment to its future inhabitants. It poisons the very water, soil and air that we rely on for sustenance and life. Fracking has been a danger and disaster for residents in other states, and North Carolinians want to protect the lives, livelihoods, and beautiful vistas that keep people visiting and residing safely in our state. We know that nearly **80,000 North Carolinians live within two miles of a coal ash dump**. When coal ash billows up in the neighborhoods where it is discarded, our children get asthma. It leaches into the groundwater from every coal ash dump across the state and its toxic components accumulate in our bodies. North Carolinians want to protect ourselves from chronic illness, and poisons in our homes. These are matters of life and death.

We cannot write to you and ignore the dinosaur in the room. **It is wrong for the working people of this state to be asked to pick up the tab for corporate polluting of our water**. Duke Energy's business model is tied to producing toxic coal, fracked natural gas, and costly nuclear

power plants. Even though solar energy is cheaper and cleaner, Duke Energy's monopolistic control and corporate pollution of our democracy is trying to force solar out. When you block the sun, who does that hurt the most? Working families, communities of color, struggling to pay for expensive energy, pouring money out the front door, while Duke Energy dumps in our backyards. **Duke Energy is generating toxic problems and blocking common sense solutions, and we need you to help us break the cycle.** Make Duke Energy pay for a comprehensive clean-up, and transition our state to clean energy before it's too late. Our very survival depends on holding Duke Energy accountable.

We need our **elected officials to fulfill their promise to protect all North Carolinians and the land we depend on.** That means ensuring that we have clean water, air, and soil for generations to come, regardless of the wealth that a few hope to gain by destroying these precious gifts. We call for you to **veto the fracking legislation**, and any other legislation that will certainly poison our water and air. We call for you to veto weak legislation that caps over coal ash dumps or transports coal ash irresponsibly instead of solving the problem. We urge you to **require an environmentally just coal ash solution.** We implore you to **instate Medicaid expansion** across North Carolina, so those who need assistance most are not left behind. We ask you to set into motion the **Medicaid pilot in Hyde and Beaufort counties**, where cost effective health solutions for poor, hard working North Carolinians are urgently required. We need access to doctors, medicine, mental health support, reproductive health care. We need you to ask why the incidence of cancer is so high in our communities, and remedy the roots of inequity and injustice. These are life and death needs.

Thank you for opening your heart and hearing our truths. Even now, there is a place for you at our table. Even now, it is not too late to make amends. Please join us in a building a North Carolina worthy of all our children.

Forward together, not one step back,

Deborah Ferruccio, long-time Warren County resident, environmental justice advocate

Jodi Lasseter, Turning Tides Consulting small business owner, member FrackFreeNC, RePowering NC

Kriti Sharma, life-affirming biologist and worker

Sedrick Harris, Pizza Hut worker, Raise Up member

Manju Rajendran, NC WARN organizer, Rogers Eubanks Neighborhood Association member, and restaurant worker at Vimala's Curryblossom Cafe

Marie Garlock, Breast Cancer Action, Teacher and PhD student working with people who face cancers

Serena Sebring, North Carolina field organizer, Southerners on New Ground, Sociology Lecturer NCSU

Rakhee Devasthali, healthcare worker and medical student

Colin Miller, garden manager Veterans Helping Veterans Heal, welcome table manager Shalom Project

Jimmy James Tyson, coal ash frontlines resident and farmer, Charlotte Environmental Action

Justin Miller, Moral Freedom Summer organizer, Charlotte Environmental Action

— On behalf of all our affected communities

See [Letter to Governor McCrory from NC NAACP President Dr. William J. Barber II June 2, 2014](#)
[McCrory 11 Participants reading letter, mix by Quran Karriem](#) and [WRAL video until citations](#)