

Dear Honorable Members of Congress,

As mayors representing cities throughout the Southeast, we have a duty to support policy that protects, upholds, and strengthens the quality of life, public health, and the local economy of the communities we serve, which is why we join together in support of national clean energy standards.

Clean energy is a proven means to create jobs, reduce pollution, and protect the treasured places that help make the Southeastern United States home. Meanwhile, the cost of renewable energy and battery storage has plummeted in recent years, making solar and wind energy among the lowest-cost options for new power generation facilities.¹

This low-cost renewable energy will enable us to transform our antiquated power grid, while keeping power costs at historic low levels, all while realizing health, environmental, and economic benefits that include:

- preventing hundreds of thousands of premature deaths,
- avoiding more than \$1 trillion in environmental and health costs, and
- creating hundreds of thousands or millions of new jobs.²

Further, these benefits are multiplied when vehicles and home appliances switch from burning gasoline, diesel, or fossil gas to being powered by electricity. Combining a 100% clean electricity grid with electrification would achieve the national emission reduction goals of 70-80% that science tells us is needed to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century in order to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

As cities, we are proud to take steps to usher in this clean energy transition, but reaping the benefits that a 100% clean power grid could mean for our communities will require partnership and leadership from state and federal government, particularly since many cities do not ultimately control the mix of energy generation fuels that power our communities.

We therefore support a national Clean Electricity Standard (CES), that could be implemented as a Clean Electricity Performance Program (CEPP), that would require the percentage of U.S. electricity coming from zero-carbon sources to increase until it reaches 80% by 2030 and 100%

¹ Lazard (October 2020). *Lazard's Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis--Version 14.0*.

<https://www.lazard.com/perspective/levelized-cost-of-energy-and-levelized-cost-of-storage-2020/>

² Energy Innovation Policy & Technology LLC (2021). "Studies Agree 80 Percent Clean Electricity By 2030 Would Save Lives and Create Jobs At Minimal Cost."

<https://energyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Studies-converge-on-immense-benefits-of-80-clean-energy-by-2030-one-pager.pdf>

by 2035, and would serve as the cornerstone for a broader clean energy transformation that could clean our air and water, protect public health, and bolster energy independence.

Expert analysis shows that this transformation is not only feasible,³ but also economical⁴ and could lower consumers' bills, create millions of well-paying jobs, and avoid massive health and climate costs, thereby lifting up the frontline communities most impacted by the climate crisis.

We urge our members of Congress to move swiftly to enact a clean electricity standard, that could be implemented as a Clean Electricity Performance Program, that would compel our nation to reach 80% clean electricity by 2030 and 100% clean electricity by 2035.

Sincerely,

Jacques K. Gilbert
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Apex, North Carolina

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Mayor
Athens-Clarke County, Georgia

Lydia Lavelle
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³ Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (2021). *Achieving 100% Clean Electricity in the Southeast: Enacting a Federal Clean Electricity Standard*.

<https://cleanenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/Achieving-100-Clean-Electricity-in-the-Southeast-Report-Appendix.pdf>

⁴ UC Berkeley's Center for Environmental Public Policy (April 26, 2021). "2030 Report: Powering America's Clean Economy, A Supplemental Analysis to the 2035 Report."

<https://gspp.berkeley.edu/faculty-and-impact/centers/cepp/projects/2030-report-powering-americas-clean-economy>

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cc: President Joe Biden, The White House