To: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First St NE
Washington, DC 20426
Date: May 11, 2021

Re: FERC MUST GRANT PETITION FOR RULEMAKING TO ADDRESS RATEPAYER FUNDING TO GROUPS ENGAGED IN ANTI-CLIMATE ACTIVITIES (DOCKET RM21-15)

Dear Chairman Glick and Commissioners Chatterjee, Christie, Clements, and Danly:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we, the undersigned 93 organizations—including Vote Solar, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, and Partnership for Southern Equity—urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) to grant the Center for Biological Diversity’s March 17, 2021 Petition for Rulemaking to Amend the Uniform System of Accounts’ (“USofA”) Treatment of Industry Association Dues. Granting the Petition would help address utilities’ unconscionable practice of charging electricity customers for payments to groups engaged in political activities that promote fossil fuels, worsen air pollution, and obstruct the urgently-needed clean and just energy transition to combat the climate emergency.

The Petition seeks to amend FERC’s accounting system to help stop the long-standing practice of forcing everyday ratepayers to fund anti-climate, anti-environmental trade groups. The USofA currently allows electric utilities to recover the costs of financing industry association groups engaged in political activities from their captive customers—actions that are often in direct conflict with their customers’ interests. For example, utility trade groups and their affiliates have litigated against standards restricting pollution, trained utility executives in how to combat clean energy policies—including policies that would make it easier for people to go solar—and sought to undermine protections for wildlife and the environment.

FERC could easily address this troubling issue by granting and adopting the Petition’s proposed rule. Specifically, by moving industry association dues from Account 930.2 to Account 426 in the USofA, FERC would prohibit utilities from presumptively recovering these dues from customers and force utilities to defend why such fees should be charged to customers.

President Biden recently directed all agencies “to deploy [their] full capacity . . . to combat the climate crisis.” As our nation attempts to address the trifecta of climate, COVID, and racism, FERC can and should leverage its capacity to help to stop utilities from directing customers’ monies toward industry groups working against the public interest and for private fossil fuel profit. Granting this Petition is a crucial step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Nathan Phelps  
Regulatory Director  
VOTE SOLAR

John Farrell  
Co-Director  
INSTITUTE FOR SELF-RELIANCE

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Glen Brand  
*Vice President of Policy and Advocacy*  
**SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS**

Nathaniel Smith  
*CEO & Founder*  
**PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTHERN EQUITY**

Jim Walsh  
*Senior Energy Policy Analyst*  
**FOOD & WATER WATCH**

Charlie Harak  
*Senior Attorney*  
**NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER**

Al Weinrub  
*Coordinator*  
**LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE**

Ted Glick  
**BEYOND EXTREME ENERGY**

Robin Schneider  
*Executive Director*  
**TExAS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

Timothy DenHerder-Thomas  
*General Manager*  
**COOPERATIVE ENERGY FUTURES**

Alice Madden  
*Energy Democracy Staff*  
**COMMUNITY POWER**

Mary Gutierrez  
*Director*  
**EARTH ETHICS**

Drew Hudson  
*Founder*  
**198 METHODS**

Mike Garrity  
*Executive Director*  
**ALLIANCE FOR THE WILD ROCKIES**

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*President*  
**ANIMALS ARE SENTIENT BEINGS, INC.**

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*Chairman*  
**ARKANSAS RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION**

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**CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP**

James Van Nostrand  
*Director*  
**CENTER FOR ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, WEST VIRGINIA**

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*Chief Operating Officer*  
**CENTER FOR RURAL STRATEGIES**
Corey E. Olsen
Owner/Activist
CEO PIPE ORGANS/GOLDEN PONDS FARM

Kerwin Olson
Executive Director
CITIZENS ACTION COALITION OF IN

Adele Franks
CAN Steering Committee
CLIMATE ACTION NOW, WESTERN MASS

RL Miller
president
CLIMATE HAWKS VOTE

Sue Mauger
Science & Executive Director
COOK INLETKEEPER

Tom Athanasiou
Executive Director
ECOEQUITY

Daniel Tait
Chief Operating Officer
ENERGY ALABAMA

Chad Oba
President
FRIENDS OF BUCKINGHAM

Edward Maibach
Director
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Mary Smith
Communications Director
CHURCH WOMEN UNITED IN NEW YORK STATE

Jennifer Stevenson
Associate Director
CLIMABLE, INC.

Debbie New
Creative Director
CLIMATE FINANCE ACTION

Donald Goldberg
Executive Director
CLIMATE LAW & POLICY PROJECT

Erik Hatlestad
Energy Democracy Program Director
CLEAN UP THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT (CURE)

Donald Raper
President
EKO NATION/CLEANER IS GREENER INC.

Brook Lenker
Executive Director
FRAC TRACKER ALLIANCE

Joanie Parker
Volunteer
GAS LEAKS ALLIES

Helen Butler
Executive Director
GEORGIA COALITION FOR THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA

John Freeman
Executive Director
GREAT LAKES RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION
Andee Krasner
Manager, Climate and Health
GREATER BOSTON PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Finian Taylor
Coordinator
HILTON HEAD FOR PEACE
Haley Havens
Research Associate
INIATIVE FOR ENERGY JUSTICE
Nancy LaPlaca
Principal
LAPlACA AND ASSOCIATES LLC
Betsy Smith
Coordinating Committee member
LOWER CAPE INDIVISIBLE
Andrew Valainis
Executive Director
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Campaign Leadership Team Member
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Facilitator
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DeeVon Quirolo
President
NATURE COAST CONSERVATION
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Investment Advisor Representative/Financial Planner
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Dori Chandler
Interim Executive Director
HOOSIER INTERFAITH POWER & LIGHT
Katy Allen
Rabbi
JEWISH CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK, MA
Michele Marantz
Chair
LONGMEADOW PIPELINE AWARENESS GROUP
Bridget Vial
Energy Democracy Organizer
MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION
Graham Clumpner
Organizer
MOSQUITO FLEET
Susan Michetti
Member
MOUNT HOreb CITIZENS AGAINST WATER FLUORIDATION
Susan Gordon
Coordinator
MULTICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR A SAFE ENVIRONMENT
Sr. Joan Brown
Executive Director
NEW MEXICO INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT
Karen Martin
Chair, Climate Justice Group
NORTH PARISH OF NORTH ANDOVER CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUP
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*Founding Member of the Board of Directors*

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*Executive Director*

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*Executive Director*

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Crystal Huang  
*CEO*

**PEOPLE POWER SOLAR COOPERATIVE**

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*Executive Director*

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*Fund Co-Manager*

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*Executive Director*

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*Legal Director*

**PUBLIC JUSTICE CENTER**

Hal Nelson  
*CEO*

James Michel  
*Co-Founder*

**RES-INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER**

Steve Greenspan  
*Member, Climate Justice and Jobs Team*

**RES-INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER**

Tonyehn Verkitus  
*Executive Director*

**RIVER GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

Dieynabou Barry  
*Climate Justice Lead*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

Lynda Majors  
*Chair*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

Debra Gardner  
*Legal Director*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

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*President & CEO*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

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*Chair*

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*Executive Director*

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*Founding Member of the Board of Directors*

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*Executive Director*

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*Executive Director*

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*CEO*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

Liz Robinson  
*Executive Director*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

Wendy Volkmann  
*Co-Director*

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Lynda Majors  
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**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

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*Co-Founder*

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*Executive Director*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

David Swanson  
*Campaign Coordinator*

**RIVERS GUARDIAN FOUNDATION**

RootsAction.org
Rob Meyers
*Director of Energy Technology and Co-Owner*
**SOUTHWEST MOUNTAIN COMPANY**

Andrea Axel
*Executive Director*
**SPARK NORTHWEST**

Jean Tepperman
*Member, Coordinating Committee*
**SUNFLOWER ALLIANCE**

Ayla Boylen
*Hub Coordinator*
**SUNRISE MOVEMENT OF CEDAR RAPIDS**

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*Manager*
**SUNTILITY ELECTRIC LLC**

Vincent Pawlowski
*Founder*
**TUCSON CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK**

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Yoca Arditi-Rocha
*Executive Director*
**THE CLEO INSTITUTE**

Sarah Wright
*Executive Director*
**UTAH CLEAN ENERGY**