

36th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill
Black Nurses: A Call for Transformative Health Equity Globally

Climate Change: A Catastrophic Health Crisis

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) serves as a national nursing body to influence legislation and policies that support comprehensive efforts to reduce the impact of climate breakdown. Climate change has a devastating impact on Black populations and historically marginalized communities. The zip code of many Black Americans inherently denies them a healthy existence. NBNA calls on the 118th Congress to acknowledge climate change as a catastrophic public health crisis that disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, especially young children and those who are aging.

Background

- Climate change makes air pollution worse which exacerbates inequities amongst Black people.
- African Americans breathe in **56%** more particulate matter than they produce from their consumption.
- Historic segregation has resulted in African Americans living in less desirable low-lying and flood prone areas.
- Many African Americans or other underserved people live adjacent to power plants, petrochemical plants factories and other sources of pollution.
- African Americans with asthma have **3 times** higher chance of going to the hospital or dying from an asthma attack than White people.
- African Americans are **twice as likely** to die from climate-induced heat waves compared to other groups.
- It is reported that **86%** of African American doctors believe that climate change is an important issue to address with their patients.

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls upon the 118th Congress to:

- **Support H.R. 5760:** Climate Resilience Workforce Act to establish a climate resilience workforce.
- **Support H.R. 5496:** Climate Solutions Act of 2023 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the climate.
- **Support H.R. 5204:** Climate Adaptation Plan Act - requires the EPA to award competitive grants to Indian tribes or localities for developing climate adaptation plans to allow for measuring, tracking, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for adopting climate change adaptation measures.
- **Support H.R. 3961:** Green Climate Fund Authorization Act of 2023 to finance projects that address climate change.

References

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2. McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility. (2024). <https://www.mckinsey.com/bem/our-insights/impacts-of-climate-change-on-black-populations-in-the-united-states>
3. Princeton Student Climate Initiative. (2020, August 15). Racial disparities and climate change. <https://psci.princeton.edu/tips/2020/8/15/racial-disparities-and-climate-change>
4. Tessum, C. W., Apte, J. S., Goodkin, A. L., Muller, N. Z., Mullins, K. A., Paoletta, D. A., Polasky, S., Springer, N. P., Thakrar, S.K., Marshall, J. D., & Hill, J.D. (2019). Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial – ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(13), 6001-6006. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1818859116>