



Overview of Call to Action and Policy Action Agenda

Fossil Free for Health is a coalition of US health professionals, health workers, health organizations and systems, and health education institutions working on public health, environmental health, mental health, and health care working to address the health and climate harms of fossil fuels. Fossil Free for Health has developed a Call for Action and Policy Action Agenda.*

Call to Action Summary

We believe that all people have the right to a healthy environment and a stable climate, now and in the future. Climate change and fossil fuel pollution have created a public health crisis that is already affecting our patients and communities, with much worse to come. **We call for immediate and comprehensive action to protect people from fossil fuels by every elected official and policymaker at every level of government, working with communities, non-profit organizations, the health sector, and businesses, adopting and implementing the policies in this US Fossil Free for Health Policy Action Agenda.**

Air pollution from fossil fuel combustion kills an estimated 5 to 8.7 million people globally each year, including 350,000 premature deaths in the US. Fossil fuel pollution is associated with respiratory disease, heart disease and strokes, lung and other cancers, effects on brain function and children's ability to learn, childhood asthma, and premature births and low birth weight.

In addition to their direct harm, fossil fuels are the primary cause of climate change, the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century. As the dominant contributor to global climate change, fossil fuels account for more than 75 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change causes extreme heat events, storms, flooding, droughts, and wildfires, resulting in deaths, injuries, and a myriad of serious illnesses including heart, lung, and kidney disease, vector and water-borne illnesses, harm to pregnant people and babies, mental health impacts in youth and adults, and forced displacement, shortages of food and water, and related exacerbation of war and conflict.

While threatening people broadly, fossil fuel pollution and climate change disproportionately harm certain groups due to historical and ongoing structural inequalities, economic injustice, and racism: people with low incomes, communities of color, Indigenous people and tribal communities, immigrants, communities heavily burdened by pollution, unsheltered people, and fossil fuel and outdoor workers. Children, pregnant people, older adults, and people with disabilities and chronic illnesses are also at high risk of harms from climate change.

The good news is that we have an unprecedented opportunity to reap immediate and ongoing health and equity benefits and save countless lives, by moving as rapidly as possible away from

dirty, polluting fossil fuels to pollution-free, renewable energy. Limiting fossil fuel combustion could save roughly 1.4 million lives over the next 20 years from improved air quality, with estimated health benefits in the trillions of dollars this century. To realize these benefits, we must accelerate our investments in healthy, non-combustion energy, restrict extraction and use of fossil fuels, and support the health of people and communities in this transition. The faster we act, the better off humanity will be.

The fossil fuel industry is actively working to block progress on each of these fronts. To move forward with necessary speed, it is essential that we take policy actions to limit the power and influence of the fossil fuel industry, as was done with the tobacco industry.

Policy Action Agenda Overview

The Policy Action Agenda includes three overarching demands supported by eleven policy areas, set out below. The full agenda also includes specific related policy recommendations.

- ❖ **Tell the truth about the health harms of fossil fuels, make polluters pay, and hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for its inequitable harms.**
 1. Counter fossil fuel industry disinformation and tell the truth about fossil fuels.
 2. Make polluters pay – hold fossil fuel companies accountable for the health harms caused by their products.

- ❖ **Stop making the problem worse and accelerate a just transition to an equitable pollution-free, renewable energy economy.**
 3. Prohibit new and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure to stop making the problem worse.
 4. Equitably phase out fossil fuel extraction, export, refining, and use.
 5. Avoid approaches that perpetuate the extraction and use of fossil fuels.
 6. End public investments and tax breaks for fossil fuels.
 7. Accelerate adoption of pollution-free, renewable energy.
 8. Accelerate the transformation of transportation and land use, buildings and housing, industry, agriculture, and other sectors to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

- ❖ **Protect people and advance healthy, equitable, resilient communities.**
 9. Protect people from exposure to toxic fossil fuel pollution.
 10. Support workers in the transition to a fossil-free economy.
 11. Support community health, redress health and racial inequities, and protect the most vulnerable.

Endorse the Call to Action and Policy Action Agenda

If your organization works on health or public health issues, **we encourage you to [sign on to the Call for Action and Policy Action Agenda](#)**, and to learn more about the [Fossil Free for Health Coalition](#).

* You can find the complete and more specific Policy Action Agenda [here](#), and a more detailed and fully referenced Policy Brief with citations [here](#).