



TOOLKIT: Organize Your Mayors to Hold Polluting Industries Liable

Thank you for taking action to move your mayor to hold Big Polluters like the fossil fuel industry liable for their decades of climate deception, to make them pay to advance real solutions like a just transition, and for the damage they've knowingly caused!

Right now, we are at a critical juncture. The COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide protests against state-sanctioned violence against Black people has exposed our deeply broken systems. And it has made plain the connections between corporate power and systemic racism. We see how our broken systems have enabled, even encouraged, polluting industries to get away with destroying our planet and harming countless people's lives and livelihoods, just so they can continue to reap profits. These systems are designed to ensure the brunt of the climate crisis—from health to economic impacts—lands on people rather than on the primary drivers of the crisis: polluting industries.

For example, Chevron continues to pollute in places like Richmond, California, where heart disease and cancer rates are far higher in close proximity to its oil refinery than elsewhere. Richmond is a city whose population is overwhelmingly Black and brown. It is also where Chevron has fought organizing by the Richmond community to curb its abuses in the area.

This is what environmental racism looks like. Instead of changing their business practices, corporations like Chevron funnel millions of dollars into local elections and PR schemes. Meanwhile, governments and the communities they operate in get stuck paying for disaster relief and public health costs worsened by climate change.

The climate crisis was not inevitable, nor was it an accident. The fossil fuel industry has knowingly fueled the climate crisis, funded climate denial, and blocked just climate progress—all while profiting at the expense of the lives and livelihoods of communities who have done next to nothing to cause climate change. Polluting industries benefit from these anti-Black and extractive systems in the US. The climate crisis and the systemic violence against Black people both stem from the same issue: an extractive and racist system that thrives off of the exploitation of Black and Indigenous people, and other people of color. We must address both in order to achieve collective liberation.

At the same time, the very same communities on the front lines of the climate crisis have long led the way in developing effective, real, people-centered solutions to address the climate crisis. Many of these solutions are laid out in the [People's Demands for Climate Justice](#). They are backed by evidence and grounded in the experience, leadership, and expertise of communities around the world, especially Black and Indigenous communities, and other communities of color, especially in the Global South, all on the



frontlines of the climate crisis. But these solutions require accountability, and they require funding. The climate justice movement believes that the corporations that fueled this crisis must be held to account and made to pay for fueling the climate crisis!

For decades Big Polluters have misled the public, blocked meaningful policy and devastated communities with impunity. We know that holding Big Polluters like the fossil fuel industry liable is essential to advancing climate justice globally. Liability refers to using legal, legislative, policy-based, cultural, and other tools to hold these corporations and industries responsible. When fully implemented in accordance with principles of equity, it should advance justice and help communities on the frontlines of the climate emergency access the resources they need and are owed.

The great news is that momentum is on our side. State attorneys general like [Maura Healey](#) in Massachusetts and Peter Neronha in Rhode Island in the US are taking legal action to help hold the fossil fuel industry accountable. And globally government officials from [Vanuatu](#) to the [Philippines](#) are demanding industry liability. To keep this momentum going, mayors have a critical role to play. Across the U.S. and the world, mayors have taken the lead by launching city-level suits to hold fossil fuel corporations liable for the harms and damage they have caused. In their positions, mayors are key connectors between their constituents, lawmakers and important institutions at the state, national, and international levels—which means that mayors are uniquely capable of hearing your voice and putting it into action.

Mayors also have immense influence over their city's police budgets. We are in the midst of historic moment for liberation. Right now, cities across the country are rethinking municipal budgets and reevaluating whether the police are doing jobs they were never intended to do. We have a unique opportunity to cut the spending of police forces that consume ever larger shares of city budgets, producing billions in savings that can be reinvested in a shared vision of community safety, infrastructure, and recovery that does not rely on the police. Together, we can dismantle the structures that police, exploit, and oppress Black people, and build communities that care for and support all beings—humans and non-human—to thrive. Corporate Accountability is following the lead of the [Movement for Black Lives \(M4BL\)](#) and advocating to defund the police and invest in Black communities and justice systems that result in accountability and safety for everyone.

This is our fight because the success and profit of transnational corporations is built off anti-Black and systemic racism. They are profiting richly from this system in all ways, including from militarized policing and mass incarceration. Their influence has helped create the kinds of racist policies and environments that have upheld anti-Blackness in our systems.



When we talk about [defunding the police](#), we're talking about making a major pivot in national priorities. We need to see a shift from massive spending on police that don't keep us safe to a massive investment in a shared vision of community safety that actually works. Defunding the police and re-investing that funding into Black communities is the first step, and mayors have a big role to play in this.

That's where you come in! You and your community have a critical role to play in moving your Mayor to hold Big Polluters like the fossil fuel industry liable and to defund the police and reinvesting in Black communities. This toolkit contains all you need to:

1. Demand your mayor **sign the Mayoral Pledge to Make Big Polluters Pay** by emailing them and following up with a phone call to discuss action for climate justice and the liability movement in detail.
2. Because we understand climate justice and racial justice are inextricably linked, ask your mayor to **stand with the Movement for Black Lives** and commit to ending state-sanctioned violence against Black people by defunding the police, and instead putting this money into Black communities by working with local Black-led organizations. (<https://m4bl.org/>)
3. Urge your mayor to **publicly share the Global Call to Make Big Polluters Pay** and the liability roadmap on their social media channels. (<https://makebigpolluterspay.org/>)
4. Organize your mayor to **call on other elected officials** such as Members of Congress, Attorneys General, and governors to sign the Global Call to Make Big Polluters Pay and hold the fossil fuel industry liable.
5. Organize your mayor to **open investigations into and launch lawsuits against** the fossil fuel industry for decades of deception.

And we are here to support you! Contact us at climateaction@corporateaccountability.org with any questions or concerns you have.

In deep solidarity and gratitude for all you do, thank you!
The Corporate Accountability team

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1. A step-by-step guide on organizing your mayor

Step 1. Review this organizing toolkit.

- This organizing toolkit contains all the information and resources you need to demand your mayor hold polluting industries liable for their decades of climate deception.
- Jot down any questions you may have as you go and reach out to climateaction@corporateaccountability.org.

Step 2. Recruit people you know and/or leaders of local organizations to join in your action.

Recruiting other folks to join in taking action is crucial to organizing successfully. Together, we are building a movement and sending a strong message to our elected officials to take just and meaningful climate action. And in order to compel them to comply with our demands, we need to show that there is widespread support and demand across constituencies to hold the fossil fuel industry liable for its role in fueling the climate crisis.

- Set a goal. We recommend reaching out to at least five people to start with and inviting them to take action with you.
- Brainstorm a list of people you know such as friends, family members, colleagues, community leaders, and leaders of local organizations who share your concern for the climate crisis and your passion for climate justice.
- Remember the organizer's rule of halves: Half of the people you invite will say yes and half of the people who say yes will carry out the action. So if you want five people to join you, ask 20!
- Email your list and invite them to join you. Follow up by phone and text to make sure they see your email and respond to it (see sample dialogue on page 7).



- Ask anyone who says yes to think of a friend or two to join in taking action as well.

Step 3. Reach out to your mayor.

- Contact your mayor's office via email to introduce yourself and the issue.
- Include the call to [Make Big Polluters Pay](#) in your email and ask your mayor to support the call by signing the Mayoral Pledge to Make Big Polluters Pay.
- Request a virtual meeting or phone call with your mayor to discuss the issue in depth.

Step 4. Prepare your agenda for your virtual meeting or phone call with the mayor's office.

- If you do not get an email response back from a staffer at the mayor's office, don't stress! Typically, we need to follow up with them via phone. Give them a call and set up the meeting—be as specific with dates and times in your asks as possible.
- Use the talking points to create an agenda. If you're interested in learning more about defunding the police, check out this [great toolkit](https://dreamdefenders.org/) from the Dream Defenders (<https://dreamdefenders.org/>)

Step 5. The meeting

- Ask your mayor to sign the Mayoral Pledge to Make Big Polluters Pay.
- Demand that your mayor works to defund the police and put this money into Black communities by handing them the [M4BL Invest/Divest information sheet](#). Ask them to follow up with Black-led organizations in your city that are doing this work. Let them know you will be following up in a few weeks.

Step 5. Follow up, follow up, follow up!

- Make sure you follow up with your mayor so they know you are serious about these demands!
- Make sure to also follow up with the people you've recruited into taking action with you by thanking them and to share any updates you may have.

2. A note on centering racial justice and race equity in your interactions while taking action



Chevron and Texaco in Ecuador. BP in the Gulf of Mexico. Shell in Nigeria. The corporations we are up against exploit the systemic racism of our society as a tool to profit at any cost. From building pipelines on Indigenous lands to refusing to pay up for environmental destruction and ecocide, the fossil fuel industry has long been complicit in intensifying environmental racism.

The climate crisis is fundamentally a crisis of inequity. This is why we cannot talk about holding the fossil fuel industry liable without talking about who has historically borne the brunt of the human rights abuses and environmental destruction that Big Polluters have caused—and how that harm must be repaired.

Black, brown, Indigenous, and Global South communities have contributed least to the climate crisis but are typically the most impacted by it. These communities have also been on the forefront of challenging the fossil fuel industry and possess the just and equitable solutions we need to address the climate crisis. We must rely on Indigenous wisdom and the knowledge of people of the Global South in organizing for a just and equitable world.

People in the U.S. have a special role to play in challenging the power of the fossil fuel industry not only because major players like Exxon and Chevron are headquartered here, but because of the long history of systemic racism, and the long global history of U.S. imperialism and corporate cronyism on behalf of the fossil fuel industry and other Big Polluters.

This is why our pursuit of climate justice cannot be separated from our pursuit of racial justice and equity. From advocating for liability to proposing solutions, our organizing must prioritize and center the voices, experiences, and leadership of communities of color and communities of the Global South. Here are some ways for you to apply a race equity lens in your interactions as you take action for climate justice:

- **Emphasize** the disproportionate impacts from climate change that people of color endure.
- **Highlight** the traditional knowledge and wisdom that people and communities of color hold and how they can lead us in achieving just, people-centered solutions to address the climate crisis that already work.
- **Research and understand** the issues that the communities on the frontline of climate change in your city are facing and highlight these stories in your conversation with your mayor.
- **Reach out to and incorporate demands** from local climate justice groups that are led by Black people, Indigenous people, or People of Color (BIPOC) and talk to them about supporting or uplifting their work and including them in the action you are taking.



3. Sample dialogue to invite people you know to take action with you

Tips:

1. Keep it short and simple!
2. Speak from the heart: Why is this action important? Personalize it and speak with passion.
3. Make a strong ask and get a clear answer. Ask for clarifications or a date the person will get back to you by, if needed.

Hi **[NAME]**, how are you?

[Respond appropriately, chat]

I wanted to give you a quick call to talk to you about some advocacy work I am doing right now related to the climate crisis. Do you have time to chat right now?

[If yes] Great! Well, just to recap...

[If no/unsure] No worries! I'm glad I caught you.

I'm working with/I am a member of an organization called Corporate Accountability. I urge the mayor of our city to help hold the fossil fuel industry liable for its decades of deception and human rights abuses. Are you familiar with the climate liability movement at all?

[Pause and listen to reactions]

[If yes] Great! I'm glad you're aware of this movement.

[If no/unsure] No worries, I'd be happy to explain!

Liability is not a groundbreaking new idea, but a concept that has been practiced by governments and communities around the world for centuries. Holding Big Tobacco liable for the harm it has caused, for example, led to vitally important public health policies that have helped tens of millions of people. Through mechanisms such as restitutions and reparations as well as legal, legislative, cultural, and other means, liability can be a critical step in bringing about the systemic change we need to ensure meaningful action against the climate crisis can be taken. When done comprehensively, holistically, and equitably, liability has the potential to proactively address and end practices that are abusive to people and nature.



In the U.S., pursuing liability against the fossil fuel industry includes opening up investigations into and launching lawsuits against Big Polluters for their role in knowingly fueling the climate crisis. This is already happening in several states and cities across the country such as Massachusetts, NYC, Baltimore, Rhode Island, and various cities in California, to name a few.

You've probably heard about deliberate attempts by fossil fuel corporations to obstruct and delay policies—some for decades—that will have a real impact in addressing climate change. What do you think about that?

[Pause and listen to reactions]

Exactly—it's well-documented that Big Polluters like Exxon and Shell have knowingly fueled and denied the climate crisis. This means that this crisis was not inevitable, nor was it accidental. Most importantly, these corporations are still engaging in abusive and polluting activities, even at the expense of the planet and the lives and livelihoods of people and communities who have done next to nothing to cause climate change but are often most severely impacted by it.

And this is why the liability movement is giving me a lot of hope. Pursuing liability against the fossil fuel industry and other Big Polluters is a crucial tool in upholding climate justice globally. It's an important step toward financing the proven solutions that front-line communities have brought forward, and that communities worldwide urgently need to take to respond to the climate crisis

Corporations also uphold and profit from anti-Black systems in our country—from mass incarceration to policing. Corporate Accountability is following the lead of the Movement for Black Lives and advocating to defund the police and invest in Black communities and justice systems that result in true accountability and safety.

This is why I'm urging our Mayor to support the liability movement and the call to Make Big Polluters Pay, as well as support the rising demand to defund our city's police department. Would you join me in speaking on this issue with our mayor at **[TIME]** on **[DATE]**?

[If yes] That's so great! I'm excited you'll be taking action with me. I'll reach out to you and other members of our delegation again soon to set up a fun prep meeting prior to our virtual meeting/phone call with the mayor. And in the meantime, please feel free to think of any friends or family members you know who we should also ask to join in taking this action!



[If unsure and wants to know more] I'm glad you're interested! It should be a pretty simple meeting with the mayor that will happen either through a video call or a phone call. We'll get together ahead of that meeting to prepare and make sure we're ready to discuss the issue with the mayor. I also have a toolkit of resources that I've been using to take this action that I can share with you. It includes a sample email, sample dialogues, and talking points that you can use as you take action. What do you think? Will you join me?

[If no] No worries, I hear you. There's another simple way you can help out: will you let me know of any friends or family members you know who are passionate about climate justice and would be interested in taking action with me?

[No matter what] Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I hope you're taking care of yourself and keeping safe and healthy. Have a great rest of your day and I'll talk to you soon!

[And remember, if they ask you a question you don't know how to answer] You know, I'm not sure. But the folks at Corporate Accountability have a lot of resources. Let me ask my point person there and get back to you.

4. Sample email to your mayor's office

A simple online search should turn up the contact information for your mayor's office. We recommend reaching out by phone. If you start by sending an email, you should also follow up by phone.

Tips:

1. Be polite but compelling.
2. Speak from the heart. Why is this action important? Personalize it and speak with passion.
3. Make strong and clear demands.

Subject: Will Mayor **[NAME]** take action on the climate crisis?

Dear Mayor **[NAME]**,

My name is **[NAME]**, and I am a resident of **[CITY]**. I'm writing to you because I was hoping to schedule a time to speak with Mayor **[NAME]** or the appropriate staff member regarding **actions the city can take to address the climate crisis and hold Big Polluters liable.**



As a resident of [CITY], I am deeply concerned about the climate crisis. *[Write from the heart and include personal experiences or observations about why you care about this issue.]*

That's why I am reaching out to urge Mayor [NAME] to sign the call to [Make Big Polluters Pay](#) [[LINK: MakeBigPollutersPay.org](#)].

The fossil fuel industry has actively deceived the public for decades, while causing human rights abuses in communities of color across the world. Big Polluters like Exxon Mobil, Shell, and others have spent billions of dollars simultaneously fueling and denying the climate crisis, delaying urgent action, and pushing false “solutions” at every level—all while raking in billions in profits each year. And they are still doing it today, despite their claims to the contrary.

In the late 1990s, a group of courageous elected officials pushed to hold Big Tobacco accountable for the public health crisis they helped create, a move that helped to completely change the landscape for tobacco control and public health. We can do the same with climate change. Several cities and states across the U.S., have already launched investigations and lawsuits against the fossil fuel industry for its role in the climate crisis. Echoed by the [Call to Make Big Polluters Pay](#), these investigations and lawsuits are a critical first step to holding polluters accountable and unlocking finance to implement the just climate solutions we need to address the most urgent crisis of our time—climate change.

It's time for our city to echo this call. Mayors play a critical role and have the power to advance the critical action we urgently need for climate justice. Corporations also uphold and profit from anti-Black systems in our country—from mass incarceration to policing. Following the lead of Black leaders across the country, I am advocating to defund the police and invest in Black communities. Please see [these demands](#) from the Movement for Black Lives for more information.

Will you continue this leadership and sign the Pledge to Make Big Polluters Pay?

I am hoping to continue this conversation with Mayor [NAME] or a staff member and talk about what it means to uphold climate justice for the people of [CITY]. Please let me know who I can speak with to schedule this meeting or phone call.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

5. Sample dialogue for a virtual meeting or phone call with your mayor



A simple online search should turn up the contact information for your mayor's office. If you start by sending an email, you should also follow up by phone. Preferably, you will already have a phone meeting set up with your mayor's office via email.

Tips:

1. Be polite but compelling.
2. Speak from the heart. Why is this action important? Personalize it and speak with passion.
3. Make strong and clear demands.

Sample dialogue 1 – ideal for following up on initial email

Hello, my name is [NAME] and I am a resident of [CITY]. I'm calling because I wanted to follow up on an email I sent recently. I would like to schedule a time to speak with Mayor [NAME] or a staff member. Are you the right person to talk to about that?

[If no, ask to speak to the right person. If yes, they'll likely ask what you hope to speak about.]

As a resident of [CITY], I am deeply concerned about climate change and climate injustice. *[Speak from the heart and include personal experiences or observations about why you care about this issue.]*

The reason we're experiencing this climate crisis is because the fossil fuel industry has actively deceived the public for decades and they are still doing it today, despite their claims to the contrary. Right now, we are at a critical juncture. The COVID-19 pandemic and the current protests against systemic racism has exposed deeply broken systems that have enabled, even encouraged, polluting industries to get away with destroying our planet and harming countless people's lives and livelihood, just so long as they continue to reap profits. These systems ensure the brunt of the climate crisis—from health to economic impacts—lands on people, especially people who are Black, brown, and Indigenous, rather than on the primary drivers of the crisis: polluting industries.

As part of a global movement to hold corporations from polluting industries accountable, some fellow community members and I are eager to have a conversation with Mayor [NAME] or the appropriate staff member to discuss what we can do in [CITY]. Several cities and states across the U.S., have already launched investigations and lawsuits against the fossil fuel industry for its role in the climate crisis. Echoed by the Call to Make Big Polluters Pay, these investigations and lawsuits are a critical first step to implementing the just climate solutions we need to address the most urgent crisis of our time—climate change.



Would [TIME] at [DATE] be a good time to speak with the Mayor?

[Pause to listen to any responses from the other end.]

[If yes] Great! Thank you so much for your time and I look forward to speaking with [PERSON] soon. Have a great day and take care.

[If no] Is there a better time and date that we can schedule? Mayor [NAME]'s leadership is urgently needed in our pursuit of climate justice and it's time for our city to take this step.

[Pause to listen to any responses from the other end.]

Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking with [PERSON] soon. Have a great day!

6. Template agenda for your virtual meeting or phone call

Tips:

1. Consult the talking points provided on the next page to help flesh out your conversation.
2. Make strong demands and get clear commitments from the person you are speaking to.
3. Speak confidently and passionately. You are prepared for this! And don't be scared to follow up with more information if you don't have it with you.

Introductions

- Share a little bit about who is on the call today and where you are from.
- Ask questions to get to know the mayor and/or staffer you are speaking to.

Context

- Share your concerns regarding the climate crisis and your city's response to it.
- Ask if the mayor or staffer is familiar with the well-documented history of climate deception by the fossil fuel industry; explain if not.
- Ask if the mayor or staffer is familiar with the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and all that it accomplished; explain if not.
- Ask if the mayor or staffer is familiar with some of the demands and actions that cities around the country are taking against the fossil fuel industry; explain if not.



- Ask if the mayor or staffer is familiar with the rising demand to defund police and reinvest that money back into Black communities. Hand them the [M4BL policy brief on defunding and reinvesting](#).
- Name some Black-led organizations in your city that are working to defund the police.

Request action

- Ask the mayor or staffer to commit to signing the pledge to Make Big Polluters Pay.
- If they are non-committal, ask them what it would take for them to take action on this issue.
- Ask the mayor or staffer to intentionally consider defunding the police and investing in Black communities, and ask them to start conversations with the Black-led organizations you listed earlier.

Establish clear follow up steps

- Find out if there's any additional information they'd like from you.
- If they can't give you an answer right away, ask to set a follow up time to reconnect.
- Make sure you have the contact information of the person you spoke with and they have yours.

Afterward

- Celebrate your hard work with a virtual hangout!
- While you're all still together, jointly compile notes from the meeting to prepare to report back to your point person at Corporate Accountability. *This is a critical step.*
- Use the prompting questions from our debrief form to guide the conversation. Capture it all while it is still fresh!
- Follow-up with the mayor's office with any further information you said you'd provide.
- Follow-up with your point person at Corporate Accountability to debrief!

7. Talking points for your virtual meeting or phone call with your mayor



COVID-19 is a major crisis and an unparalleled opportunity to build systems towards justice.

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and the current protests against systemic racism have exposed deeply broken systems, revealing how these systems and the corporations that benefit from them are destroying our planet and harming countless people's lives and livelihood, just so they can bolster corporate profits.
2. At this very moment, Big Polluters like the fossil fuel industry are attempting to profit from the pandemic, demanding government bailouts and rolling out PR schemes that paint them as saviors in this crisis, even though these very corporations are in large part responsible for the multi-faceted crises we're facing.
3. The roots of the climate crisis are found in brutal, extractive global systems that put corporate profits over the wellbeing of people and the planet. Our current system ensures the brunt of the climate crisis—from health to economic impacts—lands on people rather than on the primary drivers of the crisis: polluting industries.

Inaction on climate change fueled by the fossil fuel industry's decades of deception, and we must urgently act.

1. Since the 1960s, Exxon has known that the carbon its products are releasing into the atmosphere could fuel disastrous climate change.
2. Instead of changing its business model and investing in the energy transition we need, Exxon invested in climate denial and deception by manufacturing doubt against the science, buying political loyalty, and paralyzing the public and our lawmakers to stop climate action that would threaten the corporation's profits.
3. We also know from overwhelming evidence from some of the most respected scientific sources around that the time we have to act to avert catastrophic climate change is rapidly running out.

Climate crisis was not inevitable, nor was it an accident—it's the result of deliberate actions by a set of corporations that still make billions of dollars in profits a year by polluting our planet and harming people, especially Black, brown, and Indigenous folks.

1. The actions of Big Polluters like the fossil fuel industry have cost us decades of meaningful action to address the climate crisis – both locally and globally.
2. The fossil fuel industry is still fueling the climate crisis, despite its claims to the contrary. Corporations like Exxon and Shell have continued to fund front groups and promote false "solutions" that only continues to benefit Big Polluters, not people and the planet.



3. In the U.S., the fossil fuel industry spent more than \$100 million to oppose climate measures on states' ballots.

The real and just solutions we need to address climate change are within reach and have been led by communities hardest hit by the crisis for decades.

1. The urgency of the climate crisis requires a response centered on human rights, equity, and justice for the communities who are on the frontlines of climate change.
2. These solutions are backed by evidence and grounded in the experience, leadership, and expertise of communities around the world, especially Black and Indigenous communities, and other communities of color, especially in the Global South, all on the frontlines of the climate crisis.
3. Some examples of these solutions include:
 - a. Keeping fossil fuels in the ground
 - b. Support global efforts for a just and equitable transition out of fossil fuels that enables energy democracy, creates new job opportunities, encourages distributed renewable energy, and protects workers and communities most affected by extractive economies.
 - c. Commit to climate reparations to those most affected but least responsible for climate change.

Liability against the fossil fuel industry and other Big Polluters can and must help finance the actions communities worldwide urgently need to take to address the climate crisis.

1. Liability refers to using legal instruments to hold corporations and industries criminally and civilly responsible for their roles in driving the climate crisis and undermining meaningful action to address it.
2. Through mechanisms such as restitutions and reparations as well as legal, legislative, cultural, and other means, liability can be a critical step in bringing about the systemic change we need to ensure meaningful action against the climate crisis can be taken.
3. Investigations can play a critical role in spurring action to help address the climate crisis and is not a novel idea: In the 1990s, dozens of states launched investigations into and lawsuits against the tobacco industry, catalyzing swift and transformative tobacco control policy not only in the U.S., but also around the world.
4. The legal victory of the states involved in these lawsuits required the tobacco industry to pay billions of dollars each year to the settling states in perpetuity.
5. When done comprehensively, holistically, and equitably, liability has the potential to proactively address and end practices that are abusive to people and nature.



Action by elected officials to hold polluting industries accountable is an important step in securing the just solutions we need to address the climate crisis.

1. Big Polluters should pay for the costs of their decades of deception and liability actions against the fossil fuel industry could generate billions of dollars each year to fund the swift and necessary changes we need toward a just energy transition. People would not have to unfairly pick up the costs.
2. State attorneys general across several states in the U.S. are starting to launch investigations into the fossil fuel industry.
3. Financing from liability must go to the people who have been most impacted by the climate crisis: frontline communities, communities facing environmental racism, and communities of the Global South.

Action by elected officials to defund the police and invest in Black communities

In response to a legacy of police and proxy violence that most recently took the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade, people have taken to the streets in protest. This uprising against excessive, brutal, and militarized policing has called for decision-makers in city, state, and federal government to defund the police after decades of inaction and failed reforms, consent decrees, investigations, and oversight.

For much of U.S. history, law enforcement meant implementing laws that were explicitly designed to subjugate Black people and enforce white supremacy. That's why Black people, along with hundreds of thousands of others, are calling for city, state, and federal governments to abolish policing as we currently understand it. We must divest from excessive, brutal, and discriminatory policing and invest in a vision of community safety that works for everyone, not just an elite few.

When we talk about defunding the police, we're talking about making a major pivot in national priorities. We need to see a shift from massive spending on police that don't keep us safe to a massive investment in a shared vision of community safety that actually works. We know this won't happen overnight. Ending police violence will require a thoughtful, deliberate, and participatory approach that has already begun.

We can't stand by while our city, state, and federal governments continue to fund an excessive, brutal, and discriminatory system of policing. We will no longer be told that what we deserve is not politically viable or logistically possible. We will no longer be



deprived of what others have long enjoyed in this country: **basic rights, safety, and freedom.**

Right now, cities across the country are rethinking municipal budgets and reevaluating whether the police are doing jobs they were never intended to do. We have a unique opportunity to cut the spending of police forces that consume ever larger shares of city budgets, producing billions in savings that can be reinvested in a shared vision of community safety, infrastructure, and recovery that does not rely on the police.

Check out the M4BL website to learn more: <https://m4bl.org/>

Check out this great resource from the Dream Defenders on defunding the police and investing in Black communities: <https://dreamdefenders.org/>