



June 18, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

In defense of democracy, federalism, and the rights of all Americans, we urge you to reject recently introduced legislation that directly attacks the well-established authority of state governments to enact policies and pursue legal action on behalf of our citizens.

S.4340¹ and H.R.8330² seek to preempt the authority of state and local governments to implement laws that protect our residents from the effects of climate change, as well as to strip state and local governments of our ability to enforce the law against corporations when their pollution harms our residents. These proposals would trample on the rights of states and citizens and attempt to hand wealthy fossil fuel corporations a legal shield against accountability. Congress should be helping to make life more affordable for American families, not helping to protect companies that are profiting off of sky-high gas prices while forcing the costs of their pollution onto taxpayers.

¹ https://www.cruz.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/stop_climate_shakedowns_act_of_2026.pdf

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/8330/text>

Communities all across our nation, in red states and blue states, have suffered and face staggering costs from fires, floods, storms, and heat waves that, according to scientists, are becoming more destructive as a result of the burning of fossil fuels.³ S.4340 and H.R.8330 attack state efforts to address climate change and to make companies pay for the cost of their pollution. We urge you to defend our existing authority to implement policies that protect our residents from pollution, encourage cheaper and cleaner energy options, and ensure that companies pay for damages their pollution causes.

In the same spirit, we urge you to defend the principle that when any party – be they a powerful corporation or a single individual – violates state law and causes harm to the people of our states, we are able to hold them accountable. Today twelve attorneys general and dozens of municipal governments collectively representing more than 1 in 4 Americans are engaged in ongoing lawsuits to hold major fossil fuel companies accountable for deceiving the public about the dangers of their products and to make them pay for local damages they have caused.⁴ S.4340 and H.R.8330 are efforts to stop these cases in their tracks before state and local governments that represent the people have their rightful day in court.

Every state in the Union can proudly point to a time when our officials successfully turned to the courts to secure justice and restitution for our citizens after they suffered harm because of the unlawful actions of powerful interests, from major tobacco companies⁵ or opioid manufacturers.⁶ Liability waivers for those industries, like the one proposed for fossil fuel companies in S.4340 and H.R.8330, could have impeded or outright blocked our states from successfully obtaining such justice and accountability.

Our fair and impartial legal system is a cornerstone of our democracy. The U.S. Congress should not be in the business of carving out exceptions to allow powerful corporations to escape it.

Sincerely,

³ “Weather and Climate Extreme Events in a Changing Climate,” IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group 1, Chapter 11 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/chapter/chapter-11/>

⁴ “Taking Big Oil to Court,” Covering Climate Now, May 6, 2025 <https://coveringclimatenow.org/from-us-story/taking-big-oil-to-court/>

⁵ “The Master Settlement Agreement,” National Association of Attorneys General <https://www.naag.org/our-work/naag-center-for-tobacco-and-public-health/the-master-settlement-agreement/>

⁶ State Opioid Settlement Spending Decisions <https://nashp.org/state-tracker/state-opioid-settlement-spending-decisions/>



Governor Bob Ferguson
State of Washington



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



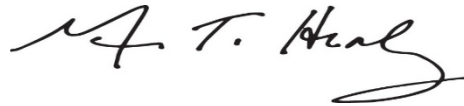
Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut



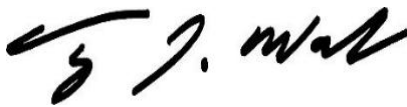
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