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Seven Ways to Fight Dirty (Energy)

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In case you missed it, dirty energy is back to dirty tricks. [This time with the help of DC lobbyists, Bonner & Associates, who forged letters to Congressman Tom Perriello of Virginia's 5th District.](#) The letters, written on "official" letterhead from the local NAACP chapter and a Hispanic group, Creciendo Juntos, asked Perriello to vote against the American Clean Energy & Security Act. Now, we know that the fossil fuel industry will stop at nothing to prevent the creation of a just, clean energy economy, but this is a new low!

If we are going to pass effective legislation this year, it's time we step up the effort and fight the dirty industries that pollute our communities and jeopardize our children and grandchildren's future. Here are seven ways to do it:

1. [Help Pass Real Healthcare Reform First](#) -- Real progress in our climate and energy policy will require strong leadership from President Obama and a unified progressive block that will stand up to dirty energy interest groups. The same dynamics are playing out right now in the debate over healthcare, and the President and Congress have made clear that the health care bill comes before the climate/energy bill. You can help the climate and energy agenda by [calling your Senator or Representative today](#) and telling them that you want quality, affordable healthcare now.
2. [Mobilize Now](#) -- It's now or never if we want to prevent the worst consequences of climate change and successfully transition to a prosperous clean energy economy. I'm reminded of the scene in Return of the King, the final Lord of The Rings, where as the climactic battle looms, the message to mobilize is spread by lighting fires from mountaintop to mountaintop. We need that now. We must mobilize all able forces or expect defeat to a better funded, entrenched opponent. Everyone with an interest in a renewed American economy and greener future needs to work together for us to win. Then we need to expand our base by reaching out to new constituencies who share in a cleaner, more just future.
3. [Build Online to Offline Organizing Power](#) -- Our forces are tech-savvy and skilled at online organizing, but we are currently splintered -- local leaders belong to different national organizations and may never learn about each other or figure out how to work together. We need better tools and organizational cooperation to empower local leaders with resources, and most importantly, connections to each other to build the power they need to pressure their representatives to support real change. Thankfully, [1Sky](#), the [Energy Action Coalition](#) and others are building this collaborative web platform and recruiting Climate Precinct Captains in the 300,000 voting precincts across the country. You can [sign up to be a climate precinct captain](#) and join the largest and most systematic grassroots infrastructure initiative ever on climate change.
4. [Stick With the Science](#) -- 350 parts per million is the safe upper limit of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. 450 ppm is the stated goal of ACES, the climate bill that recently passed the House. That's a huge difference, especially when we're already at 389 ppm and climbing. Join with the folks at [350.org](#) for the largest grassroots action on climate change ever this October 24. Groups around the world will gather from the Taj Mahal to the Great Barrier Reef to your town green, to spread the word about 350. So far over 1,200 groups in 83 countries have come up with an idea for how they want to spread 350. [Join an existing group or start your own.](#)
5. [Expand Financing for Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency](#) -- To achieve the necessary investment in clean energy and energy efficiency, we are going to need more capital than is included in ACES or that the private sector can provide -- [see a recent story in Time magazine](#) summarizing the need well. Luckily, there are two exciting possibilities. The first is Clean Energy Bonds that would work like Liberty Bonds and Victory Bonds of the past and give Americans a clear and direct stake in the successful transition to a clean energy economy. [\(Green America is developing a technical paper on the options\).](#) The second suggestion comes from [William Grieder's piece](#) on reforming the Federal Reserve in the current issue of the *Nation*. Grieder suggests that if Congress were to take back its constitutional authority, "to coin money [and] regulate the value thereof," it could "create a stand-alone development fund for long-term capital investment projects." Those investments in clean energy, energy-efficiency, and smart infrastructure could provide the capital currently absent from ACES and the private

sector.

6. Think Globally, Act Locally -- While addressing the climate crisis requires coordinated actions from national and international bodies, some bold and forward-thinking folks have refused to wait for others to solve the problem for them. If you want to help educate and prepare your local community, the Transition Town movement is a great place to start. There are lots of other examples too -- from city and state stimulus planning to local climate change preparedness efforts to the Mayors for Climate Protection and the Campus Climate Challenge.

7. Go "Beyond Talk" -- If you're really ready to put yourself on the front lines to create a better future for our children and grandchildren, sign up with Beyond Talk and join thousands who have already pledged, "to perform non-violent civil disobedience and risk arrest in order to get our leaders to make the right climate-change choices." Non-violent civil disobedience has been a core tactic of movements for justice throughout history -- from Indian Independence, to Civil Rights, to the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa. It has already played an important role in blocking or shutting down dirty energy facilities in the movement for climate justice, and I suspect has an even greater role to play in coming months and years.

These are my suggestions for what we can do as movement to create meaningful change in our climate and energy policy this year. I'd love to hear you're suggestions as well. Please leave them in the comment section below.

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