

**Appalachian Voices * Center for Biological Diversity * Conservation Law Foundation *
Earthjustice * Environment America * Friends of the Earth *
League of Conservation Voters * Natural Resources Defense Council * Sierra Club**

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2803

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1702

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0508

The Honorable John A. Boehner
U.S. House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3508

December 2, 2011

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi;

News reports have indicated that there may be a House Republican-led effort to use the payroll tax bill as a vehicle for forcing unrelated anti-environmental riders through the Congress. As we have said about similar efforts on appropriations bills, this kind of legislating is absolutely contrary to the public interest on both substantive and procedural grounds.

First, while our groups take no stand on the underlying payroll legislation, there is no reason to hold a tax relief bill hostage to utterly unrelated matters. Moreover, the environmental issues that might be folded into this package are significant in their own right, and should not be slipped into an unrelated bill, limiting scrutiny and debate, in an effort to extort votes to roll back environmental and health protections.

Environmental safeguards save lives and prevent illness. Full environmental reviews can prevent needless damage to water supplies and other resources on which the public depends.

The urgent need to address economic distress should not be used as a Trojan horse to create environmental distress.

Sincerely,

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