

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 13, 1991

Dear Braintrust Participant:

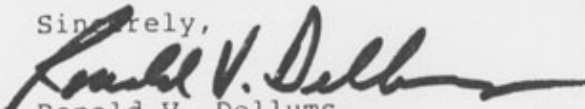
As the 21st century approaches, now more than ever, it is imperative that African-Americans become active in the environmental movement. As human beings, we African-Americans have a responsibility to ensure that the environment does not further deteriorate causing pain and suffering for untold numbers of our communities and families. I am outraged as I am made aware of how minorities suffer disproportionately from environmental pollutants such as poor air quality, lead poisoning, and poor drinking water in urban areas. Even though we cannot expect the larger environmental organizations to be concerned about the suffering of our people, we must get involved. It is for these reasons that I want to encourage you to continue your activism in challenging current environmental policies at the federal, state and local levels.

I am pleased that Congressman Ed Towns (D-NY) has decided to convene a braintrust that examines energy and environmental issues as they affect the Black community. The fact that Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta and other prestigious leaders have agreed to participate in the braintrust is an indication of the seriousness of environmental issues to be discussed.

It is also noteworthy to mention that the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), as a Congressional institutional body, has a very progressive environmental voting record. Several of the majority environmental organizations laud the CBC for consistently casting votes to preserve and clean up our nation's environment. This fact makes me proud; however, its significance is lessened by the absence of African-Americans in the environmental debate.

You may be interested to know that a "National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit" will be held at the Washington Court Hotel on Capitol Hill on October 24-27, 1991. The summit represents the first time that people of color will meet to discuss the critical issues of the environment and its effect on our collective communities and people. The summit, in concert with today's braintrust, marks the beginning of a new struggle that African-Americans will embark upon. I join you in the struggle to bring about "Environmental Justice" for our communities.

Sincerely,



Ronald V. Dellums
Member of Congress