



BLACK LEADERSHIP FORUM, INC.

***Black Leadership's  
Race for Clean Energy***

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Today, the race to address environmental issues in urban America is colored by the presence of dirty air and water. New York City's communities of color, such as Harlem, Central-Brooklyn, and the South Bronx serve as tragic examples; the asthma rate among school-aged children is nearly four times the U.S. average. This dangerously high asthma rate is in part linked to the location of gas and oil fired power plants that produce harmful pollutants.

The Black Leadership Forum (BLF) has established an impressive legacy of addressing issues impacting the Black community including first-class jails and second-class schools, unaffordable housing/predatory lending, voter disenfranchisement, and inadequate health care. However, within, communities of color today there is a great void in leadership on environmental issues.

To fill this void, the BLF is working alongside organizations like Safe Healthy Affordable and Reliable Energy (SHARE), a non-profit clean energy advocacy organization. SHARE's mission includes conducting important clean energy discussions in our schools, churches, tenant associations and senior citizen centers. Whether solar, wind, nuclear or other forms of clean energy, BLF's goal is to elevate environmental issues to the forefront of the urban public policy agenda.

The Black Leadership Forum, Inc. believes America must change its approach to exploring and developing clean energy sources. A growing number of environmental organizations realize clean nuclear power must be an integral part of any discussion on our nation's energy future. As electricity bills rise year after year, there are shortsighted calls to replace existing, clean and reliable power plants. National and local stakeholders in communities of color must demand more energy choices, not less, for the physical and economic health of our communities.

In 2002, the Black Leadership Forum (BLF) issued a report entitled "*Air of Injustice: African Americans & Power Plant Pollution*" which chronicled how coal-fired power plants affect African Americans by releasing chemicals in to our air. The report revealed that 68% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant; and 71% of Black people live in counties, which violate federal air pollution standards. In short, the "Air of Injustice" revealed too much pollution is affecting too many communities of color, with too few alternatives.

Together with SHARE and a coalition of experts, BLF will release an update to “*Air of Injustice*” in the summer of 2008. As gas, oil, and coal prices continue to soar, black leadership must ensure clean energy sources for all people. The race for clean energy should be paced by a policy concern for people of color, most affected by the presence of air-borne toxins and the state of our environment.

*Established in 1977, the Black Leadership Forum is an alliance of 35 nationally preeminent organizations linked together to form progressive public policy for Black people, based in Washington, DC. [www.BlackLeadershipForum.org](http://www.BlackLeadershipForum.org)*