My name is Dr. Beverly Wright. I am a life-long resident of New Orleans, Louisiana. I have personally experienced the pain of being exposed to petrochemical pollution and suffered losses from the climate crisis brought on by the fossil fuel industry.

In 1992, I founded the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Xavier University of Louisiana to give voice to the enormous burdens unjustly imposed on predominantly Black communities in Cancer Alley. My focus was to press the EPA to deliver on environmental protection that was grossly lacking in so many communities. To this end, I created education and research programs for communities to learn the science of how they were impacted by pollution, as well as understand their power to engage the EPA and other government agencies on decisions impacting their lives.

There have been six federal administrations since I founded the Center. The Biden-Harris Administration is the first to make environmental justice a priority in
the Justice40 Initiative and federal laws, such as the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. I want to thank President Biden for appointing the right person to lead the EPA. The first opportunity I had to work with Administrator Michael Regan was on the Louisiana segment of the Journey to Justice that took place in October 2021.

Following this time, the Center produced the report, *The More Things Change, the More They Remain the Same: Living and Dying in Cancer Alley*. This was an update to our groundbreaking study that mapped environmental racism in Louisiana’s Cancer Alley in 1994. This update shows that since the study, environmental health risks have increased for Black communities, but have decreased for White communities. We know these risks would rise if plans to concentrate 29 new gas and petrochemical facilities in overburdened Black communities come to fruition. It is our charge to defeat these plans.

Administrator Regan promised action following the Journey to Justice. He brought an analytical lens to figuring out a way to lower pollution and deliver a remedy within a legal framework that is designed to be friendly to toxic industries. This requires a deep dive and working in the weeds. How many people know about the Hazardous Organic NESHAP or HON or, for that matter, NESHAP which stands for the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants? It is under this authority in the Clean Air Act that Administrator Regan found a way to
significantly reduce the carcinogens chloroprene and ethylene oxide, as well as volatile organic compounds; and to also require fenceline air monitoring as a tool for robust enforcement. He’s shown a way forward for changing Cancer Alley. Administrator Michael Regan embodies the phrase “promises made, promises kept.” And today is a day for celebration, not because we have arrived but because we have made a critical breakthrough for advancing environmental justice.