

Phindile Baleni

Director General of the Presidency and  
Secretary of the Cabinet

**South African Government**

Cc: Rudi Dicks

Head of Project Management Office

**Private office of the President**

By email: [Phindile.Baleni@presidency.gov.za](mailto:Phindile.Baleni@presidency.gov.za); cc: [rudi@presidency.gov.za](mailto:rudi@presidency.gov.za)

9 February 2026

Dear Ms Baleni

### **Urgent request for a meeting to discuss the carbon tax**

As a group of civil society organisations, academics and experts working towards a just transition to an inclusive, low-carbon and sustainable economy, we are extremely concerned to hear that National Treasury has been requested by Cabinet to motivate for the retention of the carbon tax, indicating that there continue to be behind-the-scenes engagements in which large polluters are lobbying government to undermine a key tool for the achievement of a just transition.

We are, therefore, requesting an urgent meeting with yourselves to understand the reasons for, and extent of, the threat to the continued operation of the carbon tax.

We would also appreciate an opportunity to present to Cabinet on the absolute imperative of retaining and progressively strengthening the carbon tax as envisaged by the Carbon Tax Act and other key pieces of intersecting policy and legislation.

Many of our organisations have been actively engaged in public processes in relation to the development and strengthening of the carbon tax, submitting comments and participating in National Treasury and Parliamentary information sessions. We strongly disagree with industry about the implementation of the carbon tax, and are aware that industry lobbying has been effective in weakening and delaying the implementation of the tax. However, to date there has been no indication that the retention of the tax itself was in question.

Decisions relating to the carbon tax have implications for all South Africans: they impact our country's ability to meet our international commitments under the Paris Agreement, to adequately mitigate the impacts of climate change (physical and transitional) within our borders, and to incentivise urgent action by high-emitting sectors to reduce their emissions. The carbon tax is crucial for





operationalising the “polluter pays” principle, which ensures that the negative societal and economic impacts of big polluters are not fully externalised onto society.

Crucially, the carbon tax should direct revenue back into South Africa, via the fiscus, rather than into the profits of big polluters or outside our borders via mechanisms such as the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

The high-emitting sectors which have lobbied successfully to weaken and delay the carbon tax do not represent the interests of South Africa. Instead, their position is informed by a vested financial interest in delaying the just transition to a low-carbon economy to protect their narrow business models.

We thank you in advance for availing yourselves for this critical discussion.

Yours faithfully  
**JUST SHARE**

Per:

Nicole Martens  
Executive Director  
[nmartens@justshare.org.za](mailto:nmartens@justshare.org.za)

**AND**

**Organisation/individual**

Black Sash  
Dr Britta Rennkamp  
Dr Brett Cohen  
Centre for Environmental Rights  
Climate Legal  
Dr Emily Tyler  
Fossil Free South Africa  
groundWork/Friends of the Earth South Africa  
Prof Harald Winkler  
Project 90 by 2030  
Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI)

**Contact**

[rachelbukasa@blacksash.org.za](mailto:rachelbukasa@blacksash.org.za)  
[britta.rennkamp@uct.ac.za](mailto:britta.rennkamp@uct.ac.za)  
[brett.cohen@meridianeconomics.co.za](mailto:brett.cohen@meridianeconomics.co.za)  
Brandon Abdinor: [babdinor@cer.org.za](mailto:babdinor@cer.org.za)  
Andrew Gilder: [Andrew@climatelegal.co.za](mailto:Andrew@climatelegal.co.za)  
[emily@tyler.co.za](mailto:emily@tyler.co.za)  
David le Page: [david@fossilfreesa.org.za](mailto:david@fossilfreesa.org.za)  
Yegeshni Moodley: [yegeshni@groundwork.org.za](mailto:yegeshni@groundwork.org.za)  
  
[harald.winkler@uct.ac.za](mailto:harald.winkler@uct.ac.za)  
Gabriel Klaasen: [gabriel@90by2030.org.za](mailto:gabriel@90by2030.org.za)  
Francesca de Gasparis: [francesca@safcei.org.za](mailto:francesca@safcei.org.za)