

Tell Bank of America: Denounce Environmental Racism & Defund Formosa Plastics!

 **Week of Action March 28 to April 1** 

This toolkit contains:

- how to deliver the letter to your local Bank of America branch
- a copy of the letter to Bank of America (coming March 20)
- dates and time for training and support
- instructions for making an in-person appointment at your local branch
- a script you can use when talking to Bank of America
- campaign background, talking points, and additional resources
- graphics for social media (coming soon)

Formosa Plastics is trying to build a [mega-petrochemical complex](#) (to make throwaway plastics) in St. James, Louisiana, in the heart of what's become known as 'Cancer Alley.' The residents of St. James Parish—who are predominantly Black—suffer from cancer risks that are *50 times higher than the national average*. If built, the 'Sunshine Project' would be a [super polluter](#), doubling toxic emissions in the already overburdened Parish. It would also become the largest carbon emitter permitted in the US in over a decade and lead to roughly the emissions equivalent of 3 coal plants per year. Led by the faith-based, Black-led community organization [RISE St. James](#), the campaign to stop Formosa has already significantly slowed down the project through fierce organizing and litigation. The Army Corps of Engineers has ordered a full Environmental Impact Statement, buying us a two or three year delay. With the project's Final Investment Decision [indefinitely delayed](#), there is a timely and strategic opportunity to peel away financial support from Formosa and pressure the company to abandon this ill-conceived project.

Formosa Plastics "Sunshine Project" is a textbook case of environmental racism & it must be stopped!

How to Take Action:

1. Click here to download and print the letter with our demands:

a. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iGYPxhtelskQsJ-dyRNVe5cjkYYd3rrH?usp=sharing>

2. Sign up to deliver our letter and petition to a local Bank of America Branch March 28-April 1 [Register your event with Stop the Money Pipeline](#)

a. Need more help on setting up an event? [Check out these step by step instructions for setting up your events](#) from Stop the Money Pipeline.

Are you a Bank of America Customer? Make an appointment to sit down with a customer service representative at your local BofA financial center anytime between 3/28-4/1

b. [click here for easy instructions for making an appointment](#)

3. Attend the action training on **March 16 at 5pm PT/8pm ET** to learn more about Formosa Plastics, why Bank of America is such an important target, how-to make a letter delivery action successful, and network with other activists! [RSVP here](#)

4. Deliver the letter to your local branch (use the script below if you need help with what to say when you're there)

a. If you've made an appointment in advance (recommended), use the script below to begin your conversation with the customer representative

b. Take notes! Record the conversation and their response

5. After the meeting & letter delivery, report back and tell us how it went, what they said, and if they committed to sharing your concerns with their manager. This could be valuable information as we continue engaging with Bank of America on this campaign.

Have questions? Need Support?

Email a FOE organizer at organize@foe.org for quick help

- Get 1:1 support during “Office Hours for Action Takers” via Zoom (no RSVP required, just pop in!) Two times each week using the same zoom link – [Zoom link here](#)
 - Wednesdays 12:30-1:30pm Eastern Time (ET)
 - Friday 12:30-1:30 pm Mountain time (MT)
- Watch the Defund Formosa week of action training → [You can find the recording here.](#)

How to make an appointment to deliver the Defund Formosa letter to your local Bank of America branch

1. To begin making an appointment, [follow this link](#)
2. Select “Checking and Savings”
3. On the next page where it asks “What would you like to discuss?” –select “Other”
4. In the comment box, write something like “account concerns” or “investment concerns” – click Next
5. On the next page, enter your zip code and click “Find Locations” to pull up a list of local branches near you
6. Select your desired location and follow the steps to set an appointment any day between March 28 and April 1 at a time of your choice
7. No bank branch near you? [If an appointment is not possible, click here for instructions to deliver demands by email](#)

Use this Script to when you deliver the letter:

Hi, my name is [your name] and I’m been a customer of Bank of America for [x# of years].

I’m here on behalf of a campaign to stop Formosa Plastics from building a massive plastics plant in St. James Parish, Louisiana. The facility is called the “Sunshine Project.” They’re planning to manufacture more throwaway plastics. But the residents of St. James Parish don’t want this facility. This African-American community has already been sickened by industrial polluters. The region is referred to as “Cancer Alley” by those who live there because they suffer from cancer rates that are 50 times higher than the national average already. This new plastic plant would exponentially increase pollution there.

We know that Bank of America has done business with Formosa Plastics before. In fact, we know that in 2015, the Bank helped Formosa secure \$1 billion dollars in funding. We also know that Bank of America is one of the top plastics financiers in the world and has a history of doing business with companies that pollute Black, Indigenous, and communities of color.

A lot of people including myself think Bank of America should refuse to do business with this company because it's a textbook case of environmental racism.

[Share your personal story and what's at stake for you]

As a customer, I don't want to do business with a bank that would fund Formosa Plastics. I'm bringing this letter signed by [x#] of people asking Bank of America for a public commitment to not finance Formosa Plastics, and we're asking the Bank to formally denounce environmentally racist business practices.

ASK/CONNECT/LISTEN: Were you aware that Bank of America helps companies like Formosa Plastics operate? How do you feel about it? Do you think they should stop?

ASK: Can you give this letter to your manager and share my concerns?

For more information, check out these resources and share them on social media:

- Follow RISE St. James on social media:
 - [Twitter @risestjames](#)
 - [Facebook @risestjames](#)
 - [#RiseStJames](#)
 - [#DefundFormosa](#)
- Fact Sheet: [Stop Formosa](#)
- Animated Media | [The World We Need: Sharon Lavigne's Story of RISE St. James](#)
- Watch this: [Inside one community's battle against environmental racism](#) (Vox Media)

- People Magazine | [La. Grandma Takes on Chemical Companies in Cancer Alley 'Like a Roaring Lion' — and Succeeds](#)
- Drilled Podcast | [Plastic Pipelines: Erasing the Imaginary Line](#)

FAQ for Action Takers

Why this action?

Formosa Plastics is trying to build a mega-petrochemical complex (to make throwaway plastics) in St. James, Louisiana, in the heart of what's become known as 'Cancer Alley.' The residents of St. James Parish—who are predominantly Black—suffer from cancer rates that are 50 times higher than the national average.

If built, the 'Sunshine Project' would be a super polluter, doubling toxic emissions in the already overburdened Parish. It would also become the largest carbon emitter permitted in the US in over a decade and lead to roughly the emissions equivalent of 3 coal plants per year. Led by the faith-based, Black-led community organization RISE St. James, the campaign to stop Formosa has already significantly slowed down the project through fierce organizing and litigation.

But to stop Formosa Plastics for good, we have to stop the money pipeline for this project and environmentally racist projects like it. Bank of America is Formosa Plastics' most important US bank, and the most logical target for our campaign. **BofA helped the Formosa raise \$1 billion in 2015, making it Formosa Plastics' most likely US partner to help raise money for this giant new petrochemicals complex.**

Why now?

The Army Corps of Engineers has ordered a full Environmental Impact Statement, buying us a two or three year delay. With the project's Final Investment Decision indefinitely delayed, there is a timely and strategic opportunity to peel away financial support from Formosa and pressure the company to abandon this ill-conceived project.

Bank of America is also one of the top plastics financiers in the world. Their investments are directly responsible for the out of control plastic waste problem, with the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic waste flowing into our oceans every minute.

We're delivering our petition and demands one month before Bank of America's Shareholder meeting. This will give Bank staff a chance to respond, and give shareholder activists time to rally support for resolutions that will end Bank of America's investment in plastics and other fossil-fueled disasters for good.

What should you do?

Plan an event in your community to deliver our demands between March 28 and April 1! This can be as simple as walking into a bank branch to deliver a letter, making an appointment at your local branch to have a sit down meeting with a bank employee, or make it bigger by inviting people to come with you and/or hosting an action outside of a bank branch. We're following the leadership of RISE St James and local groups in Louisiana, who are planning a community candlelight vigil in the heart of Cancer Alley - so you may want to look to them for inspiration.

Who is RISE St. James?

RISE St. James is a faith-based grassroots organization that is fighting for environmental justice as it works to defeat the proliferation of petrochemical industries in St. James Parish, Louisiana. Nicknamed "Cancer Alley" for the above-average rates of cancer there, the area is home to a high concentration of polluting industries. Despite this, the state has plans to expand this chemical corridor with dozens more factories. Led by Sharon Lavigne, 2021's Goldman Environmental Prize winner, Rise St. James galvanized community opposition and successfully defeated the construction of a \$1.25 billion plastics manufacturing plant in 2019. The group is currently fighting to prevent Formosa Plastics from building a massive multibillion-dollar plastics plant in the parish. **Learn more about their important work and find more ways to support the campaign: <https://www.risestjames.org/>**