

December 10, 2020

Dear President-Elect Biden and Vice-President-Elect Harris,

Congratulations on securing the people's vote. As you know, your election is a testament to the tireless work of many people who believe a better world is possible and necessary. This is why we are calling upon you and your administration to walk the walk of real climate leadership.

We, the undersigned public-interest organizations, represent millions of people across the United States who demand a climate just future, including youth, women, low-income communities, racially diverse communities, faith communities, and others. The people who voted for a better future are now ready to demand it from your administration. Amid a climate emergency that is wreaking unprecedented havoc, we write to you with an urgent request that is vitally important.

We applaud your stated intent for the United States to rejoin the Paris Agreement at the earliest possible moment. We also call on your administration to go far beyond simply rejoining the Paris Agreement and commit to honor the US' Fair Share¹ in addressing the climate emergency. This commitment to Fair Shares is already included in the Democratic Party's Platform. To follow through, this will require bold, equitable and ambitious emissions reductions and a commitment to support less wealthy countries to do the same, including providing a significant amount of climate finance, far more than we committed to under the Obama administration.

We commend your promise for this nation to become a climate leader. In addition to ambitious domestic action, this will require the US to take responsibility for its historical role in international climate policy and become a truly trusted partner, not on behalf of polluters but of people. We urge you not to underestimate the amount of work necessary to establish good-faith relationships with other nations in the global fight against climate change. Based on the US' historical role, going back far beyond the previous administration, many nations no longer assume the US to act in good faith. Without recognizing that history and rebuilding those relationships, the extremely ambitious transition that the world now urgently needs will be impossible to realize.

To date, the United States has contributed more to climate change than any other country in the world. It is also the world's wealthiest country, with much of this wealth being accumulated through activities that have directly or indirectly fueled climate change. Even within the US, we see all too well how the devastating impacts of extractive and polluting activities are concentrated in low-income, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities², while the wealth accumulated through these practices is concentrated in the hands of just a few. These are truths that cannot be ignored.

It is past time for the US to finally act the way a climate leader must – both within its borders and internationally. The United States' capacity to act on the climate crisis and its historical contribution to creating it are so large that even cutting to zero emissions tomorrow would not be action enough. And so now the US, beginning with your administration, must do its Fair Share in addressing this crisis. It is long overdue. It is what's right. And if people from Louisiana to California and from the Philippines to Nigeria are going to have a chance at surviving the existential crisis unfolding before our eyes, it is paramount.

As a first step towards climate leadership and towards the US doing the right thing by doing its Fair Share, we urge you to commit to achieving the equivalent of a 195 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030³. To achieve 195 percent emissions reductions, we ask you to commit to:

1) Cutting domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 70 percent below 2005 levels, by 2030, as part of a plan to decarbonize the entire economy as quickly as possible. Achieving such reductions requires precisely the “transition from the oil industry” you promised if elected president⁴ – and more precisely, it will require halting all new fossil fuel extraction, phasing out existing extraction, and justly transitioning the energy system to 100 percent clean and renewable energy. Such necessary and bold actions so far remain absent from your climate plan⁵.

2) Achieving the remaining 125 percent of the 195 percent reductions by directly supporting developing countries with the financial and technological assistance needed to reduce their emissions beyond what they can or should have to do on their own.

To embody true climate leadership, support for developing countries and global climate finance is as important as domestic emissions cuts. The United States, despite deep economic inequalities, commands immense wealth that can be harnessed in the fight against climate change, and has contributed greatly to causing this emergency. As a result, the US has an even greater obligation as well as a moral responsibility to do what must be done to address it. If we don't, it is not just people in other countries that will pay with their lives and livelihoods; people in the United States will also continue to suffer the consequences of failing to take the necessary international action to address this global emergency with the urgency and collaboration it demands.

These demands are in line with and build on others issued to your incoming administration, including the Climate President Plan⁶ and the US-Climate Action Network's Vision for Equitable Climate Action⁷, as well as demands on past US administrations from global movements for climate justice⁸. You yourself acknowledged the people's mandate for urgent action on climate change in your victory speech⁹, and we are here to tell you that transforming how the US shows up and fulfills its obligations to address the climate crisis on the global stage is an essential ingredient in demonstrating climate leadership.

When you, as the newly elected president and vice-president of the United States, notify the world that the US will rejoin the Paris Agreement, we ask you to also explicitly demonstrate to the global community that the US is finally serious about becoming a climate leader, and that you stand ready to honor this country's Fair Share.

Signed,

1. 350 Action
2. 350 Butte County
3. 350 Seattle
4. 350 Triangle
5. 350 Brooklyn

6. 350PDX
7. ActionAid USA
8. Alabama Interfaith Power and Light
9. Alliance for Affordable Energy
10. Amazon Watch
11. Anthropocene Alliance
12. Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
13. Arm in Arm
14. Arm in Arm Birmingham
15. Arm in Arm Metro Atlanta
16. Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
17. Athens County's Future Action Network (formerly Athens County Fracking Action Network)
18. Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
19. Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community (BCMAC)
20. Berks Gas Truth
21. Blue Future
22. Bold Alliance
23. Brighter Green
24. Bucks Environmental Action
25. Call to Action Colorado
26. Care About Climate
27. Center for Biological Diversity
28. Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy
29. Climate Hawks Vote
30. Compressor Free Franklin
31. Corporate Accountability
32. Dogwood Alliance
33. Earth Ethics, Inc.
34. Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light
35. EcoEquity
36. EcoLibria International (ELI)
37. Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate And Health Organization (EEEECHO)
38. Faith in Place Action Fund
39. Flint Rising
40. FracTracker Alliance
41. Franciscan Action Network
42. Gas Free Seneca
43. GASP
44. Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
45. Good Solar Organization
46. Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
47. Green The Church
48. GreenFaith
49. GreenLatinos
50. GreenRoots
51. Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light

52. Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
53. Interfaith Power & Light
54. Iowa Interfaith Power and Light
55. JAPRI
56. John Muir Project
57. Justice Action Mobilization Network
58. Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light
59. Kingdom Living Temple
60. Lancaster Against Pipelines
61. Lebanon Pipeline Awareness
62. MADRE
63. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
64. Media Alliance
65. Ministry of Environmental Justice for the United Church of Christ
66. Mother's & Others For Clean Air
67. NC Climate Justice Collective
68. NC Council of Churches
69. NC Interfaith Power & Light
70. NewAlpha Community Development Corporation
71. Nuclear Information and Resource Service
72. Oakland Institute
73. Oil Change International
74. Organized Uplifting Resources & Strategies
75. Our Climate Education Fund
76. OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
77. Partnership for Southern Equity
78. People Demanding Action
79. Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
80. POCACITO
81. Poder Latinx
82. Progressive Democrats of America
83. Rapid Shift Network
84. Renewables Now Loveland
85. Resource Generation
86. ReThink Energy Florida
87. RootsAction.org
88. Sisters of Charity Federation
89. Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota
90. Sunrise Movement
91. Sustainable Sudbury
92. Sustaining Way
93. SustainUS
94. Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy/Texas Impact
95. The Climate Mobilization Montgomery Co MD
96. The Electric Smoothie Lab Apothecary
97. The Imani Group

98. The People's Justice Council
99. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
100. Unite North Metro Denver
101. US Climate Action Network (USCAN)
102. Utah Moms for Clean Air
103. UUJusticePA (formerly UUPLAN)
104. Vermont Community Loan Fund
105. Vermont Interfaith Power and Light
106. Vote Solar
107. Water You Fighting For?
108. Whitney M. Slater Foundation
109. Women's Environment and Development Organization

Join the call! Endorse by filling out [this form](#).

Endnotes:

1. The US Fair Share (see usfairshare.org) is not a new concept. It builds on consensus among civil society organizations in the US and globally (see civilsocietyreview.org) and is based on cutting edge science which centers equity and ambition in addressing the climate crisis. It assesses each country's Fair Share of addressing the emergency by considering its financial capacity for addressing the climate crisis and its responsibility for creating it, while safeguarding the rights of the income poor in all countries to dignified lives.
2. Mustafa Santiago Ali. "Environmental racism is killing Americans of color. Climate change will make it worse," The Guardian, July 28 2020, accessed November 30 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/28/climate-change-environmental-racism-america>.
3. US Climate Action Network (US-CAN), "The US Climate Fair Share", Dec 2020, accessed Dec 2 2020, <https://usfairshare.org>.
4. Rebecca Beitsch. "Biden: 'I would transition from the oil industry'," The Hill, October 22 2020, accessed Nov 30 2020, <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/522397-biden-i-would-transition-from-the-oil-industry>.
5. "The Biden Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice," accessed Nov 30 2020, <https://joebiden.com/climate-plan/>.
6. "The Climate President Action Plan," accessed Nov 30 2020, <https://www.climatepresident.org>.
7. US Climate Action Network (US-CAN), "The Vision for Equitable Climate Action," accessed Nov 30 2020, <https://equitableclimateaction.org/>.
8. "The People's Demands for Climate Justice," accessed Nov 30 2020, www.peoplesdemands.org.
9. Joe Biden, "Joe Biden's President-Elect Acceptance Speech," Nov 9 2020, accessed Nov 30 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/biden-speech-transcript.html>.