

February 17, 2021

Dear President Biden and Vice-President 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 and around the world 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 and action 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 inaugurated President and Vice-President of the United States, notified the world that the US will rejoin the Paris Agreement, you took the important first step. We now 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,

US-based organizations

1. 350 Action
2. 350 Butte County
3. 350 Seattle

4. 350 Triangle
5. 350Brooklyn
6. 350PDX
7. ActionAid USA
8. Agricultural Missions, Inc.
9. Alabama Interfaith Power and Light
10. Alliance for Affordable Energy
11. Amazon Watch
12. Anthropocene Alliance
13. Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
14. Arm in Arm
15. Arm in Arm Birmingham
16. Arm in Arm Metro Atlanta
17. Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
18. Athens County's Future Action Network (formerly Athens County Fracking Action Network)
19. Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
20. Baltimore Nonviolence Center
21. Beaver County (PA)vMarcellus Awareness (BCMAC)
22. Berks Gas Truth
23. Blue Future
24. Bold Alliance
25. Brighter Green
26. Bucks Environmental Action
27. California Interfaith Power & Light
28. Call to Action Colorado
29. Care About Climate
30. Center for Biological Diversity
31. Center for Economic Democracy
32. Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy
33. Climate Hawks Vote
34. Climate Justice Alliance
35. Compressor Free Franklin
36. Connecticut Interfaith Power and Light
37. Corporate Accountability
38. Delaware Interfaith Power and Light
39. Democracy Collaborative
40. Dogwood Alliance
41. Earth Ethics, Inc.
42. Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light
43. Earthworks
44. EcoEquity
45. EcoLibria International (ELI)
46. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)
47. Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate And Health Organization (EEECHO)
48. Elders Climate Action
49. Environment North Carolina

50. Faith in Place Action Fund
51. Flint Rising
52. FracTracker Alliance
53. Franciscan Action Network
54. Friends of the Earth US
55. Gas Free Seneca
56. GASP
57. Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
58. Good Solar Organization
59. Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
60. Green The Church
61. GreenFaith
62. GreenLatinos
63. GreenRoots
64. Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy
65. Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition
66. Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light
67. Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
68. Interfaith Power & Light
69. Iowa Interfaith Power and Light
70. JAPRI
71. John Muir Project
72. Justice Action Mobilization Network
73. Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light
74. Kingdom Living Temple
75. Lancaster Against Pipelines
76. Lebanon Pipeline Awareness
77. MADRE
78. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
79. Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light
80. Media Alliance
81. Michigan Interfaith Power & Light
82. Ministry of Environmental Justice for the United Church of Christ
83. Montana Interfaith Power and Light
84. Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance
85. Mother's & Others For Clean Air
86. Mountain Association (formerly MACED)
87. NC Climate Justice Collective
88. NC Council of Churches
89. NC Interfaith Power & Light
90. Nebraska Interfaith Power & Light
91. New Creation United Methodist Women
92. New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
93. NewAlpha CDC
94. North Georgia Conference United Methodist Women
95. Nuclear Information and Resource Service

96. Oakland Institute
97. Oil Change International
98. Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
99. Organized Uplifting Resources & Strategies
100. Our Climate Education Fund
101. OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
102. Partnership for Southern Equity
103. Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
104. People Demanding Action
105. Phoenix Zones Initiative
106. Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
107. POCACITO
108. Poder Latinx
109. Power Shift Network
110. Progressive Democrats of America
111. Rachel Carson Council
112. Raleigh Court United Methodist Women
113. Rapid Shift Network
114. Renewables Now Loveland
115. Resource Generation
116. ReThink Energy Florida
117. RootsAction.org
118. Sisters of Charity Federation
119. Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota
120. Skyland United Methodist Women
121. Sunrise Movement
122. Sustainable Sudbury
123. Sustaining Way
124. SustainUS
125. Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light
126. Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy/Texas Impact
127. The Climate Mobilization Montgomery Co MD
128. The Electric Smoothie Lab Apothecary
129. The Imani Group
130. The People's Justice Council
131. Tikkun's Network of Spiritual Progressives
132. Toward Zero Waste
133. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
134. Unite North Metro Denver
135. United Methodist Women
136. US Climate Action Network (USCAN)
137. Utah Moms for Clean Air
138. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
139. Utah Valley Earth Forum
140. UUJusticePA (formerly UUPLAN)
141. Vermont Community Loan Fund

142. Vermont Interfaith Power and Light
143. Vermont Interfaith Power and Light
144. Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
145. Vote Solar
146. Water You Fighting For?
147. Whitney M. Slater Foundation
148. Win Without War
149. Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)
150. Women's Environment and Development Organization

International organizations

1. AbibiNsroma Foundation
2. Alliance for Empowering rural Communities
3. Arab Watch Regional Coalition
4. Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development
5. Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
6. Break-Free Plastic Movement
7. Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)
8. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
9. Center for Sustainable Community Development (SCODE)
10. Centre for Citizens Conserving (CECIC)
11. Centre for Science and Environment
12. CLEAN (Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network)
13. Climate Action Network - International
14. Climate Action Network Latin America
15. Climate Action Network South Asia
16. Corporate Europe Observatory
17. East Africa Climate Change Network
18. EMPOWER INDIA
19. Environics Trust
20. Environmental Justice Foundation
21. Fast For the Climate
22. Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN)
23. Foundation For The Conservation Of The Earth
24. Freedom from Debt Coalition
25. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
26. Friends of the Earth Europe
27. Friends of the Earth International
28. Fundación Étnica Integral (FEI)
29. Global Justice Now
30. Life Haven CIL
31. Mediterranean Youth Climate Network
32. Migrant Forum in Asia
33. Mom Loves Taiwan Association
34. National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal

35. National Social Entrepreneurs Forum
36. Nepal Development Initiative
37. NGO Federation of Nepal
38. Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
39. Power Shift Africa
40. Share The World's Resources (STWR)
41. Solutions for Our Climate
42. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
43. The Greens Movement of Georgia
44. The Human Touch
45. Toronto350
46. Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE)
47. WomanHealth Philippines
48. Youth For Environment Education And Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation)

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, Jul 28 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, <https://usfairshare.org>.
4. Rebecca Beitsch. "Biden: 'I would transition from the oil industry'," The Hill, Oct 22 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," <https://joebiden.com/climate-plan>.
6. "The Climate President Action Plan," Nov 2020, <https://www.climatepresident.org>.
7. US Climate Action Network (US-CAN), "The Vision for Equitable Climate Action," <https://equitableclimateaction.org>.
8. "The People's Demands for Climate Justice," www.peoplesdemands.org.
9. Joe Biden, "Joe Biden's President-Elect Acceptance Speech," Nov 9 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/biden-speech-transcript.html>.