

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As the United States attends the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), we encourage you to strengthen the U.S. position in the international fight against the climate crisis. The passage of the historic *Inflation Reduction Act*, which represents a quarter of all global clean energy investments since 2020,¹ puts the United States in a position to be a global clean energy leader. As we consider the alarming findings of the first-ever Global Stocktake, which assesses our global progress on emissions reductions, the United States has both an existing duty and new capacity to support more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement. We also encourage the Administration to support a negotiated outcome for a full phase-out of all fossil fuels and an immediate end to public financing of new international unabated fossil fuel projects, as outlined in the Glasgow Statement issued at COP26.² The United States must work in pursuit of stronger financing efforts—from public, private, and multilateral institutions—for nations facing mounting challenges in climate resilience and adaptation and clean energy development. Finally, we urge you to continue to strengthen and support other countries in adopting the principles of environmental justice that we should also prioritize here at home.

More Ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions

COP28 marks the conclusion of the first-ever Global Stocktake process, which was created under the 2015 Paris Agreement and is the most extensive assessment of global action on climate change to date.³ The technical dialogue for the Global Stocktake found that “the world is not on track to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement,” and “much more ambition in action and support is needed in implementing domestic mitigation measures and setting more ambitious targets in NDCs.”⁴ We encourage the Administration to advocate for commensurate ambition in countries’ updated NDCs for 2030 and beyond, and to strengthen its own NDC in line with the

¹ *Government Energy Spending Tracker*, International Energy Agency (June 2023), <https://www.iea.org/reports/government-energy-spending-tracker-2>.

² *Statement on International Public Support For The Clean Energy Transition*, UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 (Apr. 11, 2021), <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230313124743/https://ukcop26.org/statement-on-international-public-support-for-the-clean-energy-transition/>.

³ Jamal Srouji & Deirdre Cogan, *What is the "Global Stocktake" and How Can it Accelerate Climate Action?*, World Resources Institute (Sept. 8, 2023), <https://www.wri.org/insights/explaining-global-stocktake-paris-agreement>.

⁴ UNFCCC Secretariat, *Technical Dialogue of the First Global Stocktake: Synthesis Report by the Co-Facilitators on the Technical Dialogue*, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Sept. 8, 2023), <https://unfccc.int/documents/631600>.

US fair share, as determined by climate science and equity paradigms.⁵ We also encourage the Administration to include emissions from U.S. exports in its accounting of the NDC targets and progress. In addition to ambition, transparency and accountability should be prioritized in establishing country-level contributions and commitments.

Stronger Global Commitments to Phase-Out Fossil Fuel Projects and Financing

In May 2021, the International Energy Association (IEA) issued a roadmap to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. It called for “no investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, and no further final investment decisions for new unabated coal plants,” and stated that “developing new oil and gas fields would harm the chances of keeping global warming below 1.5°C.”⁶ In March 2023, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed this point, finding that the projected lifetime emissions from existing fossil fuel infrastructure will exceed the 1.5°C pathway.⁷ Despite this warning, the International Monetary Fund reported that global fossil fuel subsidies had risen to a record level of \$7 trillion in 2022, increasing by \$1.1 trillion from 2021, and a 2023 update to the IEA report indicated that investments in fossil fuel supply also increased over that period.^{8,9} Globally, current government coal production plans and projections are expected to exceed the median 1.5°C-consistent pathway by 460 percent.¹⁰

In 2022, the United States alone contributed a total of \$757 billion in explicit and implicit fossil fuel subsidies.¹¹ In 2023, the United States approved \$1.7 billion in public funding for international fossil fuel projects and green-lit the Willow Project in Alaska, which is expected to release nearly 254 million metric tons of carbon emissions over 30 years.¹² The United States became the world’s largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2022, and is set to double its liquefaction capacity by 2027.¹³

⁵ *Fair Share*, Climate Action Tracker, <https://climateactiontracker.org/methodology/cat-rating-methodology/fair-share/>. Accessed Nov. 13, 2023.

⁶ *Pathway to Critical and Formidable Goal of Net-Zero Emissions by 2050 is Narrow but Brings Huge Benefits, according to IEA Special Report*, International Energy Agency (May 18, 2021), <https://www.iea.org/news/pathway-to-critical-and-formidable-goal-of-net-zero-emissions-by-2050-is-narrow-but-brings-huge-benefits>.

⁷ Hoesung Lee et al., *AR6 Synthesis Report*, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023), https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6synr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf.

⁸ Simon Black et al., *Fossil Fuel Subsidies Surged to Record \$7 Trillion*, International Monetary Fund (Aug. 24, 2023), <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2023/08/24/fossil-fuel-subsidies-surged-to-record-7-trillion>.

⁹ Araceli Fernández et al., *Net Zero Roadmap: A Global Pathway to Keep the 1.5 °C Goal in Reach - 2023 Update*, International Energy Agency (Sep. 2023), https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/13dab083-08c3-4dfd-a887-42a3ebe533bc/NetZeroRoadmap_AGlobalPathwaytoKeepthe1.5CGoalinReach-2023Update.pdf.

¹⁰ *The Production Gap: Phasing down or phasing up? Top fossil fuel producers plan even more extraction despite climate promises*. Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, E3G, International Institute for Sustainable Development and United Nations Environment Programme (Nov. 8, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.51414/sei2023.050>.

¹¹ Simon Black et al., *IMF Fossil Fuel Subsidies Data: 2023 Update*, International Monetary Fund (Aug. 24, 2023), <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2023/08/22/IMF-Fossil-Fuel-Subsidies-Data-2023-Update-537281>.

¹² Nicole Rodel, *Fossil Finance Violations: Tracking Fossil Fuel Projects that Violate Commitments to End International Public Finance for Fossil Fuels*, Oil Change International (Oct. 19, 2023), <https://priceofoil.org/2023/09/06/fossil-finance-violations-tracking-fossil-fuel-projects-that-violate-commitments-to-end-international-public-finance-for-fossil-fuels/>; Lisa Friedman, *Many Young Voters Bitter Over Biden’s Support of Willow Oil Drilling*, N.Y. Times (Apr. 24, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/24/climate/willow-biden-climate-voters.html>.

¹³ Ploy Achakulwisut et al., *The Production Gap: Phasing down or phasing up? Top fossil fuel producers plan even more extraction despite climate promises*. Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, E3G, International Institute for Sustainable Development and United Nations Environment Programme (Nov. 8, 2023),

In order to remain on target for a livable future, we urge the Administration to support the move toward an extensive, expedient, and equitable phase-out of fossil fuel production and consumption. A full phase-out should be inclusive of coal, oil, and fossil gas, and led by the wealthiest and highest-emitting countries, including short-term phase-down goals and climate financing to assist developing countries in executing a clean energy transition. Carbon capture and management methods—which are often included in phase-down pathways—risk locking the world into additional fossil fuel development, inhibit progress towards emissions reduction, remain prohibitively expensive, and undermine clean energy deployment goals. A fossil fuel phase-out target would also help address the proliferation of “greenwashing” carbon offsets and net-zero pledges that include no action to scale down fossil fuel investments.¹⁴

We commend the Administration’s participation in the Glasgow Statement at COP26, which calls for a shift away from international financing of fossil fuel projects. However, as noted above, the United States has failed to adhere to this commitment and has continued to use taxpayer dollars to fund international fossil fuel projects. We urge the Administration to address this by publicly releasing a plan explaining how the United States will stop all public financing of international unabated fossil fuel projects.

Increased Clean Energy Financing

In order to meet the global target of limiting warming to 1.5°C, clean energy investment will need to reach \$4.5 trillion by 2030, a more than twofold increase over the current global level of \$1.8 trillion, and a fivefold increase in emerging markets.¹⁵ We applaud the Administration’s leadership in developing net-zero principles for financial institutions and we encourage private financial institutions to adhere to these principles, in order to align private finance with the Paris Agreement.¹⁶ Although global clean energy investments have seen a steady rise since 2020, these investments are concentrated among wealthy nations, with two-thirds of the global population accounting for only 15 percent of global clean energy investments.¹⁷

The Administration should support just transition initiatives on both a wholesale and retail basis—including Just Energy Transition Partnerships—for developing countries that are dependent on fossil fuel generation and exports, in order to facilitate an economic shift towards alternative sources of revenue and development of clean energy infrastructure.

Prioritization of Climate Adaptation & Resilience

<https://doi.org/10.51414/sei2023.050>.

¹⁴ Gautam Naik & Natasha White, *Junk Offsets Are Feeding Wave of Greenwashing, Study Shows*, Bloomberg (Aug. 24, 2023), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-08-24/junk-offsets-are-feeding-mass-wave-of-greenwashing-study-shows>.

¹⁵ Araceli Fernández et al., *Net Zero Roadmap*, International Energy Agency (2023), https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/4d93d947-c78a-47a9-b223-603e6c3fc7d8/NetZeroRoadmap_AGlobalPathwaytoKeepthe1.5CGoalinReach-2023Update.pdf.

¹⁶ Principles for Net-Zero Financing & Investment, U.S. Department of the Treasury (Sep. 2023), <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/NetZeroPrinciples.pdf>.

¹⁷ Laura Cozzi et al., *World Energy Outlook 2023*, International Energy Agency (2023), <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/2b0ded44-6a47-495b-96d9-2fac0ac735a8/WorldEnergyOutlook2023.pdf>.

The summer of 2023 was the hottest on record.¹⁸ Extreme heat, flooding and other catastrophic climate-fueled weather events led to severe loss and destruction. Though climate change has no borders or boundaries, these events disproportionately impact the most vulnerable nations and communities. However, the nations that face the greatest burden of climate-fueled extreme weather are historically the lowest contributors towards global emissions.¹⁹ The United States, by contrast, has contributed nearly a quarter of all historical cumulative emissions.²⁰

Because the United States is by far the largest historical emitter, we urge the Administration to support the development of a framework for a loss and damage fund that best serves the capabilities and needs of the world's most vulnerable nations. Principles of "historical responsibility" and "differentiated capability" should be centered in all climate finance negotiations and discussions taking place at COP28, and innovative approaches to climate finance, such as debt-for-adaptation swaps, should be embraced. Potential recipients of resources for resilience, losses, and damages should play a significant role in the fund's design and operation. Governments, alongside public finance institutions, should contribute grant-based and concessional public financing, as well as work to demonstrate the economic consequences of climate risk in order to leverage and encourage additional private sector involvement.

The work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was created under the 2015 Paris Agreement, and is meant to improve adaptation posture and resilience to climate change on the local, country, and global level.²¹ During COP28 discussions around the development of a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation, we encourage the Administration to advocate for specific goals and reporting metrics for resilience and adaptation initiatives. The framework should be centered on solutions that are community-led and contextually determined, and should address both short- and long-term resilience building.

This year's COP presents a unique opportunity for the Administration to accelerate momentum built over previous UNFCCC events. To meet the Paris Agreement goals and the 1.5°C emission timelines, we must lead the way in increasing country-level commitments, phasing out fossil fuel projects and financing, improving international climate and clean energy financing, and supporting global adaptation initiatives. We urge the Biden administration to lead as a strong negotiator for global policies that will bring swift, tangible improvement in climate resilience and clean energy deployment.

We thank the Administration for its leadership thus far in combating the climate crisis, and look forward to collaborating with you in championing these issues at COP28.

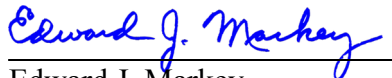
¹⁸ *NASA Announces Summer 2023 Hottest on Record*, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Sept. 14, 2023), <https://climate.nasa.gov/news/3282/nasa-announces-summer-2023-hottest-on-record/>.


¹⁹ Hoesung Lee et al., *AR6 Synthesis Report*, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023), https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf.


²⁰ Nadja Popovich and Brad Plumer, *Who Has The Most Historical Responsibility for Climate Change?*, The New York Times (Nov. 12, 2023), <https://nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/12/climate/cop26-emissions-compensation.html>.

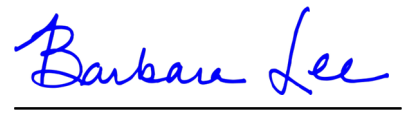
²¹ *Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation*, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/glasgow-sharm-el-sheikh-WP-GGGA>.


Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

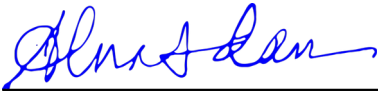

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

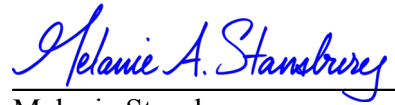

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Robert Garcia
Member of Congress

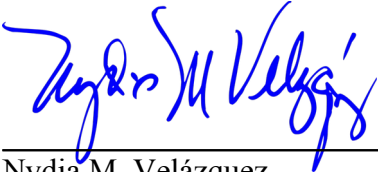

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



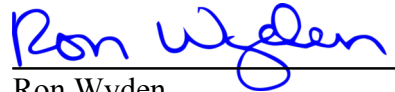
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



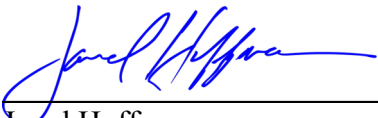
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



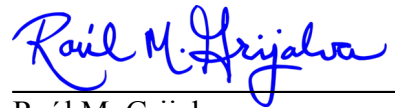
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Summer Lee
Member of Congress



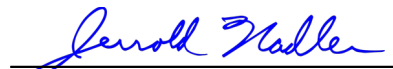
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



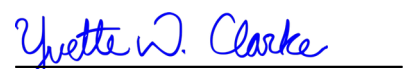
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



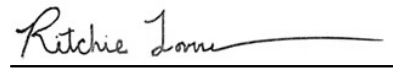
Grace Meng
Member of Congress




Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress