

**An Open Letter to the Biden Administration and Congress
from U.S. Scientists on the Need for Urgent Climate Action**

August 6th, 2021

To: President Joe Biden

National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy
National Economic Council Director Brian Deese
Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy

As our nation reels from [extreme heat waves](#), [drought](#), wildfires, and abnormally [warm ocean waters](#) fueled an [early start](#) to a projected [more active than normal](#) Atlantic hurricane season, we are reminded that climate change is here and already exerting a fearsome toll on people, critical ecosystems, and our economy. **Your leadership is urgently needed to seize the small window of opportunity that remains to limit the most catastrophic impacts of climate change now and for future generations.**

Science shows that we must take immediate action to sharply reduce heat-trapping emissions to limit the worst climate change impacts, protect public health and lives, and limit economic harms. We also have a tremendous opportunity to invest in a climate-resilient economy, powered by clean energy, which can bring benefits to all communities in a just and equitable way, as outlined in the [original American Jobs Plan](#). To size the level of action to the scope of the problem requires a robust scale of investment in climate related priorities.

Now is the time for Congress and the Biden administration to act, working together to implement a [range of robust and necessary climate solutions](#).

The climate crisis demands cleaning up the power sector by enacting and implementing robust power sector emissions reduction targets of [80 percent below 2005 levels by 2030](#) and 100 percent reductions soon thereafter, designed and funded in such a way as to drive renewables online, while minimizing ratepayer impacts. Ways to do so include:

- Implementing a program to achieve robust power sector emissions reductions
- Fully funding clean energy tax incentives
- Bolstering transmission development and grid modernization
- Facilitating the replacement of polluting resources with clean alternatives
- Supporting a [fair transition](#) for fossil fuel workers and communities
- Improving the efficiency of our energy *use*, for example through funding low-income home energy and weatherization assistance programs.

We also need the swift electrification of the transportation sector, through both standards that will both reduce pollution and [drive electrification](#) and Congressional investment in:

- Helping transit agencies and school districts buy electric buses
- Incentivizing electric vehicle (EV) purchases
- Electrifying medium- and heavy-duty vehicles
- Deploying EV charging infrastructure

As we make swift and deep emissions reductions, communities are already facing climate impacts and need federal policies and investments to help prepare and protect them. **They [need adaptation assistance now](#), including through:**

- Funding to prepare for and recover from disasters
- Establishing a Civilian Climate Corps to promote community-level climate resilience
- Investing in public health protections for communities and outdoor workers coping with extreme heat, wildfires, flooding, intensifying storms and extreme events worsened by climate change

Despite a brief dip due to the COVID-19 pandemic, global heat-trapping emissions continue to rise leaving us far off track from the steep and swift reductions needed to stave off the worst impacts of climate change. We will not be able to change this trajectory without a robust global effort and full U.S. participation, consistent at minimum with the scale of federal ambition and investment proposed in the American Jobs Plan. Such investments are a significant down payment on the contribution of the United States towards meeting the Paris Agreement's primary goal of limiting warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

A [majority of U.S. residents](#) across the political spectrum have long supported bold action to ramp up clean energy and address the climate crisis. Making a sharp turn away from fossil fuels and toward clean energy; investing in climate resilient communities and infrastructure; and acting swiftly to protect our air, water, and land will [improve public health](#) and help limit climate damages, particularly for those in low-wealth communities and communities of color that face the most harmful impacts. Investing in a fair transition for coal-dependent workers and communities, as well as creating good quality jobs in manufacturing supply chains, especially in the rapidly growing clean energy and clean transportation sectors, will also advance a strong, resilient economy for all.

Meeting the challenge of this moment is a scientific, economic, and moral imperative. We urge you to go big on climate action and to do so now.

Sincerely,

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