

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space & Technology

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Chairwoman
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, and Committee Chairs,

We write to thank you for your continued leadership addressing the climate crisis and to discuss the importance of climate policy in our economic recovery. In this historic moment, our nation is facing interconnected crises—health, economic, racial, and climate—and like you, we believe we can help address them all by building back better as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This recovery will be our opportunity to justly and equitably rebuild and spur prosperity for decades to come. Central to this work will be developing a recovery plan that addresses climate change, and so we urge you to seek every possible opportunity to advance just climate investments and standards in our recovery. We know this work will not be easy, but we urge you, our leaders in the House, to work with stakeholders, the White House, and Senate leaders to do everything in your power to advance investments and standards that will help protect our communities for generations to come.

1) We must advocate for a fiscal stimulus that includes climate-smart investments and standards. We must direct funding towards projects and investments that create quality, family-sustaining jobs while reducing emissions and increasing our resilience across all sectors and

regions of the country. This should include critical investments in clean energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing. In addition to investments, our ability to meet our decarbonization goals will necessitate just climate standards. More than a decade ago, the Obama-Biden administration succeeded, with the support of our coalition and Democratic leadership, in securing important recovery funds for clean energy in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But we fell short in passing lasting standards, and unfortunately we have seen all of the standards created by the Obama-Biden administration rolled back under the Trump administration. We need just standards to provide an enduring roadmap for the country to achieve our emission reduction goals and a clean economy for all. And importantly, federal standards that move us towards a zero-carbon economy will help create more jobs—fostering a long-term recovery and moving America ahead in the global race to be a leader in clean energy innovation.

2) Policies to address climate change must be immediate. There is no time left to delay action on climate change by a year or a congressional term. The planet is ringing all the alarm bells it has, from fires ravaging the West, to hurricanes bombarding the Gulf, to record ice melt at the poles. Nothing short of a safe and livable planet for our children and our children's children is at stake.

3) Our policies must be just and equitable. We believe this turning point presents a historic opportunity and responsibility to correct long-standing racial and economic injustices. We know that climate change is disproportionately impacting low-income communities, communities of color, and Tribal and Indigenous communities, and that it will continue to hurt these communities first and worst. But we also know that Black and Brown communities, Tribal and Indigenous communities, lower-wealth neighborhoods, and other underserved communities have long suffered disproportionately from the cumulative impacts of pollution. We support policies to include a prioritization of funding and long-neglected protections for environmental justice communities, and critically important, we support early and meaningful consultation with these communities in drafting policies. We must also prioritize policies to help us address decades of increasing income inequality that are eroding our democracy and our middle class. We can and must ensure that we are creating good jobs by working directly with labor union partners and working Americans to draft policies that will ensure the creation of family-sustaining jobs, wage growth, and critical labor protections. Equally important, we must also work directly with those in deindustrialized communities and energy sector workers who have experienced job loss to ensure support for workers, their families, and their communities. Finally, our work must also ensure polluter accountability. For too long, energy companies have received federal subsidies while the cost of their pollution has been born by the rest of us, and most acutely by frontline communities. We need a new policy paradigm that ends fossil fuel subsidies, puts in place stronger pollution limits, and requires companies to take responsibility for their pollution.

Science tells us that the narrow window of opportunity to protect the planet is closing fast, and the American people are demanding that we save the planet before it is too late. We saw climate change featured in this election unlike any other before it. It was a focal point of the presidential debates and a centerpiece of President Biden's campaign in which he proposed the boldest climate plan ever put forward by a presidential nominee. The past four years have also seen record levels of engagement on climate change from companies, states, local governments, and the American public. And most importantly, we have heard the resounding voices of America's

youth and young people across the globe demanding that the planet be protected for their futures as it was for ours. The clear laggard has been the federal government, which must now take its place as a leader in addressing the climate crisis if we are going to protect the planet.

As a coalition, SEEC includes members across the ideological spectrum of the Democratic Party, as well as members with diverse backgrounds and diverse constituencies. What unites us is our commitment to advancing just policies to address the climate crisis. We urge you to keep this time-sensitive priority at the top of your agenda as you continue to discuss plans for a legislative agenda with the Biden-Harris administration.

This moment is unlike any other, and our coalition stands ready to work with you in seizing it for the betterment of all humanity.

Sincerely,



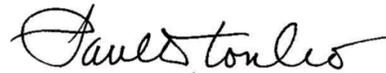
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