

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 13, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to convey our grave concern that time is running out for the United States to work to reverse and mitigate the worst effects of a warming climate. We ask that you heed the dire warning of the Fourth National Climate Assessment and work with us to protect the health of our planet.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) released the second volume of the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA) on a holiday weekend, which appeared to be in an effort to minimize the findings. It is the most comprehensive science-based evaluation of the consequences of climate change, the risks of inaction, and potential adaptation strategies for the United States to date. The NCA adds to the overwhelming research indicating that the consequences of inaction on climate change will be serious and swift. According to the NCA, without intervention, we will see record heat waves, more acidic oceans, raging wildfires, rising sea levels, and a surge in extreme weather events – all in our lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

The United States has the ability and the obligation to lead the world's efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, but in June of 2017 you announced plans to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accord.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the United States has fallen far behind the pledges made in the Paris Agreement and is unlikely to meet the targets set by 2025.<sup>3</sup> Air and water pollution do not recognize international borders. This decision weakens our standing with international allies and further endangers our planet. According to new research from the Global Carbon Project, global carbon dioxide emissions are projected to increase by 2.7 percent in 2018 alone.<sup>4</sup> As negotiations continue at the 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United States must show leadership and take meaningful steps to sharply reduce emissions.

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<sup>1</sup> "Fourth National Climate Assessment Summary Findings." U.S. Global Change Research Program. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> "Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord." June 1, 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/>

<sup>3</sup> "Emissions Gap Report 2018." United Nations Environment Programme, November 2018. [http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26895/EGR2018\\_FullReport\\_EN.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26895/EGR2018_FullReport_EN.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

<sup>4</sup> "Global Carbon Budget 2018" December 5, 2018. <https://www.earth-syst-sci-data.net/10/2141/2018/essd-10-2141-2018.pdf>

We should be encouraging states to meet carbon emission reduction standards based on energy consumption, and we should incentivize investment in renewable energy. Fossil fuel-fired power plants, which would continue to pollute under the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Affordable Clean Energy rule, would exacerbate and accelerate the effects of climate change. Even the Agency's own analysis found that the proposed rule will have negative effects on public health, leading to as many as 1,400 additional premature deaths per year.<sup>5</sup> Proposals that increase emissions of dangerous pollutants and harm public health should be resoundingly rejected.

Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation have proposed regulations to roll back our greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles. Transportation is a significant source of greenhouse gas pollution in the country, and fuel economy and vehicle emissions standards are effective policies to combat climate change and avoid adverse public health risks. Climate change and hazardous air pollutants disproportionately affect our most vulnerable communities, and these rules are particularly concerning for those communities.

Also, methane has the potential to warm the planet by up to 86 times as much as carbon dioxide.<sup>6</sup> Alarming, methane accounts for nearly 10 percent of annual U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>7</sup> Yet recently, the EPA and the Bureau of Land Management proposed rules to weaken methane leak monitoring and repair requirements for oil and gas operations and eviscerate measures designed to reduce methane venting, flaring, and leaks from oil and gas operations on public lands. These proposals once again demonstrate that the Administration is putting special interests ahead of safeguarding public health and access to clean air and clean water.

Finally, the National Climate Assessment makes clear that greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the only explanation for the observed global warming over the last six decades. Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere are now higher than at any time in the last three million years, and we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>8</sup> Climate change will harm air quality by increasing ground-level ozone and particulate matter, and it will threaten water supplies.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the EPA is also trying to weaken permitting safeguards and eliminate limits on hazardous pollutants, undermine landmark mercury and air toxic standards for power plants, and weaken a clean water rule that protects water bodies that supply drinking water to tens of millions of people.

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<sup>5</sup> "Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Proposed Emission Guidelines for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Existing Electric Utility Generating Units; Revisions to Emission Guideline Implementing Regulations; Revisions to New Source Review Program" U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2018.

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/utilities\\_ria\\_proposed\\_ace\\_2018-08.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/utilities_ria_proposed_ace_2018-08.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> "How Bad of a Greenhouse Gas Is Methane?" *Scientific American*, December 22, 2015.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-bad-of-a-greenhouse-gas-is-methane/>

<sup>7</sup> "Overview of Greenhouse Gases - Methane Emissions." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

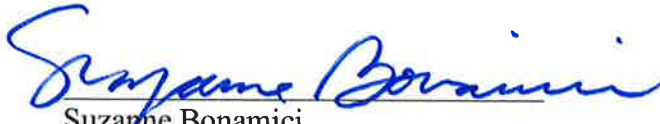
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases>


<sup>8</sup> "Fourth National Climate Assessment - Chapter 2: Our Changing Climate." U.S. Global Change Research Program. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/2/>

<sup>9</sup> "Fourth National Climate Assessment - Chapter 1: Overview." U.S. Global Change Research Program. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/1/>

Rather than ignoring the important findings of the NCA, we request that you reconsider maintaining the nation's commitment to the Paris Agreement and fully implement and enforce the Clean Power Plan, fuel economy standards, methane emission controls, and safeguards for clean air and clean water. We urge you to recognize the value of the NCA as a collaborative, peer-reviewed effort across federal agencies compiled by the nation's top scientists, and take seriously the grave warnings of the NCA by immediately enacting meaningful policies to protect the environment.

Sincerely,

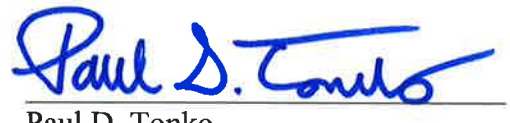
  
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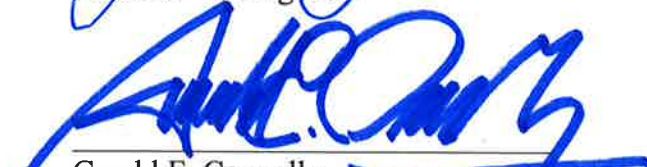
  
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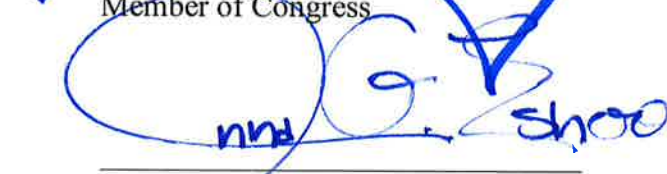
  
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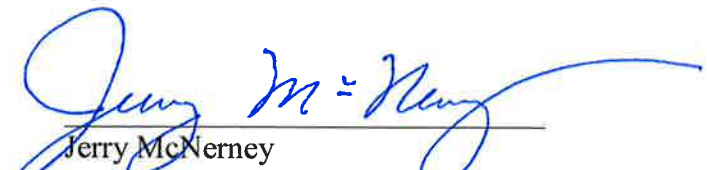
  
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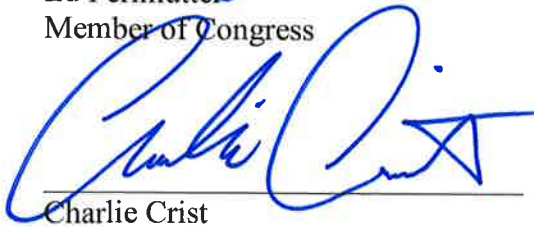
  
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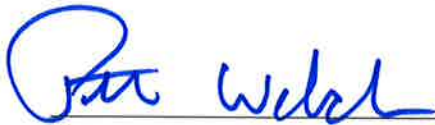
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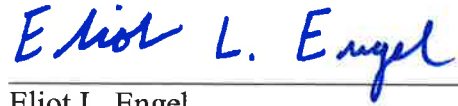
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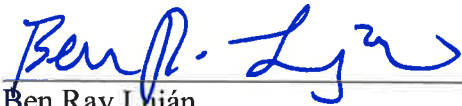
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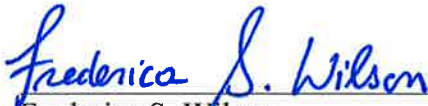
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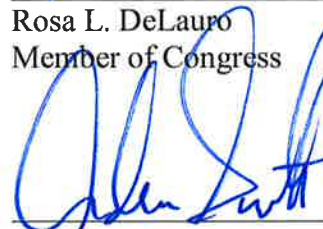
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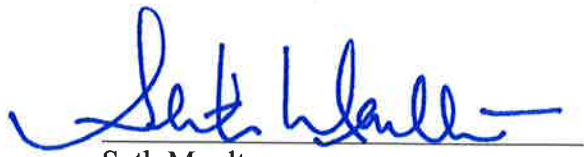
  
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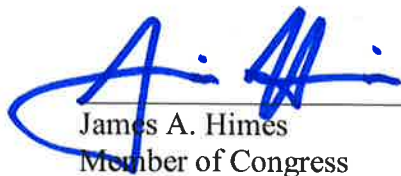
  
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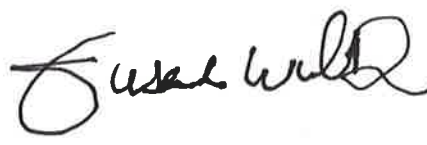
  
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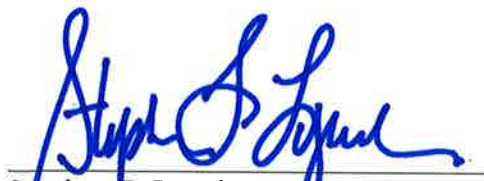
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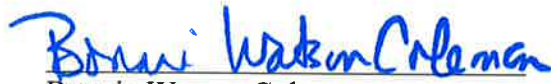


  
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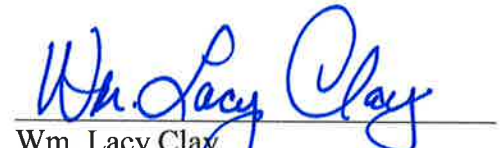
  
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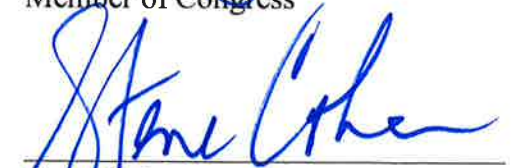
  
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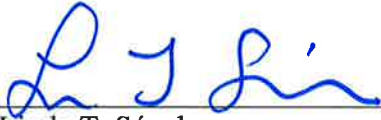
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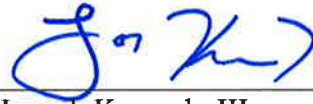
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