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November 14, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
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To: President Biden

We write to you in a year during which the world has witnessed an unprecedented spate of devastating climate-fueled disasters, alongside record-breaking global average temperatures and record levels of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations. As scientists deeply concerned about the acceleration of climate change and the huge shortfall in efforts thus far to address it, we call on you to commit to more ambitious actions from the United States in the lead-up to and at the annual United Nations climate conference, COP28, in Dubai at the end of this year. This is the best path to ensure commensurate ambition from other countries as we seek to solve this grave global challenge together.

From the beginning of your administration's term, you have elevated climate science and clearly communicated the seriousness of the climate crisis. You have secured important progress through the Inflation Reduction Act and regulations and administrative actions to limit heat-trapping emissions. Yet, under your administration, the United States remains a leading producer and exporter of fossil fuels, and our nation continues to fail to contribute its fair share of funding for global climate efforts. Meanwhile, the deeply inequitable nature of this crisis is causing mounting climate loss and damage to communities around the world that have contributed practically nothing to the problem. We urge you to increase the ambition of domestic climate action—including through accelerating a just and equitable clean energy transition, rejecting the expansion of new long-lived fossil fuel infrastructure, investing in climate resilience, and ramping up climate finance—while working toward the strongest possible agreement at COP28.

As scientists from multiple disciplines who study and understand climate impacts and solutions, we urge you to commit to the following actions to help ensure meaningful, comprehensive, and scientifically necessary progress at COP28:

- **Agree to a fast and fair phaseout of all fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas)**, with clear timelines and science-informed targets for the near and long term, and supported by finance for low- and middle-income countries for a clean energy transition. There are no plausible scenarios to stabilize global temperatures at well below 2° C and as close to 1.5° C as possible without dramatic reductions in global fossil fuel use, starting now. The transition away from coal and toward clean energy is well underway in the United States. Yet oil and gas corporations continue to expand production to record-breaking levels, undermining climate goals, and deepening harm and environmental injustices in communities near fossil fuel infrastructure.
- **Ramp up climate finance for low- and middle-income countries** so they can also make a clean energy transition expeditiously, reaping tremendous public health and economic benefits while also contributing to climate goals. The global clean energy transition must advance economic, environmental, and social justice, and ensure access to safe and reliable energy for people around the world, especially those living in poverty. At the same time, climate-vulnerable countries need scaled-up funding for adaptation so they can be more resilient in the face of the worsening climate crisis. The United States has repeatedly fallen short in its commitments to climate finance, which undermines our credibility on the global stage and impedes our ability to build trust with partner nations.
- **Operationalize the Loss and Damage Fund**, working together with other countries, so it can quickly be resourced and provide funding for low- and middle-income nations reeling from extreme climate impacts for which ordinary adaptation measures are no longer feasible. Establishing this fund was a crucial breakthrough at

COP27 last year, and the Transitional Committee is drafting recommendations for operationalizing it at COP28. The United States must play a constructive role in ensuring that the Fund moves forward with a robust and inclusive governance structure, and a clear commitment from the United States and other rich countries to live up to their responsibilities to pay into it, including through levies on fossil fuel polluters.

- **Protect international climate negotiations from fossil fuel industry interference and corporate disinformation and greenwashing.** The presence of fossil fuel interests has been growing rapidly at recent COPs, and their influence is demonstrably harmful to ambitious climate action. For decades, fossil fuel companies, their surrogates and allies have lied about climate science and obstructed climate policies. They pay lip service to net-zero goals while continuing to grow their profits and expand their polluting operations. With this year's COP being held in the United Arab Emirates under a COP presidency whose fossil fuel interests run counter to necessary climate action, it is vital that the United States publicly resist interference by fossil fuel interests, as well as greenwashing that delays or impedes a fossil fuel phaseout, in the final agreement at COP28, and beyond.

We call on you and your administration to make these commitments so that together, the global community can greatly improve the chances of preserving a safe and healthy future for people and the planet. The actions of the United States—as the world's wealthiest nation and the single largest contributor to historical heat-trapping emissions—matter greatly. And if our country acts boldly and fairly, we can unlock greater ambition from other nations. The world is watching, and this is a crucial moment for the United States to join with other world leaders and demonstrate genuine progress toward solving a crisis that is rapidly spiraling out of control.

Signed,

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