

December 11, 2020

Dear President-Elect Biden:

As we approach the anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement on December 12, faith-based organizations recognize that this historic agreement is an invaluable step towards addressing climate change. The withdrawal of the United States from this agreement was detrimental to both this country and the world. We applaud commitments by President-elect Biden to rejoin the Paris Agreement. The United States must implement the necessary measures to ensure that this country does its part in lowering greenhouse gas emissions by investing in more clean energy and electricity, and preventing the global temperature from rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Holding global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius requires transformative action here in the U.S. as well as support for our sisters and brothers worldwide through investment in climate finance as they seek to develop sustainable, low-carbon economies.

As religious communities representing a broad spectrum of faith traditions, we know that we have the responsibility to care for the earth and protect human health, especially the most vulnerable. Our faith teaches us to be just with others and we cannot practice justice without safeguarding the health of all those around us. Our care for others is integral to our care for the earth, as it is a reciprocal relationship that humans have with the earth.

Although the U.S. announced its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement in 2017, our faith communities have continued the environmental and ecological work to address climate change and advocate for climate action. Our communities and organizations have been working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by, among other things, transitioning to alternative energy sources, improving the energy efficiency of our buildings, growing gardens for community food security, and addressing the sustainability of transportation.

Rejoining the Paris Agreement complements the work of religious communities, businesses, educational institutions and the health care sector in addressing climate change. These efforts to address climate change across multiple sectors must include increasing the U.S.' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The original goal of the U.S.' NDC was to reduce our national emissions to 26-28% below 2005 levels. In 2015, the U.S. agreed to meet its goal in nine years. Just four years remain to achieve it. To keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, we must make far more ambitious cuts.

We appreciate your commitment to rejoin the Paris Agreement and, in line with the provisions of the Agreement, urge you to increase the ambition of the U.S. NDC by COP26, so that our country can get back on track in addressing climate change.

Sincerely,

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Creation Justice Ministries

Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Church World Service
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faithful America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Interfaith Power & Light
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Maryknoll Sisters Eastern Region USA
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church North America
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Environmental Justice Ministry of the United Church of Christ
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Women
Young Evangelicals for Climate Action