

**1 Sky...ActionAid USA...Avaaz.org...CARE  
Center for International Environmental Law...Center for Biological Diversity  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network...Clean Water Action  
Climate Action Network International...Climate Solutions  
Climate Law & Policy Project...Conservation International...Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice...EcoEquity...Education for Global Warming Solutions...EESI  
Energy Action...ENE (Environment Northeast)...Environment America  
Environmental Defense Fund...Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Fresh Energy...Friends of the Earth...Green For All...Greenpeace...ICLEI-USA  
Institute for Policy Studies...Interfaith Power and Light  
International Forum on Globalization...International Rivers  
League of Conservation Voters...National Audubon Society  
Natural Resources Defense Council...National Wildlife Federation...Oceana  
Oil Change International...Oxfam America...Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Pew Environment Group...Sierra Club...Southern Alliance for Clean Energy  
Sustainable Obtainable Solutions...The Nature Conservancy  
Union of Concerned Scientists...US Climate Action Network...World Wildlife Fund**

June 26, 2009

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to urge you to work with other world leaders at the upcoming G8 Summit to set a strong science-based goal for reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases aimed at keeping the increase of global average surface temperature, compared to pre-industrial levels, as far below 2 degrees Celsius/3.6 degrees Fahrenheit as possible.

Global warming will have severe (in many cases catastrophic) impacts on populations and countries throughout the world, including the US. The United States, along with 192 other nations, has committed itself to the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: achieving stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Failure to limit warming to 2 degrees Celsius will have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable nations and communities and will dramatically increase the need for adaptation in the future.

The recent U.S. Global Change Research Program report makes it clear that there is no escaping global warming. Heat waves will become more frequent and intense; increased heavy downpours will lead to more flooding, waterborne diseases, and negative effects on agriculture; rising water temperatures and ocean acidification will threaten coral reefs and the rich ecosystems they support; and local sea-level rise of over three feet on top of storm surges will increasingly threaten homes and other coastal infrastructure. The report also summarizes the latest climate change scenarios and concludes, "Resulting temperature changes depend on atmospheric concentrations

of greenhouse gases and particles and the climate's sensitivity to those concentrations...only the 450 ppm stabilization target has the potential to keep the global temperature rise at or below about 3.5°F from pre-industrial levels and 2°F above the current average temperature, a level beyond which many concerns have been raised about dangerous human interference with the climate system. Scenarios that stabilize carbon dioxide below 450 ppm offer an increased chance of avoiding dangerous climate change."

Our landmark U.S. environmental laws are founded on the best science and the pragmatic goal of designing policies that are capable of solving the problem. The goal of the Clean Water Act is for all waters to be fishable and swimmable. The goal of the Clean Air Act is to promote the public health and welfare and requires our regulations to "accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge." Our domestic global warming policies, as well as the international agreements we sign, should be aimed at protecting our population and broader national interests, as well as protecting the world's most vulnerable communities from the worst impacts of climate change. Staying below the 2°C/3.6°F target is a key guide post to measure our efforts to tackle global warming pollution. While the laws and regulations on the books may not always achieve these goals as quickly or as completely as we might hope, this guide post will keep us vigilant in reviewing and renewing our efforts.

Some 124 countries, along with scientists and citizen groups here in the United States and around the world, have called for holding global temperature increase below 2°C. Staying below 2°C is the stated goal of the American Clean Energy and Security Act that passed out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, as well as the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act of 2007, which you co-sponsored as a Senator. This goal was also the basis for the climate and energy recommendations to your transition team from the 29 largest U.S. environmental, conservation, and development organizations.

The G8 Summit and the Major Economies Forum on Climate and Energy in Italy next month will provide the opportunity to forge an important consensus among key nations toward a new global climate agreement in Copenhagen. The statements emerging from those meetings must reassure citizens in the United States and around the world that our leaders understand the threat that is before us and are courageously taking the steps necessary to protect us. Here at home, you have committed to develop and implement a comprehensive clean energy plan that will generate jobs, reduce dependence on oil, and reduce carbon pollution. By stating your commitment to keeping global average temperature rise compared to pre-industrial levels below 2°C/3.6°F, and working with other leaders at the G8 and MEF to affirm this goal, you will take an important step towards making sure the global climate agreement in Copenhagen this December helps achieve your goal of protecting Americans, and the rest of the world, from the worst potential effects of climate change.

Sincerely,

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Tom Athanasiou,  
Executive Director  
EcoEquity

Peter Bahouth  
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US Climate Action Network

Francis Beinecke  
President  
Natural Resources Defense Council

The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham  
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Interfaith Power and Light

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Greenpeace  
~~Joseph S. Reichert~~  
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