

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

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President-elect of the United States  
Biden-Harris Transition  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President-elect Biden:

Congratulations on your well fought victory. We look forward to working with you and your incoming administration. We commend you for your public commitments to rejoin the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Addressing the climate crisis is one of the most pressing challenges for our country and the world. Failing to act not only threatens the health of our natural resources, but our national security and long-term economic growth. Multilateral environmental agreements (“MEAs”) play an important role in protecting our environment for future generations. Therefore, we strongly urge you to take your commitment to rejoin the Paris Agreement one step further by working with Canada and Mexico to amend USMCA Article 24.8 (4) to include the Paris Agreement in the list of MEAs covered by the renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement (“NAFTA”).

As you know, on December 12, 2015, the international community reached a landmark global climate agreement to combat climate change. This agreement was intended to marshal the international community behind intensifying investments needed to keep a global temperature rise well below two degrees Celsius (above pre-industrial levels) and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This agreement is a strong global response to the threat of climate change which acknowledges that all:

“Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.”<sup>i</sup>

By announcing the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, Donald Trump ignored the science and reality of climate change’s impacts. House Democrats in the 116th Congress attempted to reassert America’s commitment to the international community by passing H.R. 9, the Climate Action Now Act.<sup>ii</sup>

While there is little question that international trade contributes to the negative impacts of climate change, our trade agreements fail to even mention climate change, much less meaningfully and adequately address climate change contributors, like illegal deforestation and air pollution. The volume of global trade has more than tripled since 1994, when the original NAFTA went into

effect. Over that same time period, annual global carbon emissions have increased by more than 60 percent. The Trump administration did nothing to reverse these trends in its initial renegotiation of NAFTA.

The final renegotiated NAFTA commits the United States, Canada, and Mexico to adopt, implement, and maintain seven MEAs.<sup>iii</sup> Pursuant to Article 24.8.5, a process was established for all signatories to add additional MEAs covered under the agreement.<sup>iv</sup> That list should be amended to include the Paris Agreement. Such an action would help restore the United States' role as a leader in addressing the climate crisis and demonstrate how trade agreements can be utilized to advance climate goals. Further, the renegotiated NAFTA provides a unique opportunity for the United States, Canada, and Mexico to strengthen North American cooperation and prioritization in addressing environmental harms and ensure all parties are held accountable for promises made under the Paris Agreement.

Our constituents and communities feel the negative impacts of our changing climate. Sea levels are rising at alarming rates.<sup>v</sup> Natural disasters are becoming more frequent.<sup>vi</sup> Extreme weather events are disrupting lives, causing economic hardship, and increasing the financial pressure for individuals and all levels of government.<sup>vii</sup> To address these existential threats to humanity, we must use all tools at our disposal.

Binding climate standards that protect the environment and our communities are one such tool needed in our trade agreements. Including enforceable environmental standards in our trade agreements creates more equitable competition between the United States and our trading partners. Establishing binding climate standards in agreements between our trading partners is needed to create a deterrence for companies that are not conscious of their social and environmental impact from being incentivized to using our trade agreements to take their manufacturing elsewhere.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to our request to engage our North American allies on our common agenda of addressing climate change through enforceable trade agreements. Including the Paris Agreement in the list of MEAs covered by the renegotiated NAFTA is an opportunity for the United States, Canada, and Mexico to show global leadership in collectively tackling the climate crisis. We are eager to work with you and the incoming administration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the climate crisis with the absolute urgency it demands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr." in a cursive script.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/ Colin Allred Member of Congress	/s/ Tony Cárdenas Member of Congress	/s/ Gerald E. Connolly Member of Congress
/s/ Jake Auchincloss Member of Congress	/s/ André Carson Member of Congress	/s/ Danny K. Davis Member of Congress
/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán Member of Congress	/s/ Ed Case Member of Congress	/s/ Madeleine Dean Member of Congress
/s/ Ami Bera, M.D. Member of Congress	/s/ Sean Casten Member of Congress	/s/ Peter A. DeFazio Member of Congress
/s/ Earl Blumenauer Member of Congress	/s/ Kathy Castor Member of Congress	/s/ Rosa L. DeLauro Member of Congress
/s/ Suzanne Bonamici Member of Congress	/s/ Judy Chu Member of Congress	/s/ Suzan Delbene Member of Congress
/s/ Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D. Member of Congress	/s/ David Cicilline Member of Congress	/s/ Mark DeSaulnier Member of Congress
/s/ Brendan F. Boyle Member of Congress	/s/ Katherine Clark Member of Congress	/s/ Theodore E. Deutch Member of Congress
/s/ Julia Brownley Member of Congress	/s/ Yvette D. Clarke Member of Congress	/s/ Debbie Dingell Member of Congress
/s/ Cori Bush Member of Congress	/s/ Emanuel Cleaver II Member of Congress	/s/ Lloyd Doggett Member of Congress
/s/ Salud Carbajal Member of Congress	/s/ Steve Cohen Member of Congress	/s/ Michael F. Doyle Member of Congress

/s/ Veronica Escobar Member of Congress	/s/ Steven Horsford Member of Congress	/s/ Derek Kilmer Member of Congress
/s/ Adriano Espaillat Member of Congress	/s/ Jared Huffman Member of Congress	/s/ Andy Kim Member of Congress
/s/ Dwight Evans Member of Congress	/s/ Sara Jacobs Member of Congress	/s/ Raja Krishnamoorthi Member of Congress
/s/ Ruben Gallego Member of Congress	/s/ Pramila Jayapal Member of Congress	/s/ Conor Lamb Member of Congress
/s/ Jimmy Gomez Member of Congress	/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. Member of Congress	/s/ Rick Larsen Member of Congress
/s/ Josh Gottheimer Member of Congress	/s/ Mondaire Jones Member of Congress	/s/ John Larson Member of Congress
/s/ Raul Grijalva Member of Congress	/s/ Kaiali'i Kahele Member of Congress	/s/ Brenda L. Lawrence Member of Congress
/s/ Alcee L. Hastings Member of Congress	/s/ Marcy Kaptur Member of Congress	/s/ Barbara Lee Member of Congress
/s/ Jahana Hayes Member of Congress	/s/ William R. Keating Member of Congress	/s/ Andy Levin Member of Congress
/s/ Brian Higgins Member of Congress	/s/ Ro Khanna Member of Congress	/s/ Ted Lieu Member of Congress
/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton Member of Congress	/s/ Daniel T. Kildee Member of Congress	/s/ Alan Lowenthal Member of Congress

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch Member of Congress	/s/ Frank Pallone, Jr. Member of Congress	/s/ Bobby L. Rush Member of Congress
/s/ Tom Malinowski Member of Congress	/s/ Jimmy Panetta Member of Congress	/s/ Tim Ryan Member of Congress
/s/ Betty McCollum Member of Congress	/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr. Member of Congress	/s/ Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan Member of Congress
/s/ A. Donald McEachin Member of Congress	/s/ Chellie Pingree Member of Congress	/s/ Linda T. Sanchez Member of Congress
/s/ James P. McGovern Member of Congress	/s/ Mark Pocan Member of Congress	/s/ John P. Sarbanes Member of Congress
/s/ Jerry McNerney Member of Congress	/s/ Ayanna Pressley Member of Congress	/s/ Janice D. Schakowsky Member of Congress
/s/ Grace Meng Member of Congress	/s/ David E. Price Member of Congress	/s/ Bradley S. Schneider Member of Congress
/s/ Gwen Moore Member of Congress	/s/ Mike Quigley Member of Congress	/s/ Robert C. "Bobby" Scott Member of Congress
/s/ Joseph D. Morelle Member of Congress	/s/ Jamie Raskin Member of Congress	/s/ Terri Sewell Member of Congress
/s/ Grace Napolitano Member of Congress	/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard Member of Congress	/s/ Brad Sherman Member of Congress
/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Member of Congress	/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger Member of Congress	/s/ Mikie Sherrill Member of Congress

<u>/s/</u> Albio Sires Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Bennie G. Thompson Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Juan Vargas Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Adam Smith Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Dina Titus Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Nydia Velázquez Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Abigail D. Spanberger Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Rashida Tlaib Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Debbie Wasserman Schultz Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Jackie Speier Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Paul Tonko Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Bonnie Watson-Coleman Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Marilyn Strickland Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Ritchie Torres Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Peter Welch Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Thomas R. Suozzi Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Lori Trahan Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Susan Wild Member of Congress
<u>/s/</u> Mike Thompson Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> David Trone Member of Congress	<u>/s/</u> Nikema Williams Member of Congress
		<u>/s/</u> John Yarmuth Member of Congress

<sup>i</sup> [https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris\\_nov\\_2015/application/pdf/paris\\_agreement\\_english\\_.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english_.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/9>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/agreements/FTA/USMCA/Text/24-Environment.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid

---

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-sea-level>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.edf.org/climate/climate-change-and-extreme-weather>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/11/21/477190/climate-change-threatens-stability-financial-system/>