

March 2nd, 2021

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
National Climate Advisor
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Jane Nishida
Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable John Kerry
Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. McCarthy, Ms. Nishida, and Mr. Kerry,

We are writing on behalf of students and student governments at 42 universities representing over 800,000 students. We support proactive policies to mitigate the effects of climate change and to promote the study and monitoring of climate change and its effects. **We sincerely thank the Biden administration for prioritizing this issue and for its recent initial steps to combat the climate crisis.**

As future leaders of research, we strongly support the administration's ongoing efforts to integrate climate change into foreign policy and to set ambitious renewable energy and emissions targets. We further encourage the administration to promote and fund rigorous climate research and to prioritize emissions-cutting policies to make the US a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Efforts to monitor climate change and understand its effects require promoting rigorous and well funded research. Specifically, we recommend:

1. **Expanding fellowships for graduate students focused on understanding and addressing the climate crisis.** Graduate students are developing climate-related research projects including [developing more accurate atmospheric models](#) and [effects of air pollution on mortality in the US](#), among [many others](#), efforts which will be vital for understanding the effects of the changing climate, mitigating the pace of climate change, and increasing climate resilience. [Graduate and postdoctoral fellowships at the Department of Energy](#) focused on renewable energy and energy efficiency should be expanded, and fellowship programs at institutions which play a crucial role in addressing climate change, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Defense, should consider climate-related work to be high-priority areas.
2. **Abandon [EPA rule 86 FR 469](#) so as not to hinder the use of science in environmental regulations.** While this rule nominally seeks to strengthen transparency in science used for regulatory action, it [does not have the support of the scientific community](#), and the rule as currently implemented [hinders the ability of science to be used in critical regulations for public health](#) and risks politicizing EPA regulations due to [ambiguity in proposed methods for independent validation and identification of rule exceptions](#).
3. **Increased investment research and development, specifically in the area of energy efficiency, to reach clean energy goals.** Policy and industry experts agree that to achieve the administration's goals of decarbonizing the economy, [increased investment in research development is needed over the coming decade](#). Movement towards electrifying the

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transportation and home heating sectors will cause demand on the electricity sector to grow. Robust energy efficiency investments, both research and deployment, will make the transition to an electrified economy easier, faster, and cheaper.

We support the administration's broader efforts to prioritize urgent actions to mitigate climate change and to encourage further ambitious and concerted policies. Specifically we recommend:

4. **Set a carbon price specifically targeted at achieving emissions reduction goals.** While potential carbon pricing schemes vary widely, [policy experts have devised pricing schemes](#) that are specifically targeted at adjusting pricing over time to achieve net-zero emission goals. The [Chamber of Commerce and others in the business community](#) are supportive of carbon pricing as a form of climate action, as it encourages private sector innovation in tackling emissions.
5. **Set legally binding interim goals for renewable energy consumption and emissions reduction in-line with scientific consensus.** To limit the probability of warming beyond 1.5 °C, [steady declines in emission reductions must be achieved continually](#) over the next 3 decades, necessitating aggressive and legally binding interim emissions cutting goals. Experts show that these goals can be achieved by [large and continual investments in renewable energy infrastructure](#) over the next decade while simultaneously creating hundreds of thousands of jobs each year.
6. **Increase the US commitment to the Green Climate Fund set up by the Paris Accord.** Climate change is going to require emission reductions from many nations and have adverse impacts on communities around the world. The US should strive to be a global climate leader by supporting climate mitigation and adaptation infrastructure projects in other nations, a commitment which benefits all global citizens and [comes at a low cost to the US taxpayer](#).
7. **Investigate how changes to travel, work, and transportation could promote emissions reductions, drawing lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.** The Federal government should consider how changes such as remote-attendance options for conferences, encouraging public transit as a recommended method for employee travel, and equitable approaches to remote work could reduce the government's carbon footprint and spur broader emissions reductions in society.

We look forward to working with the Biden administration to increase research and development in climate change-related issues and pursue aggressive emission-cutting policies. If you would like to know more about the role of graduate students in climate change-related research and our recommended policies to combat this crisis as members of the generation who will bear the brunt of climate change, please reach out to us at gsc-eab-fed@mit.edu or gsa-vpea@andrew.cmu.edu.

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On behalf of:

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Brandeis University Graduate Student Association
Brown University Graduate Student Council
Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Assembly
Case Western Reserve University Graduate Student Council
Chicago Graduate Student Association
Council of Graduate Students at Missouri S&T
CUNY Climate Coalition
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice Student Council
CUNY School of Public Health Graduate Student Government Association
Duke University Graduate and Professional Student Government
Georgia Tech Graduate Student Government Association
Graduate and Professional Student Assembly at the University of Pennsylvania
Graduate and Professional Student Government Association, Oklahoma State University
Graduate Student Council of the California Institute of Technology
Harvard Graduate Council
Iowa State University Graduate and Professional Student Senate
John Jay College Student Council and CUNY University Student Senate
Lehigh University Graduate Student Senate
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Graduate Student Council
Miami University Graduate Student Association
Pacific University Professional Student Senate
Rutgers Graduate Student Association
Sacred Heart Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Stony Brook Graduate Student Organization (SB GSO)
Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional Student Government
The University of Arizona, Graduate & Professional Student Council
UC Berkeley's The Graduate Assembly
UNC Charlotte Graduate and Professional Student Government

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University of Arkansas Graduate-Professional Student Congress
University of California Riverside Graduate Student Association
University of Colorado - Boulder Graduate and Professional Student Government
University of Connecticut Graduate Student Senate
University of Delaware Graduate Student Government
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Graduate Student Organization
University of Kentucky's Graduate Student Congress
University of Maryland Baltimore Graduate Student Association
University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, Graduate Student Senate
University of Michigan Ann Arbor - Rackham Student Government
University of New England Graduate and Professional Student Association
University of Pittsburgh Graduate & Professional Student Government
University of Rochester Arts, Sciences & Engineering Graduate Student Association
University of Southern California Graduate Student Government Executive Board
Washington State University Graduate and Professional Student Association
Yale Graduate and Professional Student Senate