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July 15, 2010

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We are writing to you with an urgent request related to our national security, our country's moral and economic leadership, and America's standing in the world. As you work with your colleagues to develop climate and energy legislation to bring to the Senate floor, we urge you to ensure that the Senate bill includes key programs and investments for international action to combat climate change and its consequences.

Taking action internationally – including innovative adaptation solutions in countries hardest hit by climate impacts, cost-effective efforts to protect tropical forests, and the deployment of clean energy technologies – is essential to reinforcing and steering our country's global engagement on climate change. Senate legislation must set a framework to help mobilize international action to address a challenge that fundamentally requires a global solution.

Our leadership and effective engagement around the world can be a critical element in stimulating our economy here at home. International investments under a US climate and energy bill will create sizeable opportunities for American businesses and workers to tap into the growing global demand for green and climate-resilient investment. Reducing climate impacts and improving resiliency will also be critical for protecting the supply chains of many U.S. companies whose operations are increasingly affected by climate change.

Further, taking action on climate change is essential to effectively promote our national security and global stability. As recognized in the Quadrennial Defense Review, climate change “will contribute to food and water scarcity, will increase the spread of disease, and may spur or

exacerbate mass migration.” As a result, climate impacts were recognized not only as causing increased poverty, but also as “an accelerant of instability or conflict.” Supporting climate resilience and adaptation efforts will help decrease these risks while promoting global stability.

It is also vital to work with developing countries to help them enhance their efforts to reduce greenhouse gases through the protection of tropical forests and the reduction of deforestation. Deforestation accounts for about 15% of global emissions. The bipartisan Commission on Climate and Tropical Forests found that meeting long term climate goals, such as the 2°C goal agreed to under the Copenhagen Accord, “will be almost impossible absent a dramatic reduction in tropical deforestation before 2020.” If done right, protecting the world’s forests, including support for governance and social safeguards, can reduce greenhouse gases while also improving the livelihoods of a substantial segment of the world’s rural poor.

Now is the time for the Senate to enact comprehensive climate and energy legislation. Final legislation should include robust guidance for any international investments to ensure that funds are used effectively to achieve the greatest mitigation of and resilience to global warming pollution. To achieve our shared climate, national security and economic goals it is critical that the Senate bill fulfill our commitments to tackle the international elements that are core to meeting the climate challenge. We urge you to help ensure that Senate legislation includes these key international solutions.

We stand ready to work with you to support these priorities, and please feel free to call upon us as legislation is considered by the Senate.

Sincerely,

1Sky  
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Natural Resources Defense Council  
The Nature Conservancy  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Operation Free  
Oxfam America  
PennFuture  
Pennsylvania Interfaith Climate Change Campaign  
Population Action International  
Progressive National Baptist Convention  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of the Holy Cross - Congregation Justice Committee  
SustainUS  
Truman Project  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth  
Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Methodist Women  
US Climate Action Network  
World Wildlife Fund

Cc: Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman John Kerry  
Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Richard Lugar