

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 13, 2019

Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062

Dear Mr. Donohue:

We write today to request that the Chamber of Commerce support S.J. Res. 9, calling on the United States and Congress to take immediate action to address the challenge of climate change. We ask that you urge both Republicans and Democrats to swiftly pass this important resolution.

The resolution, which is currently co-sponsored by 47 Senators, states that it is the sense of Congress that:

1. Climate change is real;
2. Human activity during the last century is the dominant cause of the climate crisis;
and
3. The United States and Congress should take immediate action to address the challenge of climate change.

The language of this resolution is non-controversial. It is scientifically accurate to say that our planet is heating up and that this warming is caused primarily by combustion of fossil fuels. Both the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United States Government's National Climate Assessment agree that climate change is a serious crisis that requires urgent action if we are to limit some of its worst effects.

As you know, many of your member companies and supporters agree with the scientific consensus that climate change is real and requires action. However, we are aware that the Chamber – the largest lobbying organization in the country – has long used its considerable resources to fight legislative and administrative action on climate change. In 2016, the Chamber ran numerous attack ads against candidates for their support of policies limiting carbon pollution.¹ In 2017, the Chamber funded a misleading economic study critical of the Paris Agreement, a study that the President cited as a justification to withdraw from the Paris Agreement.² Also in 2017, the Chamber lobbied in favor of a Congressional Review Act

¹ See, e.g., “Run Jimmy,” U.S. Chamber Action (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzMAw0MWrTs>).

² Glenn Kessler and Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “Fact-checking President Trump’s claims on the Paris climate change deal,” *The Washington Post* (June 1, 2017) (available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact->

resolution to disapprove a rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas facilities – going so far as to issue a “Key Vote Alert” implying that the Chamber’s future support of their reelection campaigns might depend on their vote.³ In 2018, the Chamber filed an amicus brief in support of major oil companies seeking to dodge tort liability for the damages their products have and will continue to cause.⁴

These efforts to fight action on climate change contravene several policies that would benefit our climate and clean air that the Chamber has supported, including: increasing the tax on gasoline; ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol which would phase out climate damaging hydrofluorocarbons; and maintaining the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard rule.

These efforts also do not appear to reflect the views and interests of the Chamber’s Board Member companies. In 2016, eight Senators examined the positions and actions of companies serving on your board and released a report finding that the Chamber did not accurately represent the positions, input, and knowledge of its board members.⁵ In particular, the report was unable to identify a single Board Member that had publicly endorsed the Chamber’s campaign against the Environmental Protection Agency’s efforts to limit carbon pollution.

What’s more, diverse and respected voices – including the Bank of England, Moody’s, Standard & Poor’s, Freddie Mac, and many professional economists – that we assume enjoy significant credibility with your membership are warning of major economic risks arising out of climate change and governmental failure to address climate change. The economic consensus that we must act in order to mitigate these risks perhaps explains why major American companies such as Apple have left the Chamber in recent years.

Climate action should not divide us; it should unite us. While the Chamber in recent years has publicly admitted climate change is a “serious challenge,” you have continued politically to attack policies to address it. We are also troubled that much of your funding is not disclosed, raising the prospect that you are supported by fossil fuel interests working against climate policies supported by your broader membership. We urge you to disclose what portions of your revenues come from the fossil fuel sector, either companies themselves or the front groups through which they distribute money in return for climate denial services.

[checker/wp/2017/06/01/fact-checking-president-trumps-claims-on-the-paris-climate-change-deal/?utm_term=.809f54f899f5\).](https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/5.9.17-key_vote_letter_to_senate_supporting_h.j._res._36_cra_resolution_repealing_blm_methane_rule.pdf)

³ Key Vote Alert, U.S. Chamber of Commerce (May 9, 2017) (available at https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/5.9.17-key_vote_letter_to_senate_supporting_h.j._res._36_cra_resolution_repealing_blm_methane_rule.pdf).

⁴ Brief of amicus curiae Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America in support of appellants and reversal, *County of San Mateo v. Chevron, et al.*, Case No. 18-15499 (9th Cir.) (available at <https://www.chamberlitigation.com/sites/default/files/cases/files/18181818/U.S.%20Chamber%20Amicus%20Brief%20--%20County%20of%20San%20Mateo%20v.%20Chevron%20Corporation%20-%20%28U.S.%20Court%20of%20Appeals%20for%20the%20Ninth%20Circuit%29.pdf>).

⁵ Sheldon Whitehouse and Elizabeth Warren, *et al.*, “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Out of Step with the American People and its Members” (June 14, 2016) (available at https://www.warren.senate.gov/files/documents/2016-6-14-Chamber_of_Commerce_Report.pdf).

It is time that we put aside our differences and start working to take real actions on climate change because the American people and American businesses can no longer afford inaction. We believe the time has come for the Chamber to act on behalf of its members who support and stand to benefit from a transition to a clean energy economy.

We therefore urge you and the Chamber to support S.J. Res. 9, issue a "Key Vote Alert" on the resolution, and include support for it on your legislative scorecard, thereby informing both Republicans and Democrats that support for this common-sense resolution is critical. Once we achieve this first step of acknowledging the reality of the climate crisis and the need to act, we look forward to working with you and your membership to enact real, long-lasting policies that will benefit the economy and create millions of jobs.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator




Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator




Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



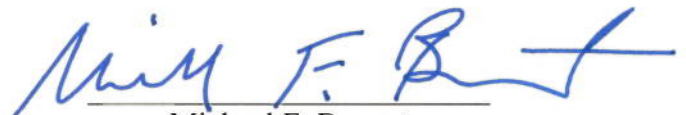
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator




Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



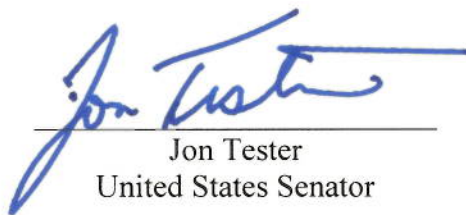
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



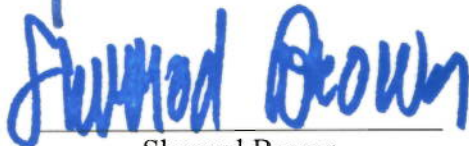
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



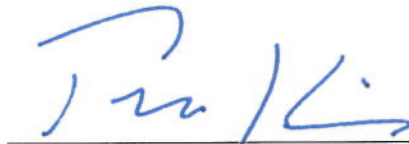
Jon Tester
United States Senator



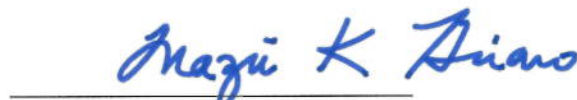
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



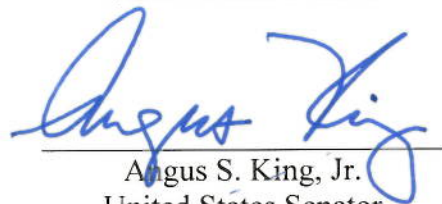
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



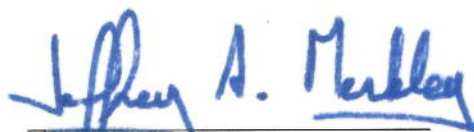
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



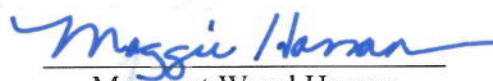
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



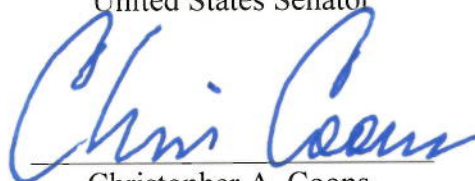
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator