May 23, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1040 Brussels
Belgium

The Honorable António Guterres
Secretary General
United Nations
760 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Mr. Simon Stiell
Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
P.O. Box 260124
D-53153 Bonn
Germany

Dear President Biden, President von der Leyen, Secretary General Guterres, and Executive Secretary Stiell:

We, the undersigned Members of the United States Congress and Members of the European Parliament, write to urge you to address our profound concern that current rules governing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) permit private sector polluters to exert undue influence on UNFCCC processes. We address this letter to the executive leaders from the jurisdictions in which our respective bodies function and to UNFCCC leadership, who can work collectively to enact the requested reforms.

Ahead of the annual Conference of the Parties (COP28) climate negotiations, enacting policies that expose the influence of corporate polluters in UNFCCC meetings will help ensure that climate science takes precedence over climate delay and greenwashing. To that end, we urge you (i) to engage in diplomatic efforts to secure the withdrawal of the President-designate of COP28; and (ii) to take immediate steps to limit the influence of polluting industries, particularly major fossil fuel industry players whose business strategies lie at clear odds with the central goals of the Paris Agreement, at gatherings of the UNFCCC.

Last year, many of us attended or followed COP27 in Sharm-al-Sheikh, Egypt. While we applaud the United Nations for bringing tens of thousands of delegates together, leading to a historic agreement that will help developing countries deal with losses and damages from the
impacts of climate change, the conference ultimately failed to secure consensus from Parties to cut greenhouse gases in line with the agreed global goals.¹

It did not escape our attention that at least 636 lobbyists from the oil and gas industries registered to attend last year’s COP—an increase of more than 25% over the previous year. When the number of attendees representing polluting corporate actors, which have a vested financial interest in maintaining the status quo, is larger than the delegations of nearly every country in attendance, it is easy to see how their presence could obstruct climate action.²

As you know, there is no time to waste in sharply cutting carbon pollution on a global scale. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report states that, to limit warming to 1.5 °C, global emissions must halve by 2030.³ The planet has already warmed over 1.2°C, and our ability to reach the 1.5 °C goal is moving fast out of reach, with the IPCC pegging the current probability at just 38%.⁴ Maintaining the status quo would lead to a catastrophic 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century.⁵

In this moment of great urgency, we must unblock the barriers that have kept us from advancing strong global collaboration to address climate change. One of the largest barriers to strong climate action has been and remains the political influence and obstruction of the fossil fuel industry and other major polluting industries. We have seen their negative influence in our home institutions; oil companies and their industry cheerleaders have spent billions of dollars lobbying both the European Parliament, other European institutions and Member States, and the U.S. Congress in order to obstruct or water down climate policy for years.⁶ While we acknowledge that engaging with industry can play a role, we must consider this particular industry’s track record on climate. Since at least the 1960s, the fossil fuel industry has known about the dangers of climate change posed by its products and, rather than supporting a transition to a clean energy


future, has instead chosen to promote climate denial and spend millions of dollars to spread disinformation.\(^7\)

Over a half century later, not one of 39 major global oil and gas companies, with collective market capitalization of $3.7 trillion, has adopted a business strategy that would limit warming to safe levels.\(^8\) Several independent analyses agree that the sector is still not taking meaningful action to avoid the worst impacts of the crisis.\(^9\)

Even more outrageous, the global oil and gas industry is expanding amid blockbuster profits to the tune of $4 trillion last year.\(^10\) The sector has poured $160 billion into exploration for new fossil reserves since 2020, even as the IEA has stated that no new fossil fuel projects are compatible with limiting warming to 1.5°C.\(^11\) In short, in the words of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, “We seem trapped in a world where fossil fuel producers and financiers have humanity by the throat.”\(^12\) It is time to alter this dangerous course.

In June, world governments will gather in Bonn for the UN Climate Change Conference, a critical opportunity to advance progress towards implementation of the Paris Agreement, in anticipation of COP28. It is essential that we seize the opportunity to take actionable steps to address and protect climate policy from polluting interference by adopting concrete rules that

---


limit the influence of the fossil fuel industry and its lobbyists in the UNFCCC decision-making process.

First, we urge you to advocate for the United Arab Emirates to withdraw the appointment of Sultan Al Jaber, head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, as President-designate of COP-28. The decision to name as president of COP28 the chief executive of one of the world’s largest oil and gas companies—a company that has recently announced plans to add 7.6 billion barrels of oil to its production in the coming years, representing the fifth largest increase in the world—risks undermining the negotiations. With commonsense reforms to help restore public faith in the COP process severely jeopardized by having an oil company executive at the helm, we respectfully submit that different leadership is necessary to help ensure that COP28 is a serious and productive climate summit.

Second, as some of us have already urged, we request that you institute new policies for corporate participation at COPs and UNFCCC processes more broadly, including requiring participating companies to submit an audited corporate political influencing statement that discloses climate-related lobbying, campaign contributions, and funding of trade associations and organizations active on energy and climate issues. These statements should be reviewed, publicly disclosed, and scrutinized prior to any engagement in UNFCCC climate policymaking processes. The UNFCCC should also consider additional measures to establish a robust accountability framework to protect against undue influence of corporate actors with proven vested interests that contradict the goals of the Paris Agreement; such a framework was proposed last year with broad-based international support from over 450 organizations around the world and five UNFCCC constituencies representing thousands of organizations and millions of people. These reforms would bring much-needed transparency to corporate climate-related political influencing activities around the world, and would help restore public faith that the COP process is not being abused by companies as an opportunity to greenwash.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your ongoing dedication to building global support for reducing carbon pollution and combatting climate change. We welcome further engagement with you on this topic, and the lead co-signers are available to meet with you at a mutually agreeable time prior to the UN Climate Change Conference in June.

Sincerely,

---

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Manon Aubry
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress
Peter Welch  
United States Senator

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator
Martin Shirdewan
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Philippe Lamberts
Member of the European Parliament
The Greens/EFA

Terry Reintke
Member of the European Parliament
The Greens/EFA

Mohammed Chahim
Member of the European Parliament
S&D

Sirpa Pietikäinen
Member of the European Parliament
EPP

Nikolaj Villumsen
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Pierre Larrouturou
Member of the European Parliament
S&D

Margrete Auken
Member of the European Parliament
The Greens/EFA

Kira Marie Peter-Hansen
Member of the European Parliament
The Greens/EFA

Saskia Bicmont
Member of the European Parliament
The Greens/EFA

Idoia Villanueva
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Mick Wallace
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Clare Daly
Member of the European Parliament
The Left

Marisa Matias
Member of the European Parliament
The Left
José Gusmão  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Malin Björk  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Younous Omarjee  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Rosa D'Amato  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Henrike Hahn  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Ernest Urtasun  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Claude Gruffat  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Jutta Paulus  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Leïla Chaibi  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Cyrus Engerer  
Member of the European Parliament  
S&D

Marie Toussaint  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Robert Biedroń  
Member of the European Parliament  
S&D

Emmanuel Maurel  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left
Silvia Modig  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Carles Puigdemont  
Member of the European Parliament  
Non-Inscrits

Antoni Comín  
Member of the European Parliament  
Non-Inscrits

Clara Ponsatí  
Member of the European Parliament  
Non-Inscrits

Miguel Urban Crespo  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Tilly Metz  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Erik Marquardt  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Martin Buschmann  
Member of the European Parliament  
Non-Inscrits

Michael Bloss  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Jordi Solé  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Anja Hazekamp  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Karen Melchior  
Member of the European Parliament  
Renew

Anne-Sophie Pelletier  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Cornelia Ernst  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left
Petros Kokkalis  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Rasmus Andresen  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Aurore Lalucq  
Member of the European Parliament  
S&D

Ciarán Cuffe  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Pascal Durand  
Member of the European Parliament  
S&D

Benoit Biteau  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Helmut Scholz  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Left

Ville Niinistö  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Damien Carême  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Ana Miranda  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

François Alfonsi  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

David Cormand  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA

Karima Delli  
Member of the European Parliament  
The Greens/EFA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yannick Jadot</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Roose</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pär Holmgren</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Kuhnke</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara Wolters</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora Mebarek</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira Rego</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michèle Rivasi</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mounir Satouri</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakop Dalunde</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>René Repasi</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiziana Beghin</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>Non-Inscrits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignazio Corrao</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martina Michels</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manu Pineda</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Özlem Alev Demirel</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitrios Papadimoulis</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matjaž Nemec</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tineke Strik</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bas Eickhout</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raphaël Glucksmann</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabio Massimo Castaldo</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>Non-Inscrits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris MacManus</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katalin Cseh</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>Renew Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina Mesure</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim van Sparrentak</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace O’Sullivan</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sándor Róna</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Waitz</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niklas Nienass</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Guerreiro</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika Vana</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlad Gheorghe</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>Renew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dino Giarrusso</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>Non-Inscrits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrin Langensiepen</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes Jongerius</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Tang</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gergios Georgiou</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Cavazzini</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Albuquerque</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuela Ripa</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>The Greens/EFA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cc: The Honorable John Kerry  
Special Presidential Envoy for Climate  
United States Department of State

The Honorable Charles Michel  
President of the European Council

The Honorable Frans Timmermans  
Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal  
European Commission

Parties to the UNFCC