

**American Rivers * Clean Water Action * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice *
Energy Action Coalition * Environment America * Environmental Defense Fund *
Friends of the Earth * League of Conservation Voters * National Audubon Society *
National Wildlife Federation * Native American Rights Fund *
Natural Resources Defense Council * Oceana * Physicians for Social Responsibility *
Population Connection * Sierra Club * Voices for Progress**

January 16, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We applaud the actions you have taken to reduce economy-wide carbon pollution and your commitment last June “to take bold action to reduce carbon pollution” and “lead the world in a coordinated assault on climate change.” We look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve these goals.

In that speech, you referenced that in the past you had put forward an “all of the above” energy strategy, yet noted that we cannot just drill our way out of our energy and climate challenge. We believe that continued reliance on an “all of the above” energy strategy would be fundamentally at odds with your goal of cutting carbon pollution and would undermine our nation’s capacity to respond to the threat of climate disruption. With record-high atmospheric carbon concentrations and the rising threat of extreme heat, drought, wildfires and super storms, America’s energy policies must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, not simply reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

We understand that the U.S. cannot immediately end its use of fossil fuels and we also appreciate the advantages of being more energy independent. But an “all of the above” approach that places virtually no limits on whether, when, where or how fossil fuels are extracted ignores the impacts of carbon-intensive fuels and is wrong for America’s future. America requires an ambitious energy vision that reduces consumption of these fuels in order to meet the scale of the climate crisis.

An “all of the above” strategy is a compromise that future generations can’t afford. It fails to prioritize clean energy and solutions that have already begun to replace fossil fuels, revitalize American industry, and save Americans money. It increases environmental injustice while it locks in the extraction of fossil fuels that will inevitably lead to a catastrophic climate future. It threatens our health, our homes, our most sensitive public lands, our oceans and our most precious wild places. Such a policy accelerates development of fuel sources that can negate the important progress you’ve already made on lowering U.S. carbon pollution, and it undermines U.S. credibility in the international community.

Mr. President, we were very heartened by your commitment that the climate impacts of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline would be “absolutely critical” to the decision and that it would be

contrary to the “national interest” to approve a project that would “significantly exacerbate the problem of carbon pollution.” We believe that a climate impact lens should be applied to all decisions regarding new fossil fuel development, and urge that a “carbon-reducing clean energy” strategy rather than an “all of the above” strategy become the operative paradigm for your administration’s energy decisions.

In the coming months your administration will be making key decisions regarding fossil fuel development -- including the Keystone XL pipeline, fracking on public lands, and drilling in the Arctic ocean -- that will either set us on a path to achieve the clean energy future we all envision or will significantly exacerbate the problem of carbon pollution. We urge you to make climate impacts and emission increases critical considerations in each of these decisions.

Mr. President, we applaud you for your commitment to tackle the climate crisis and to build an economy powered by energy that is clean, safe, secure, and sustainable.

Sincerely,

Wm. Robert Irvin
President and CEO
American Rivers

Robert Wendelgass
President
Clean Water Action

Jamie Rappaport Clark
President and CEO
Defenders of Wildlife

Trip Van Noppen
President
Earthjustice

Maura Cowley
Executive Director
Energy Action Coalition

Margie Alt
Executive Director
Environment America

Fred Krupp
President
Environmental Defense Fund

Eric Pica
President
Friends of the Earth

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

David Yarnold
President and CEO
National Audubon Society

Larry J. Schweiger
President & CEO
National Wildlife Federation

John Echohawk
Executive Director
Native American Rights Fund

Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Andrew Sharpless
Chief Executive Officer
Oceana

Catherine Thomasson, MD
Executive Director
Physicians for Social Responsibility

John Seager
President
Population Connection

Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club

Sandy Newman
President
Voices for Progress