

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman,

As you and your colleagues consider how the United States can best tackle the challenge of climate change and how we can effectively engage in international negotiations, we strongly urge you to ensure that comprehensive climate legislation includes robust international financing for developing countries' efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The international community is looking to the United States for leadership in the run-up to negotiations in Copenhagen, Denmark, this December. The inclusion of international financing in US legislation is critical to demonstrating our leadership and commitment to working with other countries for a global solution.

We recognize that US climate legislation must be a part of our nation's economic recovery – and it can be. Tackling climate change creates new markets for technologies and services that will reduce emissions and help poor communities build resilience to climate change impacts. It can also spur innovation and job creation here in the United States. Domestic companies and workers are well-positioned to seize market opportunities in clean energy technology and innovative climate adaptation solutions such as water systems and irrigation technology. Our leadership and effective engagement will open these markets to US technology firms and manufacturers.

These efforts are all the more necessary because climate change is already having a disproportionate impact on the world's poorest, often in the most volatile regions of the world. The impacts of climate change include increasingly severe weather events, reduced agricultural productivity, increased water scarcity, and expanded geographic ranges for some infectious diseases. These impacts can fuel migration, refugee crises and conflict over ever-scarcer resources - increasing instability and exacerbating security risks. General Charles Wald, Deputy Commander of the US European Command, asserted, in 2007, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that, "I believe we must now also prepare to respond to the consequences of dramatic population migrations, pandemic health issues and significant food and water shortages due to the possibility of significant climate change." Providing impoverished communities and countries with the resources necessary to build resilience and adapt to these impacts is critical to our own national security.

Furthermore, many developing countries either have expressed willingness or have already taken significant steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. If we are to keep global temperature rise below a dangerous threshold, every country must do its part. We can increase the likelihood of achieving that goal and facilitate even greater actions by developing countries by investing in their mitigation efforts. We can work with developing countries to embark on a path toward clean development, adopt clean and low-carbon energy alternatives, and assist in reducing emissions caused by such harms as deforestation while concomitantly promoting and protecting the livelihoods of local communities.

Estimates of the need for international financing are substantial and the challenge of tackling climate change is great. The United States will not be alone in supporting these efforts but as the largest historical greenhouse gas emitter, the United States must do its fair share. Comprehensive climate change legislation should devote a significant portion of generated revenues to investments in international adaptation, clean technology cooperation, and forest protection activities in the developing world. It is an opportunity for leadership, innovation, economic growth at home and abroad and trust building with developing countries. It would also align the US with the commitments we made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

With the negotiations in Copenhagen nine months away, the time to act is now. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former Vice President Al Gore detailed the elements that he believes are critical to a successful agreement this December. Among them, he listed "the inclusion of deforestation...and the assurance that developing countries will have access to mechanisms and resources that will help them adapt to the worst impacts of the climate crisis and [to] technologies to solve the problem." Domestic legislation that includes these same elements is essential for the United States to credibly engage in negotiations in Copenhagen.

We urge you to consider these critical points as you craft climate change legislation and look forward to working with you and your committee. Please feel free to call upon us as you move this vital initiative through Congress.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



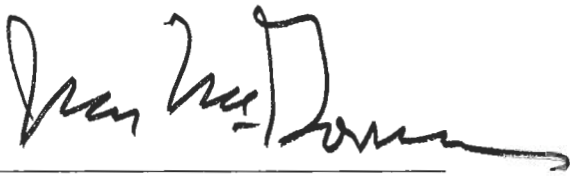
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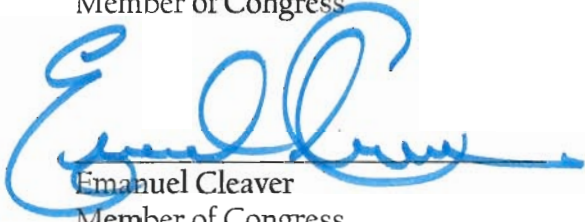
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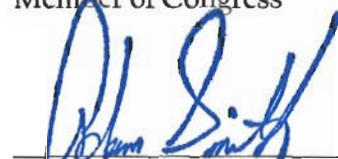
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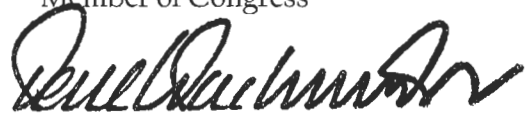
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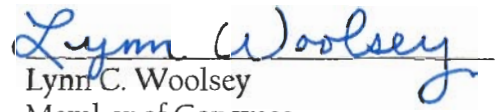
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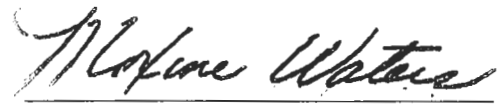
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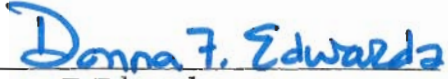
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