

UNITED STATES CLIMATE ALLIANCE

February 16, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
U.S. Senate
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
U.S. House of Representatives
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
U.S. House of Representatives
2186 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Feinstein, Chairman Simpson, and Ranking Member Kaptur,

I write to you on behalf of the United States Climate Alliance - a bipartisan coalition of 16 governors committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Alliance states represent 40 percent of the U.S. population and a \$7.4 trillion economy. The Alliance believes that investing in renewable energy research is critical for meeting domestic energy demand, creating jobs, and growing our economy. The proposed approximate 70 percent cut to the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy research budget would be disastrous. These substantial cuts to the Department's budget would slow the American innovation needed to maintain America's energy dominance, and deliver the solutions to today's climate and renewable energy challenges. We ask that you protect this critical funding, which is essential to America's energy transformation and our battle against climate change.

Renewable energy is a huge economic opportunity for the United States domestically and internationally. The world is moving to a renewable energy economy with about \$300 billion annually in new investments expected in the sector.¹

As more countries commit to zero emission transportation, continued renewable energy research leadership will be critical to economic growth. The United States must continue to innovate if it wants its companies and people to tap into this growing market and be the vanguard of a new energy economy.

U.S. support for energy research has been instrumental in mobilizing the private sector innovation that has grown the U.S. economy and created hundreds of thousands of jobs here at home. Today, there are as many renewable energy jobs as in coal or petroleum and more solar jobs than either coal or natural gas.²

As a result, in the last decade, more than half of generating capacity additions in the United States have come from renewable energy sources.³ Furthermore, the cost of renewable energy has fallen year after year – making it not only cost competitive, but often cheaper than fossil fuels. This has helped move towards a cleaner energy economy while putting more money in the pockets of American families.

The U.S. Climate Alliance has seized this opportunity by putting in place climate, renewable energy and resilience policies that have already created 1.5 million jobs - nearly half of all the renewable energy and energy efficiency jobs in America.⁴ To put the opportunities of this sector in context with the rest of the economy, consider that in recent years, the solar and wind sector has created jobs 12 times faster than the rest of the economy.⁵

Moving towards cleaner energy is also essential to avoiding the most catastrophic impacts of climate change through extreme weather and its very persistent impact on coastal communities in Hawaii or other coastal states. Americans are already facing the realities of climate change - the severity and frequency of extreme weather events is on the rise, extolling enormous human and economic costs. Major hurricanes in 2017 alone cost the United States over \$306 billion,⁶ with 8 percent of the U.S. population affected, and 4.7 million survivors requesting assistance from FEMA.⁷ In Puerto Rico, Hurricane Maria decimated the American territory, which four months later is still rebuilding its energy infrastructure. In Alaska, accelerated warming is destroying infrastructure, eroding coastlines, and threatening traditional ways of life. In California, the combination of drought and intense heat contributed to the worst fires in the state's history.

The solutions to our energy and climate challenges are the same and require continued investment by the United States to drive technology innovation so that we can remain competitive in these markets and advance our clean economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Julie Cerqueira
Executive Director
The United States Climate Alliance

California | Colorado | Connecticut | Delaware | Hawaii | Maryland | Massachusetts | Minnesota |
New York | North Carolina | Oregon | Puerto Rico | Rhode Island | Vermont | Virginia | Washington

Copy to:

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources,
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural
Resources, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy,
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Bobby Rush, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on
Energy, U.S. House of Representatives

¹ Frankfurt School-UNEP Centre/BNEF. 2017. “Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2017.” http://fs-unep-centre.org/sites/default/files/attachments/gtr_2017_-_key_findings.pdf

² U.S. Department of Energy. 2017. “U.S Energy and Employment Report.” https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report_0.pdf#page=29

³ Business Council for Sustainable Energy/BNEF. 2017. “Sustainable Energy in America Factbook.” <http://www.bcse.org/sustainableenergyfactbook/#>

⁴ U.S. Department of Energy. 2017. “U.S Energy and Employment Report – State Charts.” https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts%202_0.pdf

⁵ EDF. 2017. “Now Hiring – the Growth of America’s Clean Energy and Sustainability Jobs.” http://edfclimatecorps.org/sites/edfclimatecorps.org/files/the_growth_of_americas_clean_energy_and_sustainability_jobs.pdf (using 2015 data from the Solar Foundation and American Wind Energy Association)

⁶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2017. “Fast Facts Hurricane Costs.” <https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/hurricane-costs.html>

⁷ Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2017. “2017 Hurricane Season by the Numbers.” <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/images/153868>