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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

September 27, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced the United States' intention to withdraw from the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Though the announcement occurred more than two years before the U.S. could act to realize this plan, the earliest date (November 4, 2019) the President could initiate the yearlong withdrawal process is now 39 days away. We, the undersigned, write to urge you and the President to reverse this decision and remain a party to the Agreement. Climate change is an existential threat that requires all countries and leadership from the United States to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and avoid irreparable damage to our planet.

We recognize that the Administration has refused these calls in the past, so in advance of the likely beginning of the U.S. withdrawal process; we are requesting that you provide Congress:

- Comprehensive justifications for the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement;
- Detailed explanations of the U.S. strategy for maintaining global leadership and influence on international cooperation to combat climate change – including strategic plans for continued engagement on decisions made within the framework of the Paris Agreement as an “observer” to Agreement; and
- Articulation of how U.S. interest are better served as a “non-party” to the Agreement.

A similar request was made of you in February to which you still have not responded.

The President's June 1, 2017 announcement also stated a conditional interest in maintaining U.S. acceptance of the Paris Agreement, or initiating a new international agreement when he said, “we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair.” He also expressed interest “to immediately work with Democrats to either negotiate our way back into Paris, under the terms that are fair to the United States and its workers, or to negotiate a new deal”. We are not aware of any outreach efforts the administration has made to work “immediately” on a “new deal” with Democrats, nor have we seen or heard about any progress towards negotiating a new international “deal that's fair”. Given that time is short, we insist that you provide Congress:

- A progress report on the administration's efforts “to negotiate... a deal that's fair.”
- Does the administration consider the concessions the U.S. successfully negotiated to the Paris Agreement “Rulebook” (also known as the “Katowice Rulebook”) at COP24 a

sufficient “deal that’s fair” that would warrant keeping the U.S. party to the Paris Agreement?

- If not, please explain why the Katowice Rulebook fails to satisfy such fairness tests, and why then did the U.S. support the adoption of the Katowice Rulebook?
- A determination as to whether the administration intends to follow through on the President’s stated intentions to “work with Democrats to either negotiate our way back into Paris... or to negotiate a new deal.” Granted, avoiding the predicate of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, would alleviate the need for either such negotiations.

Although we strongly object, it is certainly the President’s prerogative to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, and “to negotiate a new deal” with Democrats. Therefore, we urge you to provide Congress with the President’s proposed “new deal” (alternative to the Paris Agreement). Congressional Democrats and Republicans should have the opportunity to review such a proposal, as well as the opportunity to engage with the administration on the “new deal” intended for renewed negotiations with parties to the Paris Agreement.

We strongly believe that withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris Agreement amounts to a self-inflicted error that weakens America’s leadership on the world stage, diminishes the effectiveness of the international community’s efforts to combat climate change, and yields opportunity costs for the American private sector’s investments in clean energy innovation and marketing of more sustainable products. The United States Congress, American people, and the international community need to understand how the President is conducting climate change diplomacy and acting to combat global climate change – beyond just dogmatic skepticism of his predecessor’s work. We support maintaining U.S. participation and leadership within the Paris Agreement. While we disapprove of the President’s inclination to withdraw the U.S. from the Agreement, we do appreciate the opening he offered to keep the U.S. in the Agreement and we continue to wait for constructive engagement from the administration towards achieving that end.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



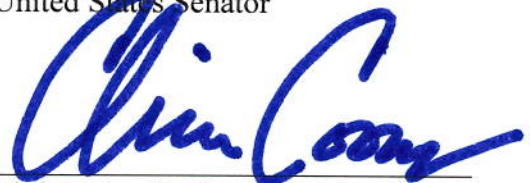
Robert Menendez
Ranking Member



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



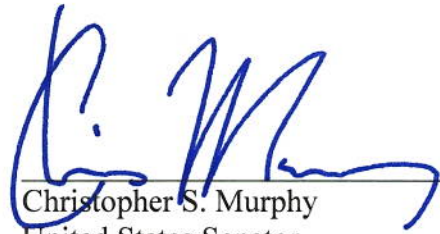
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



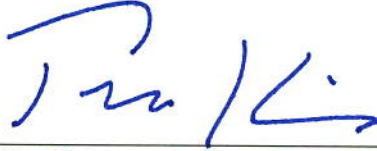
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



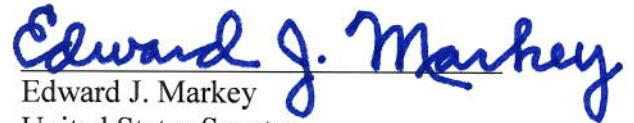
Tom Udall
United States Senator



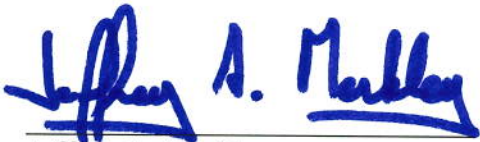
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



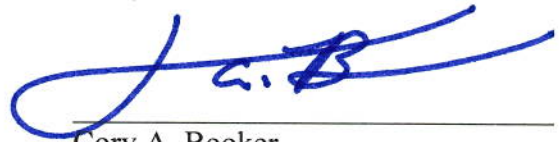
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United States Senator