

November 16, 2020

Dear President-elect Biden:

We congratulate you on your election as the 46th President of the United States. Your ambitious climate platform during the campaign, the prominence of climate change as an electoral issue, and your record-breaking popular vote have created an undeniable mandate for leadership in January.

During the campaign, we applauded your commitment to restore trust in government and to address the climate emergency, environmental injustice, and the array of other crises that working families and communities face today. We were deeply encouraged by the statement in the Biden-Harris Transition Team Ethics Plan that you aim “to ensure that those who serve are aligned with his values and policy priorities, and have not, for example, been leaders at fossil fuel or private prison companies.”

Therefore, we are writing to urge you to commit to ensuring Ernest Moniz holds no public or private role, whether formal or informal, in your transition team, cabinet, or administration.

Mr. Moniz’s professional and financial ties fly in the face of [The Biden Plan to Guarantee Government Works for the People](#) that would “reduce the corrupting influence of money in politics...restore ethics in government...[and] rein in executive branch financial conflicts of interest.” Mr. Moniz’s employment and financial ties situate him firmly in the revolving door between government and fossil fuel corporations.

For example, a [profile](#) in *The New Republic* details the close relationship between Mr. Moniz and the fossil gas and electric utility holding company Southern Company. Southern Company received “\$407 million in financing from the Department of Energy during Moniz’s tenure for a ‘clean coal’ plant that was never completed. After championing the doomed project and leaving office, Moniz joined the company’s board in March 2018. According to Southern’s proxy statements, he accepted a combined \$486,668 worth of fees and stock awards from Southern in 2018 and 2019.” Further, Mr. Moniz has been closely tied to fossil fuel behemoths like BP, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Eni, and Saudi Aramco.¹

The [Biden Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice](#) rightly states, “climate change poses an existential threat – not just to our environment, but to our health, our communities, our national security, and our economic well-being.” Mr. Moniz’s championing of an “all-of-the-above” energy policy goes against your commitments to tackle the climate emergency. He has been a cheerleader for “clean” coal, the export of liquified natural gas, and the untenable expansion of fossil gas. Indeed, Mr. Moniz is an unrepentant founding father of the fracking industry. He spearheaded an influential 2010 report that helped establish the dangerous myth that fossil gas is a “bridge fuel,” and he continues to promote expensive and unproven technologies that will extend our reliance on fossil fuels and the very companies with which he is linked.

Mr. Moniz’s approach is incompatible with a stable climate. According to [The Production Gap Report \(2019\)](#), countries are on track to produce 120% more fossil fuels in 2030 than is consistent with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Further, fracking is deeply harmful to the lives and livelihoods of nearby communities. It is also a super climate polluter; methane is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide during its first 20 years in the atmosphere, and leaky oil and gas infrastructure is responsible for far more methane emissions than previously thought.

Mr. President-elect, we have no doubt that the world needs a leader on climate action and integrity in the White House in January. We are also certain that Mr. Moniz must not have any role in guiding you there or in a Biden Administration. We thank you for your serious consideration.

Sincerely,

¹ See, for example, The Hill, [Energy nominee Moniz details ties to BP](#), 3/30/13; The New Republic, [The Biden Adviser Who Gives Climate Activists Nightmares](#), 9/15/20.

Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE)
Anthropocene Alliance
Beyond Extreme Energy
Biofuelwatch
Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions, Inc.
Call to Action CO
Catholic Network US
Center for Biological Diversity Action Fund
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Center for Political Ecology
Climate Finance Action
Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy
Climate Hawks Vote
Community of Urbana-Champaign Cooperative
Housing
Concord Climate Action Network (CCAN)
Cooperative Energy Futures
Corporate Accountability
Critical Frequency
CRP Baltimore
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earth Guardians
Endangered Species Coalition
Energy Alabama
Extinction Rebellion SF Bay
Franciscan Action Network
Friends of the Earth U.S.
GASP
Green Delaware
Greenpeace, Inc.
Hap Mountain Herbal
Indigenous Environmental Network
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute
Just Climate
Labor Network for Sustainability
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
Movement Rights
NC Climate Justice Collective
North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light
NTS Group, CEA, City of Boulder Energy Tech Team
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Oakland Institute
Oil Change International
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Progressive Democrats of America
Protecting Our Waters
Rainforest Action Network
Rapid Shift Network
Revolving Door Project

Rochester DSA
Rogue Climate
S. R. D. Consulting
Sane Energy Project
Seeding Sovereignty
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
StopCricketValley.org
STW Consulting
Sunrise Movement
Sunrise Movement Howard County
The Climate Mobilization
The Debt Collective
The People's Justice Council
TIAADivest!
Unite North Metro Denver
UnKoch My Campus
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
Women's Environment and Development
Organization
Youth Vs Apocalypse
198 methods
350 Action
350 Seattle
350 Triangle
350NH
350NYC