



Friends of
the Earth
United States



JUBILEE
AUSTRALIA
RESEARCH CENTRE

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
2 Rue André Pascal
Paris 5775 CEDEX 16
France

March 8, 2021

RE: Selection of OECD Secretary-General

Dear members of the Council,

As organizations representing millions of members working on the intersections of economic, social, environmental and climate justice, we are writing to urge you to reject Mathias Cormann's bid for OECD Secretary-General.

According to the OECD's website, "Decisive climate action should form an integral part of economic development plans." However, in his time as Australian Finance Minister Mr. Cormann served as a senior leader in a government that took no action on climate for more than a decade and that approved a scheme with proposed fossil gas projects that could unleash an annual climate impact of more than half of Australia's annual emissions. He often [voted against](#) increasing investment in renewable energy, and in 2017, [described](#) banks placing restrictions on coal lending as "very disappointing".

Just last year, Mr. Cormann labelled the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 as "[reckless and irresponsible](#)" and went so far as to say the target was "[extremist](#)". When students around Australia participated in climate strikes as part of a global youth movement, he [praised](#) Donald Trump's Davos speech calling climate activists "prophets of doom". Mr. Cormann's poor track record on climate is particularly important due to OECD's crucial role in setting the rules for public financing of fossil fuels through the Working Party on Export Credits and Credit Guarantees.'

As a nominee to lead an institution at the heart of international cooperation and standard setting, which counts "equality" and "well-being for all" among its main goals, we find remarks made by Mr. Cormann that are critical of racial and gender equality not only disqualifying but disturbing. A nominee who refers to a parliamentarian using [sexist epithets](#), and labels Black Lives Matter advocates and advocates protesting Aboriginal deaths in custody as "[self-indulgent](#)" does not demonstrate fundamental qualities befitting of a leader, and his selection would bring disrepute and discredit to the important work of this organization.

As the world's leaders and citizens take on the twin emergencies of a global pandemic and climate change, sensible, unifying leadership to carry out the OECD's influential mandate in the multilateral space is more important than ever.

Considering Mr. Cormann's alarming public record on issues of equality, human rights, governance, and climate change, as well as his past record of [corruption scandals](#), we do not believe he is a suitable candidate for the job, and urge you to reject his nomination for the position of Secretary-General.

Yours respectfully,

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