



TO: Presidential Debate Moderators Lester Holt (NBC), Martha Raddatz (ABC News), Anderson Cooper (CNN), and Chris Wallace (Fox News)
FROM: LCV National Campaigns Director Clay Schroers
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SUBJECT: A Critical Election Issue – Climate Change

Today, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton will share the debate stage for the first time in the 2016 presidential election. The candidates will have the chance to explain to voters their stance on the critical issues we face and how they hope to govern in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges our next president will face, domestically and abroad, and whether these candidates are prepared to meet this challenge from day one is an appropriate test of their fitness for office.

Climate change is already here. People are already feeling the impacts of climate inaction. 2016 will almost certainly be the [hottest](#) year on record, thanks to rising temperatures, while three of the four warmest years have all occurred [since](#) the 2012 presidential election. Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists [agree](#) that warmer temperature trends over the past century are “very likely due to human activities.” In fact, scientists are “more [certain](#) than ever” that humans are actively changing the climate. Even the Pentagon has [warned](#) that climate change is a threat to national security.

With stakes this high, voters want to know where the candidates stand on climate. Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults – a [record high](#) – believe that climate change is real, including a [majority](#) of Trump’s own supporters. More than two-thirds of voters [want](#) the government to play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including nearly half of all Republicans. Millennials and swing state voters agree, too: climate change is real, and we must act *now* to curb its dangerous effects on our planet.

Trump and Hillary’s approaches to addressing climate change and preserving our environment are among the sharpest differences between the candidates. We are already feeling climate impacts here at home. Voters want to know where the candidates stand. **For these reasons, we strongly urge the debate moderators to ask the two presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, about their plans to tackle climate change and protect our planet for generations to come.**

To learn more, read on.

MILLENIALS AND SWING STATE VOTERS BELIEVE CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL, AND WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP SOLVE THIS PROBLEM

MILLENNIALS HAVE THE NUMBERS, AND THEY WANT CLIMATE ACTION. Here are some numbers to consider: nearly three-fourths of millennials [believe](#) climate change is a serious problem; two-thirds want government action to solve it; and four in five millennials would like the United States to [transition](#) to a clean energy economy. Here’s one more number: the millennial generation is now 75.4 million strong, surpassing the Baby Boomers to officially become the country’s most [populous](#) generation.

SWING VOTERS AGREE: IT’S TIME TO ACT ON CLIMATE. In swing states all across the country, voters understand the critical nature of tackling climate change. Voters in key swing states [agree](#) – by a more than two-to-one margin – that climate change is caused by human activity, and that we must do more to address it. Swing voters in several states also [agree](#) that we should regulate carbon dioxide (75 percent), and that climate change will ultimately harm future generations (60 percent).



ON KEY ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY ISSUES, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DONALD TRUMP AND HILLARY CLINTON COULD NOT BE MORE STARK

CLIMATE CHANGE. Last December, [195 nations](#), including the United States came together – for the first time – and agreed to combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Since then, leading industrialized nations like [China](#), and [Brazil](#) have joined the United States in ratifying the agreement – [India](#) is set to do so in the coming few days – the strongest signal yet that dealing with a warming planet will truly take a global effort. By the end of this year, 60 countries are [expected](#) to official be on board, making the agreement a binding one. So, when Donald Trump says that the “concept of global warming was [created](#) by and for the Chinese” to make the United States less competitive, as well as a [b*****t hoax](#), and a [money-making industry](#), it’s no surprise that based on an [inaccurate](#) understanding of the deal, he’d [cancel](#) the agreement altogether.

On the other hand, Hillary Clinton [knows](#) that climate change is real, and that it’s already “wreaking havoc on communities across America.” She [supports](#) the Paris climate agreement, and is proud of President Obama’s leadership in getting nearly 200 countries to take the necessary steps to start acting on climate change. The [American people](#) are increasingly on her side – [fewer](#) Americans than ever before doubt that climate change is happening, and a majority of Republicans [accept](#) climate science.

CLEAN POWER PLAN. The nation’s first federal limits on the amount of carbon pollution that power plants are allowed to dump into our air, the [Clean Power Plan](#) empowers states to craft their own plans to reduce carbon pollution. By focusing on cleaner energy, the plan will [prevent](#) 3,000 premature deaths from heart attacks and respiratory illnesses, 90,000 [fewer](#) asthma attacks in children, and 300,000 missed work and school days. Furthermore, we are now at a point where the economy is growing the [carbon emissions are not](#). Donald Trump [claims](#) to support clean air, but he would [immediately](#) get rid of the Clean Power Plan, which he called “[stupid](#).” Unsurprisingly, irony seems to be lost on Trump, as he is more concerned about an energy industry that “[can’t breathe](#)” because of regulatory measures, than he is about the nearly [25 million](#) Americans with asthma.

Hillary Clinton [supports](#) the Clean Power Plan, and pledges to defend and [build upon](#) it as president, by partnering with state and local governments to “accelerate clean energy deployment, building efficiency, and clean transportation.” She knows that it will help [combat](#) climate change, and lead to the [modernization](#) of North America’s energy infrastructure.

DRINKING WATER CRISIS IN FLINT, MICHIGAN. When news of the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan initially broke nationwide in January, Trump – the frontrunner at the time for the Republican nomination – said that he shouldn’t be [commenting](#) on the subject. Nine months later, and he has largely remained [silent](#) since. Earlier this month, Trump traveled to Flint, where his visit was seen as transparently political. Officials [derided](#) his trip as nothing more than a photo op and a publicity stunt that lacked any serious policy proposals to fix problems.

Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, knows that clean and safe water is a [basic human right](#), one that “shouldn’t change between ZIP codes.” Upon hearing about what was happening in Flint, she immediately sent her top aide there to find out ways to help the community. She publicly and forcefully called on the governor of Michigan to [act](#). Since then, she has [visited](#) the city, and discussed in detail the need for Congress to fund crucial infrastructure repairs. She and continues to check in on the community’s progress.

CLEAN & RENEWABLE ENERGY. Donald Trump has [repeatedly promised](#) to remove restrictions on energy exploration and production, and wants to [drill](#) on federal lands as well as in the [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge](#). And, although he [calls](#) for a coal industry renaissance, Trump lacks a plan to do so. Trump has also [steadily supported](#) the Keystone XL pipeline, which President Obama rejected last year. Additionally, his inaccurate and cartoonish views on clean energy leave much to be desired. Trump [falsely](#) said that solar energy was expensive – in fact, the cost of installing solar has [dropped](#) more than 70 percent in the last 10 years. He also [doesn’t care](#) for wind turbines, in part [because](#) they “make noise” and “create shadows.”



Hillary Clinton [wants](#) the United States to “be the clean energy super power of the 21st century,” creating millions of jobs and growing businesses in the process. She knows we must [end](#) taxpayer subsidies for polluters, and transition to a clean energy economy. Her detailed and well-thought out energy plan [includes](#) a push for 500 million solar panels by the end of her first term, and enough clean energy to power every home in America by the end of her second term. Hillary Clinton also knows that in order for America to truly prosper as a leader in clean energy, we must “[bring](#) solar and energy efficiency technologies to more low-income communities.”

PROTECTING PUBLIC LANDS. As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of America’s [best idea](#), its National Parks system, it’s worth noting Donald Trump’s reckless attitude towards protecting our public lands. While he lacks any discernible policy proposals, Trump is really only looking out for polluters, and for himself. His [energy plan](#) is a giveaway to oil and gas companies, and his senior adviser [advocated](#) drilling on government lands – no surprise, as he recently [said](#) he is “very much into” drilling and energy exploration. Additionally, a President Trump would [transfer](#) federally-protected lands to state and local government, where developers would be free to turn a wildlife refuge into a Trump [golf course](#).

Hillary Clinton [wants](#) to preserve public lands’ federally-protected status, and “[increase](#) tenfold renewable energy production from federal lands and waters.” She would expand upon the bipartisan Land and Water Conservation Fund. On the heels of President Obama’s decision to impose a three-year moratorium on coal development on public lands, she expressed her [support](#) for a ban on future fossil fuel extraction on public lands, a sign that she might [extend](#) that moratorium to oil and gas leases, too.

TRUMP TAKES HIS TALKING POINTS FROM CLIMATE DENIERS, AND WOULD EFFECTIVELY REMOVE OUR SAFEGUARDS FOR CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER

LISTENING TO CLIMATE DENIERS. Trump cited the Institute for Energy Research, a group that [denies](#) the reality of climate change, to bolster his case for removing current environmental safeguards against dirty energy. IER, and its advocacy arm, the American Energy Alliance, have received [hundreds of thousands](#) of dollars in funding from Exxon Mobil, the American Petroleum Institute, and multiple groups tied to the Koch Brothers. It’s not really surprising that Trump would turn to an organization in the pocket of Big Oil and the Koch Brothers for energy advice; a President Trump would let the oil and gas industry write their own rules, letting them make a profit while our families suffer more polluted air and water.

ELIMINATING THE EPA. Donald Trump has [repeatedly called](#) for [cutting](#) the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA is charged with executing and enforcing the Clean Power Plan and the Waters of the United States rule; if Trump eliminated funding the agency itself, these crucial protections for clean air and clean water would effectively be nullified. Incredulously, when asked who will protect the environment without the EPA, Trump replied, “We’ll be fine with the environment. We can leave a little bit, but you can’t destroy businesses.”

DONALD TRUMP’S PICKS FOR HIS POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATION IS A LAUNDRY LIST OF POLLUTERS TO OVERSEE OUR ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

SECRETARY OF ENERGY. Donald Trump is [considering](#) longtime oil magnate Harold Hamm to be his energy secretary. Hamm would be Secretary of Energy “drawn directly from the oil and gas industry” since the post was created, bolstering Trump’s pro-drilling energy agenda. Speaking at the Republican National Convention, Hamm “called for expanded drilling and said too much environmental regulation threatened to limit U.S. oil production and increase the country’s dependence on Middle Eastern oil producers.” Trump also thought about former vice presidential nominee and governor of Alaska [Sarah Palin](#) to lead the department – a proposition that Palin immediately welcomed, so that she could Drill, Baby, Drill, and have the “opportunity to dismantle” the department altogether.



SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR. Forrest Lucas, an oil industry executive, is on Trump's [frontrunner](#) for Secretary of the Interior. Lucas would be in charge of a department that "oversees national parks and wildlife refuges," and makes decisions about "offshore drilling, fracking regulations and protections for endangered species." Just like the possibility of putting Harold Hamm in charge of the Department of Energy, the selection an oil executive to lead the Department of the Interior would be "nearly unprecedented ... Lucas' nomination would be a coup for the oil and gas industry, which has battled President Barack Obama's Interior Department for years over everything from Endangered Species Act listings to access to federal lands for drilling. Trump has cultivated close ties to the oil industry."

ENERGY ADVISER. In May, Trump brought on Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-North Dakota), an outspoken climate change [skeptic](#), as his energy adviser. Wasting no time, Rep. Cramer urged Trump to get rid of the Clean Power Plan, the Clean Water Rule, and the newly-minted federal standards on methane emissions. He also [suggested](#) that Trump reduce environmental regulations, and get rid of tax incentives for clean and renewable energy. Rep. Cramer, after all, is "basically a [representative](#) of the oil and gas industries." Maybe that's why the oil and gas industry [expected](#) Trump to offer a "full-throated endorsement" of its dangerous activities.

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