

League of Conservation Voters * Sierra Club * Environment America * Friends of the Earth *
Endangered Species Coalition * Public Citizen * Greenpeace

Thomas J. Donohue, Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000

November 19, 2019

Dear Mr. Donohue,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our millions of members across the country, we urge the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its member organizations to take genuine action to tackle the climate crisis. The devastating impacts of climate change are being felt across the country and around the globe, especially in frontline communities and communities of color, and the costs of its effects are escalating into the hundreds of billions of dollars. It is imperative that the Chamber of Commerce reverse course and help promote rather than stymie action on climate change.

If you are serious about helping to combat the climate crisis, then the Chamber should:

- support science-based climate policies that will get our country to 100% clean energy economy and net-zero emissions as soon as possible to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as recommended by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and committed to by nearly every nation in the world under the Paris Agreement;
- deploy significant resources to advance science-based climate policies rather than to attack efforts to address the climate crisis and those championing the policies; and
- stop taking funding from the dark tangled web of climate denial front groups.

As more and more businesses and trade associations are taking action to tackle their own climate pollution and publicly committing to promote policies to drive down emissions to net-zero, the Chamber of Commerce is becoming even more out of step with its own membership. Companies across the country are acknowledging that climate change poses a threat to their business and the communities in which they operate and are setting targets and making real changes to eliminate net carbon emissions from their processes and value chains. In addition, consumers are demanding companies stop blocking progress and act on climate and are making choices based on companies' actions or lack of actions. **Meanwhile, the Chamber's recent actions to block methane emissions standards for oil and gas drilling on public lands, to support the undoing of the Clean Power Plan, and to oppose legislation protecting our coasts from oil and gas drilling run contrary to public sentiment and the spirit and letter of your newly-announced "Our Approach to Climate Change".**

We cannot simply wait for technology and innovation to save us – it is not a real plan for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on the scale and pace required. In addition to the Chamber’s recent climate policy obstruction, the fact that technology and innovation is the centerpiece to your “Approach” is further evidence that the Chamber is not yet taking climate change seriously, even while trying to say that it is. We can and must adopt strong federal policies to reduce emissions to net-zero economy wide as soon as possible, as scientists believe is necessary to avert the worst of climate change. Your words and actions to date have all but ensured that the Chamber will not be at the table for crafting climate policy unless you make a commitment to do things much differently and far better.

While the Chamber still takes and expends tens of millions of dollars in climate denial front group funding, it will be nearly impossible for the Chamber to take any real action to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and avert the worst impacts of climate change. There is vast annual spending and carried momentum to cast false doubt on climate science, obstruct any policy progress at the local, state, and federal levels, and smear vocal scientists and elected officials taints any donations originating from the Medusa’s head of climate denial front groups. Genuine concern for and action to solve the challenge of climate change, given it is such an about-face from the Chamber’s climate policy record, should include accountability to your membership about these front groups’ influence on policy priorities of the Chamber. Especially when many of your members want to take on the challenge of climate change, the Chamber should stop taking money from climate denial political entities and provide clarity to members about the origin of climate policy obstruction positions and campaigns.

The need to take bold action on climate change has never been greater – nearly every week brings another community damaged by storms, floods, heatwaves, droughts, and other weather extremes fueled by climate change. As the harms that millions of people around the country and the world are already suffering are only growing starker, we call on the Chamber and its members to: support science-based climate policies that will get our country to 100% clean energy economy and net-zero emissions, stop spending vast amounts to block and pivot to supporting real climate solutions that will transition our country to a clean energy future, and decline funding and policy direction from climate denial front groups.

Sincerely,

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