

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6375
www.science.house.gov

October 13, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

With the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) quickly approaching, we again request information on the Administration's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target and how it impacts American jobs and our economy.

On May 10, 2021, all Republican members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Subcommittee on Environment wrote National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy to request a briefing on the process your Administration utilized to set its nationally determined contribution (NDC) of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by 50 to 52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030.¹ After two months of unresponsiveness from Ms. McCarthy's office, the White House Counsel's Office transmitted a letter on July 13, 2021² that merely restates the fact sheet published on the White House website.³ This response does not satisfy the request for a briefing or provide an adequate response to the specific questions posed in the initial letter.

This lack of transparency is especially concerning given your Administration's pledge to restore the public's trust in science and policy making. In your January 27, 2021 "Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking," you stated your Administration's responsibility to "prevent the suppression or distortion of scientific or technological findings, data, information, conclusions, or technical

¹ See e.g. Letter from Hon. Stephanie Bice, Ranking Member, Subcomm. on Environment of the H. Comm. on Science, Space, and Tech., et al., to Hon. Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor (May 10, 2021), available at <https://republicans-science.house.gov/sites/republicans.science.house.gov/files/05.10.21%20NDC%20Letter%20to%20McCarthy%20FINAL.pdf>.

² Letter from Dana A. Remus, Counsel to the President, White House Counsel's Office, to Hon. Stephanie Bice Ranking Member, Subcomm. on Environment of the H. Comm. on Science, Space, and Tech., et al., (July 13, 2021).

³ THE WHITE HOUSE, *Fact Sheet: President Biden Sets 2030 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Target Aimed at Creating Good-Paying Union Jobs and Securing U.S. Leadership on Clean Energy Technologies*, (Apr. 22, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/22/fact-sheet-president-biden-sets-2030-greenhouse-gas-pollution-reduction-target-aimed-at-creating-good-paying-union-jobs-and-securing-u-s-leadership-on-clean-energy-technologies/>.

results.”⁴ However, your Administration has not shared the scientific data, information, and technical results behind your NDC target with the public and Members of Congress.

It is also troubling that Executive Branch agencies and Senate-confirmed officials have provided only vague details of their agencies’ roles. In testimony before the Science Committee, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm stated that “[The National Climate Task Force] used a number of resources, economic models. I’ve certainly talked with them.”⁵ Before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michaela Regan testified that the “analysis was done by the White House” in response to questioning about cost estimates.⁶ Such responses suggest an opaque process rather than the purported “whole-of-government” approach.⁷

While the United States’ NDC target is a nonbinding pledge, the Administration and congressional leadership have been using it to promote drastic policy changes and justify massive federal spending. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer sent a letter to colleagues advocating that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the \$3.5 trillion partisan budget reconciliation package would together “put our country on the path to meet President Biden’s climate change goals.”⁸ The White House has also championed passage of its Build Back Better plan “[i]n order to meet this goal.”⁹ The push to pass this extreme agenda without providing Members of Congress with the information supposedly driving it undermines the legislative process and could produce catastrophic consequences for our constituents.

At a time when employment rates struggle to recover, consumer prices surge, and inflation continues to rise,¹⁰ any additional burdens without solid justification could send our economy into an unrecoverable spiral. At just the surface level, your target sparks serious concerns, including those around feasibility, loss of jobs, grid reliability, and access to affordable energy.

Therefore, as Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, we once again request a briefing to better understand the process behind selecting the nationally determined contribution. We respectfully reiterate our request that the White House facilitate a

⁴ Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking, 86 Fed. Reg. 8845 (Jan. 27, 2021). .

⁵ *Overview of the Science and Energy Research Enterprise of the U.S. Department of Energy: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech.*, 117th Cong. (May 27, 2021) (response of Secretary Granholm in response to question by Rep. Brian Babin).

⁶ *The Fiscal Year 2022 EPA Budget; Hearing Before the Subcomm. On Env’t & Climate Change of the H. Comm. on Energy & Commerce*, 117th Cong. (Apr. 29, 2021) (response of Administrator Regan in response to questions by Rep. Bill Johnson).

⁷ THE WHITE HOUSE, *supra* note 3.

⁸ See e.g. Letter from Hon. Charles E. Schumer, Maj. Leader, Senate, to Colleagues (Aug. 25, 2021), *available at* [https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dear%20Colleague%2008.25.21%20\(FINAL\).pdf](https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dear%20Colleague%2008.25.21%20(FINAL).pdf).

⁹ THE WHITE HOUSE, *Fact Sheet: How the Build Back Better Plan Will Create a Better Future for Young Americans* (July 22, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/07/22/fact-sheet-how-the-build-back-better-plan-will-create-a-better-future-for-young-americans/>

¹⁰ See Lucia Mutikani, *U.S. Consumer Confidence Hits Seven-Month Low as Near-term Economic Outlook Dims*, REUTERS (Sept. 28, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/us-goods-trade-deficit-increases-august-2021-09-28/>.

briefing for Committee staff on this issue. Given the potential for the United States delegation to solidify this commitment or offer higher ones at COP 26, we ask that this briefing take place before November 1, 2021. Please ensure this briefing addresses the following questions, as posed in our initial request:

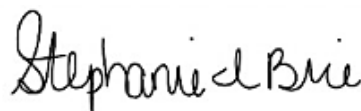
1. What steps, methods, or calculations did this “bottom-up analysis”¹¹ entail?
2. Which federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments were involved in this process, and what was the specific role of each in the process?
3. What stakeholders were consulted, through what methods were they consulted, and how did the National Climate Advisor and the National Climate Task Force organize the feedback received to ensure adequate consideration?
4. According to the nationally determined contribution document cited above, “[t]echnology availability, current costs and available savings, and future cost reductions were considered, as well as the role of enabling infrastructure.”¹² How were these data points determined, and how were they factored in to the “techno-economic analysis”?
5. Per this same document, “[s]tandards, incentives, programs, and support for innovation were all weighed in the analysis.”¹³ How were these items quantified and weighed?
6. What, if any, other models or data sources were used to inform this process?

If you have any questions related to this request, please contact the minority staff of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee at (202) 225-6371. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Frank D. Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space,
& Technology

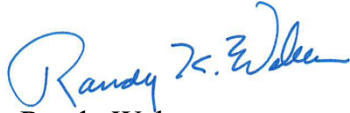


Stephanie Bice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment

¹¹ U.S. NAT’L CLIMATE ADVISOR, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION 10 (Apr. 21, 2021), *available at* <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/United%20States%20of%20America%20First/United%20States%20NDC%20April%202021%20Final.pdf>.

¹² *Id.* at 3.

¹³ *Id.*



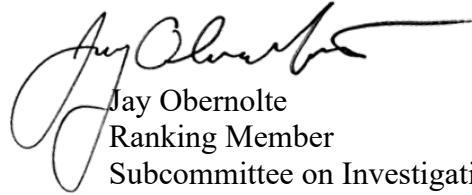
Randy Weber
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy



Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Space and
Aeronautics



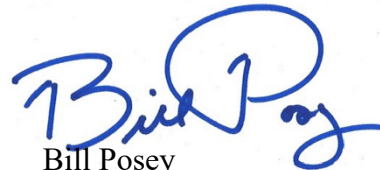
Michael Waltz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Research and
Technology



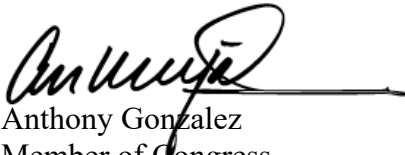
Jay Obernolte
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Investigations
and Oversight



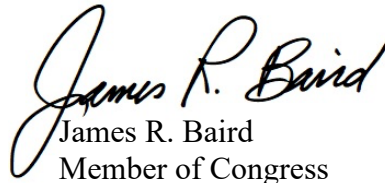
Mo Brooks
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
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James R. Baird
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Carlos Giménez
Member of Congress



Peter Meijer
Member of Congress



Jake Ellzey
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chair, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology.