**Memorandum**

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:**

**Re:** In Absence of Action from Trump Administration, Local Leaders Must Do What Trump Won’t Do on Climate Change to Protect Americans.

**Date:**

On October 8, 2018, the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released their [much-anticipated report](https://climatenexus.org/international/ipcc/ipcc-1-5c-report-planet-nearing-tipping-point/) which found that our time to act and avoid the most deadly and disastrous effects of climate change is quickly running out. Specifically, the report estimates that if global temperatures warm just 1.5 degrees Celsius, hundreds of millions more people could be exposed to life-threatening flooding, heat waves, and water shortages by 2050. Their conclusions are based on more than 6,000 scientific papers, input from 91 authors, and editors from 40 countries.

Despite this dire news, the Trump administration remains steadfast in forcing their toxic agenda on Americans, questioning the science behind the report to excuse their reckless roll back of the best protections we have on the books to fight climate change, protect our health and protect our economy.

**With that in mind, we encourage your newspaper to editorialize in opposition to the Trump administration’s polluter backed climate and clean air policy rollbacks, especially in light of the imminent threats and call for immediate action presented by the IPCC’s report. These rollbacks harm the lives and livelihoods of [STATE DEMONYMS] and take us backwards in our fight against climate change.**

So far, Trump and his cabinet have proposed a rollback of: America’s clean car standards; put forth a “Dirty Power Scam,” which would replace the lifesaving Clean Power Plan, which set the first federal limits on carbon pollution from power plants; and are working to gut methane pollution protections – an especially grave danger to our planet given methane’s potent warming power.

However, despite the Trump administration’s abdication of global leadership on climate change, states, cities, businesses, and every day Americans are filling the vacuum with their own commitments and action to meet “America’s Pledge” to reduce carbon pollution by moving forward with local clean energy solutions. Over 2,700 leaders from states, cities, and businesses – representing 159 million people and $6.2 trillion in GDP – are ramping up actions to cut carbon pollution as the rest of the world continues to work toward the goals of the Paris Agreement. [INSERT LOCAL ACTION].

We need climate action now more than ever. Apart from the urgent pleas from the world’s top climate scientists, we know from our own experiences with extreme weather in recent years; from the wildfires raging through the American West; and from the devastating Hurricanes like Michael and Florence; that we need forward-looking policies that take steps to reduce the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. We can no longer accept the backwards approach to public health protection illustrated the Trump administration’s toxic agenda, which is leading us to the brink of disaster.

**Americans deserve clean air. By rolling back clean car standards, the Trump administration will allow automakers to make dirtier cars that pollute the air and harm our health.**

* Cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks are now the country’s largest source of the carbon pollution that causes climate change. That makes the clean car standards the most effective policy we have on the books to fight climate change and protect public health.
* Even EPA’s Scientific Advisory Board, which includes members handpicked by the Trump Administration, is questioning the “adequacy” of the scientific justifications for rolling back these standards. These rollbacks ignore thousands of pages of research showing that the current standards are achievable, protect public health, and reduce air pollution.
* Over 26 million Americans suffer from asthma – including 6 million children. By rolling back safeguards that protect them, the Trump administration demonstrates once again they will protect the interest of their polluter allies over the health of American kids.
* No one voted for more pollution and dirtier air. But that’s exactly what we’ll get if President Trump, Andrew Wheeler, and Deputy NHTSA Administrator Heidi King succeed in rolling back clean car standards.

**The Clean Power Plan should be made stronger, not gutted with a “Dirty Power Scam” that will cost lives, exacerbate climate change, and slow the transition to cleaner, safer and more economically competitive and beneficial energy sources.**

* The Clean Power Plan set the first federal limits on carbon pollution from power plants – a major source of the pollution that drives climate change.
* The Trump administration’s own analysis found that the Clean Power Plan could prevent as many as 4,500 premature deaths each year by 2030 — more than even Obama’s EPA estimated — and previous estimates found it could provide up to $54 billion in health and climate benefits.
* The Clean Power Plan also encouraged investment in cleaner, safer energy sources like wind and solar. Clean energy creates jobs and drives economic growth and is supported by a majority of Americans.
* Instead of listening to American families who will be impacted by the deadly impacts of climate change, Trump and Wheeler are pushing their Dirty Power Scam; a corporate polluter giveaway that will cost thousands of lives, exacerbate climate change, and threaten our health.

**Methane pollution poses a grave a danger to our planet. It has over 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide, making it among the most potent drivers of climate change. Despite this imminent threat, though, the Trump administration is rapidly trying to gut commonsense, cost-effective methane standards.**

* In 2016, two rules were finalized to reduce methane pollution and waste: the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Methane and Waste Prevention Rule and the EPA's New Source Performance Standards.
* [National](https://www.lung.org/about-us/media/press-releases/new-methane-poll-shows-broad-support.html) and [regional](https://www.citizensfor.com/survey-voters-want-maintain-improve-current-federal-methane-emission-regulations/) polling consistently shows broad, bipartisan support for these methane rules, ranging to over 70 percent in several states. What’s more a [plurality of voters](https://morningconsult.com/2018/09/19/43-plurality-of-voters-oppose-epas-proposed-easing-of-methane-rule/) oppose EPA’s rollback of methane protections.
* Yet again, the Trump administration is ignoring the overwhelming support for the rules, including action taken by the U.S. Senate last year to block a Congressional Review Act resolution attempting to axe the BLM rule.
* On top of support for the rules, reducing methane waste and pollution is critical to protecting our health.
  + Right now, oil and gas industrial facilities emit at least 8.1 million metric tons of methane pollution a year. That has the same climate impact as operating over 150 coal-fired power plants for a year or driving more than 145 million cars for a year.
  + EPA scientists recently published [a peer reviewed study](https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.8b02050) finding that particulate matter and ozone pollution, from oil and gas development, is expected to result in nearly 2,000 deaths by the year 2025.
* There is no reason to weaken the rule, which is cost effective and helps create a more efficient energy system-- especially as industry continues to move forward on efforts to reduce emissions.
  + In May, ExxonMobil committed to reduce methane emissions by 15 percent and flaring by 25 percent by 2020. Earlier in the year, ExxonMobil US subsidiary XTO Energy also announced an enhanced leak detection and repair program.
* The Trump administration’s efforts to weaken these protections and create loopholes for polluters is a blatant giveaway to oil and gas interests at the expense of communities’ health and well-being, and will mean more wasted natural gas, less money for impacted communities and more air and climate pollution from public and tribal lands.

The good news is that despite the Trump administration’s climate denial, abdication of global leadership on this imminent threat, and barrage of rollbacks to lifesaving protections, states, cities, businesses, and everyday Americans are moving forward to meet “America’s Pledge” to reduce the carbon pollution that contributes to climate change by moving forward with local clean energy solutions.

Since President Trump announced he would retreat from the Paris Agreement, over 2,700 state and local leaders representing 159 million people and $6.2 trillion in GDP declared “We Are Still In” and are ramping actions to cut carbon pollution. [INSERT AMERICA’S PLEDGE EXAMPLE]

###