Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2013

Mr. Richard Trumka
President
AFL-CIO
815 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Trumka:

We are writing to you as co-chairs of the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change to solicit your assistance in gathering the individual views of your organization's members on the important issue of climate change. We look forward to receiving a wide range of responses that reflect the diversity of your membership.

The recent draft report National Climate Assessment is the latest comprehensive study to confirm that climate change is occurring, that it is caused by human activity, and that its dangerous impacts are pervasive. The consequences of climate change are disruptive and wide-ranging, from extreme heat and sea level rise to droughts and wildfires. Recovery efforts are lengthy and expensive. As Superstorm Sandy demonstrated, we are already starting to experience severe weather events of alarming intensity.

The window to prevent catastrophic climate change is rapidly closing. If we do not act soon, our children and future generations will suffer from irreversible changes to our environment that we are causing. We have a moral obligation to act.

We are writing to ask that you share this letter with your members in order to solicit their ideas about the actions the federal government can take to address climate change. We welcome suggestions for action by the leading federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy, as well as recommendations for action by agencies that have been less visible in this debate, from the Appalachian Regional Commission to the U.S. Trade Representative. We also invite suggestions for new authorities to be enacted by Congress.

We invite all suggestions for action, both large and small. We welcome a wide range of ideas: limited or far-reaching, easy or complex, possible with existing authorities or dependent on new legislation. Specifically, we would appreciate answers to the following questions by February 20, 2013:

1. What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt, using existing authorities, to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution?
2. What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt, using existing authorities, to make our nation more resilient to the effects of climate change?
3. What legislation would you recommend Congress enact to strengthen the ability of federal agencies to prevent and respond to the effects of climate change?

Also, please feel free to provide any supporting information, such as the amount of emissions reductions or economic benefits, associated with your recommendations.

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We value the expertise and experience of the groups your organization represents. Their responses will help inform Congress and the federal government about the menu of options that could be taken to address climate change.

We thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions, you can contact Kiren Gopal of Rep. Waxman's House Energy and Commerce Committee staff at Kiren.Gopal@mail.house.gov, or Emily Enderle of Sen. Whitehouse's staff at Emily_Enderle@whitehouse.senate.gov.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce

Sheldon Whitehouse
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight, Senate
Committee Environment and Public Works