

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
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June 19, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

We are writing to commend you for your efforts to spur international action to address short-lived climate pollutants, including black carbon, ground-level ozone, methane, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFC's). We also encourage you to focus high-level attention on this issue at the G20 Summit in Mexico and in the months leading up to the Montreal Protocol's Meeting of the Parties in November.

Unlike carbon dioxide, which remains in the atmosphere for millennia, short-lived climate pollutants have a relatively short lifetime in the atmosphere of a few days to a few decades. Yet they are responsible for nearly half of current global warming.¹ As a result, cutting short-lived climate pollution can significantly reduce the current rate of global warming, particularly in the Arctic, where it can reduce the rate of warming by an estimated two-thirds in the next thirty years.² Implementation of measures to cut emissions of short-lived climate pollutants has the potential to reduce the planetary warming expected by 2050 by half a degree Celsius.³ Such action would substantially reduce the risk of crossing the dangerous threshold of more than two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming. Because ground-level ozone and black carbon also harm human health and agriculture, emissions reductions

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report: The Physical Science Basis* (2007).

² World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, *Integrated Assessment of Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone* (2011).

³ *Id.*; *Simultaneously Mitigating Near-Term Climate Change and Improving Human health and Food Security*, Science (Jan. 2012).

could save millions of lives each year and increase annual crop yields by tens of millions of tons.⁴

We strongly support the initiatives of the recently-launched Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants. By partnering with a number of developed and developing countries, as well as international organizations, the United States has taken a leadership role in addressing these pollutants.⁵ The Coalition promises to produce concrete environmental and health benefits by focusing on the rapid implementation of five initiatives, including reducing diesel emissions from heavy-duty vehicles, upgrading old inefficient brick kilns, and accelerating the reduction of methane emissions from landfills. We believe that your personal commitment to this effort has been crucial to its early success.

Your personal involvement in the effort to address HFCs under the Montreal Protocol would be similarly invaluable. The Montreal Protocol is widely recognized as a tremendously successful international environmental agreement. In 2009, it became the first international environmental agreement to achieve universal ratification by every country in the world. As a result of the Montreal Protocol's legally binding controls on the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances, global emissions of these gases are a small fraction of their 1990 levels. Although we still have a way to go, the ozone layer is on the path to recovery.

In 2009, the United States joined Mexico and Canada in proposing an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase-down the production and consumption of HFCs, which are extremely potent greenhouse gases. The amendment has not yet been adopted, but each year the North American proposal has gained support – from 41 countries in 2009 to 91 countries in 2010 and 108 countries in 2011.

This year, the United States, Mexico, and Canada have once again placed the HFC proposal on the agenda of the Meeting of the Parties in November. This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol. It is a time when parties will naturally reflect on past successes and look to harness the potential of the Protocol to confront new challenges. In 2007, with the leadership of the United States, the parties agreed to accelerate the phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), which both deplete the ozone layer and contribute to climate change. Five years later, the pressing task is to adopt the North American HFC proposal. We encourage you to personally engage with the governments of key developing countries, such as India, China, and Brazil, to make substantive negotiations a reality. The foundation for progress has already been laid. It is time for the Montreal Protocol to take its next big stride forward.

⁴ *Simultaneously Mitigating Near-Term Climate Change and Improving Human Health and Food Security*, Science (Jan. 2012).

⁵ The founding coalition partners are Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden, and the United States, together with the UN Environment Programme. U.S. Department of State, Fact Sheet, *The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants* (Feb. 16, 2012) (online at www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/02/184055.htm).

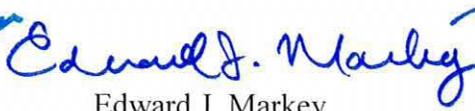
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
June 19, 2012
Page 3

Climate change is an enormous challenge. We appreciate your dedication to addressing this problem and look forward to working with you to harness the full potential of the Montreal Protocol and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to help meet this challenge.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and
Commerce



Edward J. Markey
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural
Resources



Howard L. Berman
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign
Affairs