

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20505

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20505

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20505

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we write to demand that any federal assistance to the aviation industry to address the rapid drop-off of worldwide travel due to the coronavirus be conditioned on the industry agreeing to take necessary steps to ensure the safety of our climate, impacted workers, and affected communities. We oppose the U.S. aviation industry's request for \$50-60 billion in unconditional assistance and any request that would allow the aviation industry to shirk its responsibility to workers or return to business as usual in the face of the climate crisis.

Status quo operation of the aviation industry is incompatible with global efforts to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Commercial aviation already accounts for 12% of all U.S. transport CO₂ emissions, 2.4% of annual global CO₂ emissions, and is expected to grow rapidly in the coming decades under a business as usual model.¹ If emissions are not curbed, between 2020 and 2050, aviation is projected to consume over a quarter of the entire global budget for a 1.5°C warming scenario. Unfortunately, the aviation industry has successfully opposed and avoided virtually every meaningful regulation of its greenhouse pollution.

Simply put, the aviation industry must begin decarbonizing now. Accordingly, any financial assistance from Congress, tax relief, loans or grants must be conditioned upon reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the US airline industry. Specifically we request that any financial assistance to the aviation sector require:

1) Put airline employees first. Flight attendants, ground crews, pilots, and all the workers that support the airline industry are feeling the brunt of the impacts from the coronavirus crisis. Aviation workers cannot afford a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis, where the plight of ordinary people was an afterthought while corporations and corporate boards received outlandish support. Any bailout of the aviation industry should make sure that workers are made whole first and foremost with strong labor protections and direct payroll subsidies to flight attendants, pilots, ground workers, caterers, and other impacted workers. In the long-term, as the aviation industry transitions to an environmentally just and sustainable model, the U.S. federal government must

¹ International Council on Clean Transportation, CO₂ emissions from commercial aviation, 2018, <https://theicct.org/publications/co2-emissions-commercial-aviation-2018>; See also, Environmental and Energy Study Institute, Fact Sheet: The Growth in Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Commercial Aviation (Oct. 17, 2019), <https://www.eesi.org/papers/view/fact-sheet-the-growth-in-greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-commercial-aviation>

support every worker in the industry and guarantee that existing pensions are honored, health care coverage is maintained, and job transition training is provided, among other vital benefits.

2) *Science-Based Emission Reductions for Greenhouse Gas Emissions.* Section 231 of the Clean Air Act requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue rules to reduce greenhouse pollution for planes, just as it does for cars and trucks. Despite this clear requirement, the Trump administration has failed to establish greenhouse gas limits for aircraft. Any relief package must require EPA to issue a final rule within 18 months to regulate emissions for both in-service and new aircraft, that reduces emissions by at least 2.5% per year.

3) *An Absolute Cap on Greenhouse Gas Emissions from U.S. Airline Fleets.* Congress must cap total lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. airline fleets at 2020 levels, and overall emissions must fall at least 20% per decade thereafter. These emission reduction targets must be absolute, and not employ dubious accounting mechanisms such as offsets, or rely on problematic biofuels that harm the environment, the climate, food security, and land rights.

4) *Reform of Slot Usage Rules.* On March 11, 2020, the Federal Aviation Administration announced a temporary waiver of the minimum slot-use requirements,² under which airlines can lose their slots at congested airports if not sufficiently used. The waiver of slot-use requirements is essential to avoid the ludicrous debacle of “ghost flights” — empty aircraft that fly anyway to maintain airport gate slots — pointlessly wasting fuel and exacerbating the climate crisis. Slot use rules must be revised long-term to ensure that greenhouse pollution is minimized moving forward, rather than incentivizing inefficient and wasteful air travel.

Airline industry executives have not only relentlessly opposed common sense regulation of their industry, but recklessly failed to plan for the inevitable downturn by spending a stunning 96% of their free cash flow over the past decade on stock buybacks.³ Congressional bailouts that simply return to the pre-crisis status quo are unacceptable. Climate change damages will wreak havoc on a scale even greater than the coronavirus. It is time to stop repeating the mistakes of the past and ensure that any bailout of the aviation industry puts it on a path to address its threat to our climate, workers and communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Center for Biological Diversity | 9. 350 Montgomery County |
| 2. 100Grannies.org for a Livable Future | 10. 350 Sacramento |
| 3. 198 methods | 11. 350 Santa Cruz |
| 4. 350 Colorado | 12. 350 Seattle |
| 5. 350 Eastside | 13. 350 Triangle |
| 6. 350 Everett | 14. 350.org |
| 7. 350 Mass Metro North Node | 15. 350Brooklyn |
| 8. 350 Milwaukee | 16. 350Greenbelt |

² Federal Aviation Authority, “FAA Acts to Help Airlines Affected by Coronavirus Cancellations,” https://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=24736 (last visited March 16, 2020)

³ See, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-16/u-s-airlines-spent-96-of-free-cash-flow-on-buybacks-chart>

17. 350Kishwaukee (IL)
18. ActionAid USA
19. Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
20. Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments Fellowship
21. American Federation of Teachers
22. Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
23. Animas Valley Institute
24. Anthropocene Alliance
25. Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
26. Azul
27. BeanCounters Unlimited
28. Beloved Earth Community of The Riverside Church
29. Berks Gas Truth
30. Berkshire County Branch NAACP
31. Better Path Coalition
32. Beyond Extreme Energy
33. Big Reuse
34. Biofuelwatch
35. Brighter Green
36. Bronx Climate Justice North
37. Buddhists Responding - Corvallis
38. California Young Democrats Environmental Caucus
39. Canton Residents for a Sustainable, Equitable Future
40. Carolina Biodiesel, LLC
41. Catskill Mountainkeeper
42. Center for a Competitive Waste Industry
43. Center for Climate Change and Health
44. Center for Climate Change Communication, George Mason University
45. Center for Disability Rights, Inc.
46. Center for Environmental Health
47. Center for International Environmental Law
48. Central California Environmental Justice Network
49. CEO Pipe Organs/Golden Ponds Farm
50. Chatham Research Group
51. Christians For The Mountains
52. Church Women United in New York State
53. Citizens Regeneration Lobby
54. Clean Energy Action
55. CleanAirNow
56. Clemson University Students for Environmental Action
57. Climate Defense Project
58. Climate Hawks Vote
59. Climate Justice Alliance
60. Clinton Church Restoration Project
61. Co-op Power
62. CODEPINK, Long Island, NY
63. Collaborative Center for Justice
64. Columbus Community Bill of Rights
65. Concerned Citizens of Danby NY
66. Concerned Health Professionals of New York
67. Conservation Congress
68. Cooperative Energy Futures
69. Corporate Ethics International
70. Courage California
71. Crawford Stewardship Project
72. Deep Green Resistance New York City
73. Democratic National Committee Environment and Climate Crisis Council
74. Development Resource Group New York City
75. Dogwood Alliance
76. Don't Gas the Pinelands
77. Don't Waste Arizona
78. Down to Earth Storytelling
79. Earth Ethics, Inc.
80. Earth Guardians Bay Area Crew
81. Earth Justice Ministries
82. Echotopia LLC
83. Eco-Eating
84. Eco-Justice Collaborative
85. Ecology Party of Florida
86. EcoWorks
87. Elders Climate Action

88. Elmirans and Friends Against Fracking
89. Endangered Habitats League
90. Endangered Species Coalition
91. Episcopal Dioceses of Mass.
92. Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
93. Fire Drill Fridays
94. Flight Free USA
95. Food & Water Action
96. Food Empowerment Project
97. Foundation Earth
98. Frac Sand Sentinel: Project Outreach
99. Frack Free Catskills
100. FracTracker Alliance
101. FreshWater Accountability Project
102. Fresnans against Fracking
103. Friendly But Suspicious Productions, Inc.
104. Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
105. Friends of the Bitterroot
106. Friends of the Earth
107. Friends of the Owls
108. Fund for Wild Nature
109. GASPP
110. Genesis Farm
111. Geos Institute
112. Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
113. Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
114. Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
115. Great Old Broads for Wilderness
116. Greater Brunswick Peaceworks
117. Greater New York Labor- Religion Coalition
118. Green Belt Movement International-NA
119. Green Party of Butler and Venango Counties
120. GreenLatinos
121. Greenpeace USA
122. Hands Across the Sand
123. Holman United Methodist Church
124. Hope Glen Farm
125. Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
126. Idle No More SF Bay
127. Idle No More SoCal
128. Indigenous Environmental Network
129. Indivisible
130. Inspiration of Sedona
131. Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
132. Interfaith Earthkeepers of Eugene
133. Interfaith Oceans
134. Iowa Green Party
135. Jackpine Savage Guide Service
136. Jewish Climate Action Network - MA
137. Kickapoo Peace Circle
138. KyotoUSA
139. Labor Network for Sustainability
140. LaPlaca and Associates LLC
141. Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper
142. Long Beach 350
143. Marcellus Outreach Butler
144. Mass Forest Rescue
145. Metro NY Catholic Climate Movement
146. Mid-Missouri Peaceworks
147. Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance
148. MLK Coalition of Greater Los Angeles
149. Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)
150. Movement Rights
151. National Center for Transgender Equality
152. National Employment Lawyers Association
153. National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
154. National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
155. National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
156. Native Movement
157. Nature Coast Conservation, Inc.
158. NC APPPL
159. NC WARN

160. NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
161. New York Communities for Change
162. No Coal in Oakland
163. No Sharon Gas Pipeline
164. North Bronx Racial Justice
165. North Carolina Council of Churches
166. North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light
167. North Quabbin Energy
168. Northern Jaguar Project
169. Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council
170. Nuclear Information and Resource Service
171. NYC H2O
172. Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
173. Ocean Conservation Research
174. Oceanic Preservation Society
175. Oil Change U.S.
176. On Behalf of Planet Earth
177. OneMillionOfUs
178. OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
179. Partnership for Policy Integrity
180. Partnership for Southern Equity
181. Peace Action New York State
182. Pelican Media
183. People Demanding Action
184. People for a Healthy Environment
185. People for Mobility Justice (PMJ)
186. People's Health Movement - USA
187. Peoples Climate Movement-NY
188. Physicians for Social Responsibility
189. Physicians for Social Responsibility Colorado
190. Physicians for Social Responsibility, AZ Chapter
191. Popular Resistance
192. Power Shift Network
193. Poweshiek-Jasper Green Party
194. Presentation Srs, Aberdeen SD Justice Commission
195. Progressive Democrats of America
196. Progressive Democrats of America, Tucson Chapter
197. Public Citizen
198. Public Lands Project
199. Rachel Carson Council
200. Rachel's Network
201. Radiation Truth
202. Rainforest Action Network
203. RedTailed Hawk Collective
204. Riverdale Jewish Earth Alliance
205. RootsAction.org
206. Safe Climate Campaign
207. SanDiego350
208. Santa Barbara Frack Back to Save the Central Coast
209. Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition
210. Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
211. Save Our Shores
212. SAVE THE FROGS!
213. Save Wolves Now Network
214. SCIPL
215. Seeding Sovereignty
216. Sequoia ForestKeeper®
217. Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples
218. Sharon, CT Energy and Environment Commission
219. Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
220. Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
221. Sisters of the Presentation
222. SoCal 350 Climate Action
223. Social Eco Education (SEE-LA)
224. Sojourners
225. South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)
226. South Texas Human Rights Center
227. Spottswoode Winery, Inc.
228. Stone Quarry House
229. Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
230. Sunflower Alliance

231. Sunrise Movement Asheville
232. Sustainable Novato
233. Sustainable Upton
234. Synergistic Solutions
235. Syracuse Cultural Workers
236. Tar Sands Action Southern California
237. Tax March
238. The Climate Center
239. The Climate Mobilization: Hoboken Chapter
240. The Conservation Planning Institute
241. The Daniel Initiative
242. The Democracy Collaborative
243. The Enviro Show
244. The River Project
245. Tikkun & the Network of Spiritual Progressives
246. Topanga Peace Alliance
247. Toxic Free NC
248. Transition Express Inc
249. Transition Sebastopol
250. Tucson Climate Action Network
251. Turtle Island Restoration Network
252. Two Mooks and a Mic
253. Unexpected Wildlife Refuge
254. Union for Reform Judaism
255. Unitarian Universalist Association
256. Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
257. University of Oregon Climate Justice League
258. Up Homes
259. Uplift
260. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
261. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
262. V-Day/One Billion Rising
263. Valley Watch, Inc.
264. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
265. Vote-Climate
266. Wasatch Clean Air Coalition
267. WATCH, Inc
268. We Own It
269. Weather Medic Inc
270. Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club
271. WESPAC Foundation
272. West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
273. West End Revitalization Assn
274. WildEarth Guardians
275. WilderUtopia
276. WildWest Institute
277. Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)
278. Young Democrats of America
279. Zero Hour