

February 4, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

My name is Jonathan Hester and I am a scientist living in Wisconsin. I am writing to you about a challenge I am extremely concerned about, Global Climate Change. There is a robust scientific consensus that global warming is happening, is caused by humans, and has the real potential to greatly harm Earth's capacity to support human life. Between 97% and 99.99% of scientists believe this.<sup>1-3</sup> Because of this near-unanimous scientific consensus, I am frustrated and concerned that both you and 34% of U.S. Congress members have made public statements expressing skepticism that global warming is a real problem. I do not believe this skepticism will be a tenable position much longer; the irrefutable evidence is all around us.

I think you know all of this. At least, you did in 2009, when you and three of your children signed an open letter to President Obama and the U.S. Congress stating,<sup>4</sup> "If we fail to act now, it is scientifically irrefutable that there will be catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet." Since 2009, the evidence of this challenge has only continued to mount, but your recent public statements have been more confusing and you have taken multiple actions that are unhelpful in dealing with this existential threat to humanity. You have said, "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." This statement is obviously absurd to anyone even marginally informed on the subject, and it directly contradicts the 2009 letter you signed, which argued – correctly – that a shift to clean energy would "spur economic growth." You have said you "have an open mind to" withdrawing from international climate change accords, a move which would represent a shameful and disastrous neglect of global leadership on the part of our nation. You have signed an Executive Order green-lighting the Keystone XL pipeline expansion, expressly for the purpose of delivering to market crude from Canadian oil sands that will produce 17% more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil.<sup>5</sup> You have nominated a global climate change denier to lead the EPA.

Based on your signature in 2009, I have hope that you can be convinced to renew your attention to this important issue. Our nation must maintain its commitments to international accords related to curbing greenhouse gas emissions. This will require that fossil fuel emissions be made to have *costs* that reflects their profound developing impacts on the Earth and the well-being of future generations. The specific policies can be debated: EPA regulation, carbon tax, cap-and-trade. *But we must stop pretending this problem does not exist.* As my President and the most influential leader in the world, I urge you to please re-educate yourself about Global Climate Change and take actions that are consistent with transitioning our energy infrastructure to a sustainable one. I am, and particularly my children and grandchildren are, counting on you.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Hester, Ph.D.

## References

1. J. Cook, *et al.*, Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature; *Environmental Research Letters* **8** (2013), 024024.
2. J. L. Powell, Climate scientists virtually unanimous: anthropogenic global warming is true; *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* **35** (2015), 121-124.
3. J. Cook, *et al.*, Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming; *Environmental Research Letters* **11** (2016), 048002.
4. *Washington Post* article: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/22/whats-donald-trumps-position-on-climate-change-all-of-them/?utm\\_term=.b5df1cff6d3d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/22/whats-donald-trumps-position-on-climate-change-all-of-them/?utm_term=.b5df1cff6d3d).
5. "Editorial: Tar Sands and the Carbon Numbers," *The New York Times*, 8-21-2011, ISSN 0362-4331.