

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

World leaders will soon gather for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, a meeting that may well affect the lives of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of the world's people in this century. For the good of our nation and the good of our planet, we wish your administration every success in endeavors to reach an agreement that results in a sustainable and livable environment.

While we can expect disagreements on the means to accomplish this objective, there is one singular goal around which all nations must align in order to avert disaster, the concentration of carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere.

We urge you to attend the conference and seek agreement with fellow leaders in Copenhagen on the ultimate goal of lowering and maintaining the level of CO₂ in the Earth's atmosphere at 350 parts per million.

Scientists tell us we must reach and maintain a level of 350 ppm in order to keep global temperatures from rising to catastrophic levels. That threshold has already been breached – 390 ppm and climbing – and signs indicate that global climate change is under way. Those signs include glaciers receding at record rates and the loss of summer sea ice in the Arctic Ocean.

Our nation's leading climate scientist, Dr. James Hansen, Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, put it this way:

“If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleo-climate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm (now 390 ppm) to at most 350 ppm.”

A recent report from the United Nations Environment Program was very specific about the consequences our world faces unless we take more aggressive steps to lower the level of CO₂ in our atmosphere.

- Loss of mountain glaciers will affect drinking water, irrigation and hydro-power for 20-25 percent of the world's population.

The Honorable Barack Obama

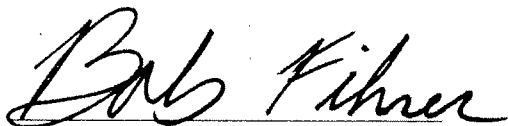
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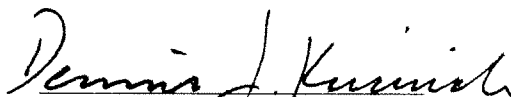
- As more carbon is absorbed in the oceans, acidification increases, destroying shell-making creatures that provide the foundation for life in our seas. About 1 billion people depend upon the bounty of the oceans for food.
- Sea levels will rise six feet, inundating low-lying islands and coastal areas.
- Droughts in the Southwest United States will become more severe.
- Arctic permafrost, which stores twice the amount of CO2 that is held in the atmosphere as well as methane, will thaw and accelerate the climate change process.
- Shifting climate patterns will destroy large numbers of habitats, killing species that live in those habitats.

By agreeing to the 350 ppm goal, nations will craft the policies and solutions to meet this challenge, just as America once met the challenge of sending a human being to the moon. And by meeting this challenge we will allow our children and grandchildren to inherit the kind of world that we ourselves have been so blessed to enjoy.

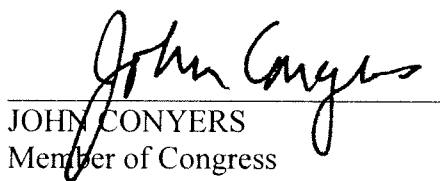
Sincerely,



BOB FILNER
Member of Congress



DENNIS KUCINICH
Member of Congress



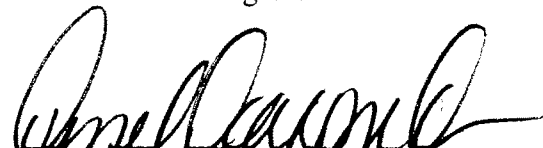
JOHN CONYERS
Member of Congress



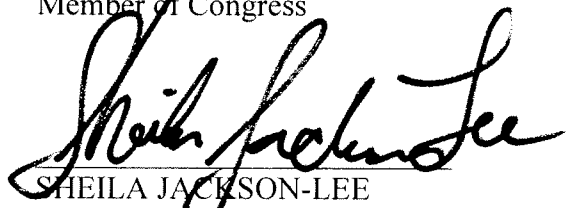
JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress



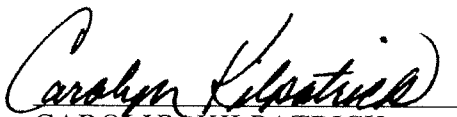
LYNN WOOSLEY
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