American Conservation Coalition

CHANGING the NARRATIVE.
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The American Climate Contract

The right way forward on climate change

Climate change is among the most significant challenges facing the United States—and the world — in the 21st century. From rising sea-levels to increased extreme weather events, our health, well-being, and security will be impacted without significant decreases in global greenhouse gas emissions.

Sound science demonstrates that there is an undeniable link between human activity, particularly greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change. It is vital that the United States government, foreign partners, and the private sector work jointly to reduce global emissions and help communities adapt to the direct and indirect impacts of climate change.

The United States is the global economic powerhouse, innovation hub, and leader of the free world. As a result, it is our moral responsibility to play a leading role in the response to the threats posed by climate change.

Both inaction and unrealistic proposals are insufficient responses. The United States should prioritize actionable policy solutions that will generate environmental and economic benefits for all Americans impacted by climate change and for the betterment of future generations.

To fully address the threat of climate change and move toward the goal of global net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the United States should advance specific policies and champion collaborative initiatives in the following categories:

Energy Innovation

The United States should continue to lead in developing innovative energy technologies and a broad cross-section of energy resources. This can be accomplished by expanding public-private partnerships, as well as helping federal laboratories and the private sector work together in developing and scaling affordable emissions-reducing technologies for the power, commercial, and industrial sectors. Congress should also direct federal investments in ways that best promote improvements in exportable energy technology. Policies like these will diversify the United States' energy portfolio, provide consumers with access to affordable and reliable energy, and reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

21st Century Infrastructure

The United States should modernize its infrastructure to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Deploying smart-grid and competitive energy transmission infrastructure will make it easier to transport energy efficiently. Integrating low- and zero-emissions technology into transportation infrastructure will also reduce emissions. Clean energy should be expanded in public and commercial transit, as well as for millions of passenger vehicles on the roads. To accomplish these goals, Congress should use targeted investment and regulatory streamlining to bring the United States' infrastructure into the 21st century.

Natural Solutions

The United States should pursue natural solutions that store carbon and enhance resiliency. Investing in projects such as wetland restoration and reforestation will expand carbon sinks and facilitate the natural processes that reduce emissions. To accomplish this, private landowners, farmers, and other important actors should be encouraged to pursue conservation strategies that maximize carbon storage capacity. Prioritizing natural solutions like wetland restoration and active forest management that reduce risks from flooding and wildfires will ensure that the United States is better prepared for natural disasters. Promoting natural solutions both domestically and globally will help the United States' climate mitigation and resilience efforts.

Global Engagement

The United States should engage with partner nations to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and develop climate adaptation practices. By promoting and deploying technologies and resources to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, the United States will be a leader and an example to the rest of the world.