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c/o Office of the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate  
c/o Office of Domestic Climate Policy  
c/o Office of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

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As organizations working to tackle the climate crisis, we applaud the Biden-Harris Administration's decision to rejoin the Paris Agreement and ratify the Kigali Amendment, and to convene a global leaders' climate summit on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The devastating impacts of climate change are upon us and accelerating faster than ever imagined. This puts a premium on aggressive action to curb all of the pollutants that are driving the climate crisis – including the super pollutants that are causing the most immediate warming impacts and whose abatement offers the most immediate relief by quickly bending the warming curve (and not just the emissions curve).

Early action to cut emissions of methane, hydrofluorocarbons, black carbon, and tropospheric ozone is the best strategy for reducing the warming coming in the next two to three decades – to slow self-reinforcing feedback loops, to keep from crashing through the 1.5C guardrail, and to avoid catastrophic near-term impacts and tipping points, especially in the Arctic. Cutting carbon dioxide emissions is necessary but not sufficient. A dual strategy is needed, with cuts in the super pollutants to reduce near-term warming while carbon dioxide mitigation reduces warming over a longer time horizon.

Reducing black carbon soot and tropospheric ozone reduces warming in a matter of days to months, while reducing HFCs and methane reduces warming over a decade and a half. Cutting these pollutants also provides direct public health benefits to disproportionately affected people of color and low-income communities both here and in other countries.

While much more must be done to regain U.S. domestic and international leadership, there is a strong foundation for fast action on super pollutants. Strategies for reducing these pollutants are well known, feasible, and are often very low or no cost.

According to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition – a coalition of 71 countries, including the United States, and 78 international and non-governmental partners – global efforts to cut super pollutants could reduce:

- At least 40 percent of methane emissions by 2030 compared to 2010,
- Up to 70 percent of black carbon by 2030 relative to 2010, and
- 99.5 percent of HFCs by 2050 compared to 2010.<sup>1</sup>

The Administration has immediate opportunities to curb methane, which packs more than 80 times the heat-trapping punch of CO<sub>2</sub> over the next 20 years. Methane accounts for a quarter of today's global warming, and levels in the atmosphere are surging.<sup>2</sup> Methane emissions from the global oil and gas sector alone cause nearly as much near-term warming as CO<sub>2</sub> from coal-fired power plants worldwide.<sup>3</sup> The Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration can act quickly to cut methane emissions from this industry to 65% below 2012 levels by 2025.<sup>4</sup> The International Energy Agency estimates that global emissions from this industry can be cut by 75% by 2030. The U.S. must reengage internationally on methane through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Global Methane Alliance, the International Methane Observatory and other mechanisms.

Cutting methane also will help reduce tropospheric ozone, which is formed when precursor gases including oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds, methane, and carbon monoxide react in the presence of sunlight. EPA can cut overall tropospheric ozone by tightening the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone smog, which would also bring direct public health benefits, reducing early deaths and lost school and work days.

The EPA has new responsibilities to phase down HFCs under the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act just enacted as part of the omnibus package in December, which creates opportunities for additional climate benefits by recovering, recycling, or destroying HFCs. By moving quickly to ratify the Kigali Amendment, the State Department can solidify global action on HFCs. The Energy Department can also contribute additional climate mitigation by upgrading appliance efficiency standards to reduce the energy used by cooling equipment.

Black carbon also was addressed in the omnibus package with the reauthorization of the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act and EPA's new performance standards for woodstoves. As California is demonstrating, more can be done to cut black carbon through clean fuel standards, transitioning to electric vehicles, reducing emissions from shipping, and improved fire-free agricultural practices.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/content/short-lived-climate-pollutant-solutions>

<sup>2</sup> See: [https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends\\_ch4/](https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends_ch4/)

<sup>3</sup> See: R. B., Jackson, et al. (2020) "Increasing anthropogenic methane emissions arise equally from agricultural and fossil fuel sources". Environ. Res. Lett. 15 071002 and <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-co2-status-report-2019/emissions>

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.catf.us/resource/reducing-methane-from-oil-and-gas/>

In addition to putting the super pollutants on the agenda of your climate summit, we urge you to make mitigation of super pollutants a priority in all of the international consultations and negotiations that will take place this year, including the re-entry into the Paris Agreement and plans for strengthening that agreement at the next Conference of the Parties in Glasgow this fall; and at the Arctic Council ministerial in Iceland in May.

With your leadership, the U.S. can seize the significant national and international opportunities to reduce emissions of the short-lived super pollutants to complement aggressive action to cut carbon dioxide and ensure that the warming curve does not breach the 1.5 - 2-degree Celsius limits to protect against irreversible climate tipping points.

The time to act is now. As a collective group of organizations working to promote fast action strategies to slow global warming as quickly as possible, we are ready to help you in any way.

Sincerely,

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Armond Cohen, Executive Director, Clean Air Task Force

David Doniger, Senior Strategic Director, Climate & Clean Energy Program,  
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Durwood Zaelke, Executive Director, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

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