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To:

Prime Minister Boris Johnson
COP26 President Alok Sharma
European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen
Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans;
Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC Patricia Espinoza

Dear decision-makers,

We are writing to you as 138 civil society groups ahead of the crucial upcoming UN climate talks in Glasgow, COP26. We are calling on you to address the elephant in the room which is holding back global climate ambition: the fossil fuel industry and its lobbying.

Specifically, we call on you to take the following urgent measures:

1. Recognise that the public interest in urgent climate action in line with keeping global heating to below 1.5°C is not compatible with the private interests of fossil fuel companies

For decades the fossil fuel industry has been successfully delaying, weakening and sabotaging greater climate ambition, and as long as it continues to maintain its access to decision-makers and the policy-making process, then it will use that access to obstruct real climate action.

The International Energy Agency's recent 1.5°C scenario clearly states there is no room for new fossil fuel investments, yet most of the world's biggest oil and gas companies are ignoring this and plan to keep exploring for new oil and gas. The majority of coal, oil and gas reserves have to stay in the ground if we are to keep to 1.5°C, yet vested economic interests are being placed before those of the planet.

2. Support the adoption of a strong conflict of interest policy at the UNFCCC to raise ambition

The positive impact on effective policy that can be achieved by excluding vested interests has already been successfully demonstrated at the UN level by the World Health Organisation (WHO) when agreeing the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (UNFCTC). The WHO instituted a firewall between the tobacco lobby and public health officials after realising there was a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health. Known as Article 5.3, it also comes with clear guiding principles on how to apply it.

In 2016, countries representing almost 70% of the world's population supported the introduction of a conflict of interest policy at the UNFCCC, but it was blocked by the

European Union (then including the UK). This is despite the European Parliament calling on the EU to support such a process.

A new conflict of interest policy could gain strong political momentum if the UK government, as COP26 President, the European Commission, and the UNFCCC publicly supported such a call at COP26, acting in accordance with the wishes of most of the world's population.

3. Protect official spaces at and around COP26 from fossil fuel industry influence

The UK government has taken measures that have resulted in no Oil and Gas major sponsoring COP26 or taking part in the Green Zone, yet gas companies National Grid and SSE are still named sponsors. Protecting official spaces would include revoking fossil fuel sponsorship and participation in both the Blue and Green Zones, as well as pavilions. The EU should not use its pavilion to give a platform to the fossil fuel industry.

While many global South government and civil society delegates have been shut out of COP26, despite the UK government claiming it was a "safe, inclusive summit", representatives from many of these companies will be proactively promoting their pro-fossil fuel vested interests at COP26. Particularly given the unequal access to this year's talks, we expect representatives of the UK, EU and UNFCCC to refuse to share platforms or attend fossil fuel sponsored events in and around COP26.

4. Close the revolving door between your own institutions and the fossil fuel industry

Recent research from the Fossil Free Politics campaign shows that Europe's biggest oil and gas companies continue to have an active relationship with public officials and politicians thanks to their use of the revolving door. Between COP21 and COP26 it discovered over 70 revolving door cases between Shell, BP, Total, Eni, Equinor, Galp and 5 of their lobby groups with governments and institutions, all the way up to the ministerial level. Big Energy therefore benefits from the know-how and contact books of insiders, jeopardising democratic, public-interest decision-making.

The UK, EU and UNFCCC should close the revolving door by introducing restrictions on moving from the public sector to the fossil fuel industry or vice-versa, as well as ending industry side jobs.

5. The UK and EU should introduce a firewall between the fossil fuel industry and decision-makers.

Since COP21, Total, BP, Shell, Galp, Equinor, ENI and their lobby groups spent more than €170m on lobbying the EU, securing on average 1.5 meetings per week with top level EU Commission staff. This is part of a broader corporate capture of climate decision-making by the fossil fuel industry that ensures that ambition, and the policies to realise those goals, remains limited. As well as supporting a firewall at the UNFCCC, the EU and UK should ensure climate decision-making is protected from fossil fuel interests at the regional, national and local level. In addition to closing the revolving door, this should involve ending private lobby meetings with the fossil fuel industry, excluding the industry from climate or trade delegations, and refusing to attend fossil fuel-sponsored events.

We hope many signatories to this letter will be at COP26 in person, despite the constraints, and would appreciate a face-to-face meeting to discuss how you can increase ambition by protecting the process from the vested influence of the fossil fuel industry. We will closely observe the extent to which the UK, EU and UNFCCC take action to curb the influence of the fossil fuel industry at COP26.

We look forward to discussing this more in person,

Signed,

Pascoe Sabido, on behalf of:





350 West Sound Climate Action



Challenging Public Investment Banks





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