

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2019

Ambassador Kelly Craft
Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Craft:

We continue to be highly concerned with your potential conflicts of interest at the United Nations, particularly with regards to coal, fossil fuels, and climate issues. During your confirmation hearing on June 20, in response to a question from Senator Markey about your ties to the coal industry, you stated “where there is the issue of coal and or fossil fuels, I will recuse myself in meetings through the UN.”¹ The Paris Climate Agreement commits the nations of the world to doing their fair share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate-smart economic development with the goal of preventing global warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius, including halting investments in and use of coal. Per our conversation that outlined your family ties to the coal industry at your hearing in June, you will have a conflict of interest if, in your role as UN Ambassador, you formulate or take part in a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement. Therefore, we request you keep your commitment to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and recuse yourself from participating in any way to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement.

On June 1, 2017, President Trump declared that he would withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement. In August 2017, Former Ambassador Nikki Haley wrote a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations informing him that the United States intended to exercise its right to withdraw from the Paris and would submit a “formal written notification of its withdrawal as soon as it is eligible to do so.”² The first day that the United States is eligible to formally request an exit, according to the rules of the Paris Agreement, is November 4, 2019.

The November 2018 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on the impacts of global warming beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius found that, to prevent warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius, all nations need to halt investment in coal without carbon capture by 2030³ and phase down coal as a source of energy by at least 75 percent from 2010 levels by 2050.^{4,5} Upon

¹ <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/nominations-061919>

² USA Communication to the United Nations Communication regarding the Paris Agreement
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CN/2017/CN.464.2017-Eng.pdf>

³ Chapter 2, pp 128-129, 154: in IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees. Available at:
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_Chapter2_Low_Res.pdf

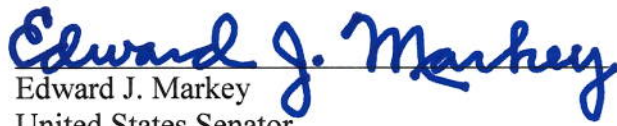
⁴ Summary for Policymakers, Figure SPM.3b: in IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees. Available at:
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf

⁵ Technical Summary: in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s “Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate


the release of the report, UN Secretary General António Guterres stressed the need to phase out coal by 2050.⁶ Gebru Jember Endalew, Chair of the Least Developed Countries Group, stated that “there is a need to take advantage of the increasing availability of affordable, renewable and efficient energy solutions, rapidly reduce the use of fossil fuels, with coal phased out by mid-century . . . and implement other real climate solutions that together can bring about a zero-carbon economy.”⁷ The future of our planet’s climate is inextricably linked to the elimination of coal from global power systems. International cooperation to address the climate crisis must include policies that address the use of coal. Given your extensive family ties to the coal industry, and given that decisions about climate inherently involve decisions about the future of coal, we urge you to agree to recuse yourself from any actions to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.

We ask that you respond in writing by November 3 with a response to this single question: will you agree to recuse yourself from any discussions, negotiations, signing, approvals of actions or delivering of letters and other paperwork to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement?

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

poverty” (2018) – hereafter referred to as *IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees* – Available at:
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_TS_High_Res.pdf

⁶ United Nations. “Do What Science Demands ‘Before It Is Too Late’, Secretary-General Stresses in Statement on Special Global Warming Report.” Press Release. October 8, 2018. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19282.doc.htm>

⁷ M. Taylor, M. Weaver, H. Davidson. “IPCC climate change report calls for urgent action to phase out fossil fuels – as it happened,” *The Guardian*, October 8, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2018/oct/08/ipcc-climate-change-report-urgent-action-fossil-fuels-live>