

U.S. Climate Alliance



To: US Climate Alliance & We Are Still In coalitions
(Cities and States at UN World Climate Summit)

Subject: Strategy Briefing

Goals

You are attending the UN conference as a representative of the [US Climate Alliance](#) and [We Are Still In](#) coalition. 25 states and 292 cities & counties in the United States, along with thousands of businesses, organizations, and institutions, have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. You have no official standing in the negotiations—you can only create results via your influence on the official parties. Unlike other groups, however, you are not beholden to vested interests and are free to advocate for policies to swiftly and effectively address climate change. Throughout the conference, strive to use your influence to:

1. Persuade the U.S. government to fulfill its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Climate Agreement, and increase the ambition of those reductions.
2. Show other parties (e.g., China, the EU, etc.) that beyond US federal policies, many Americans are committed to ambitious climate action—both emission reductions and financial contributions. Highlight the work you are doing at the state and city level, with the goal of persuading other groups to increase their emission cuts and contributions to the global climate fund, and to put pressure on the US to do the same. Your motto—and hashtag—is “#WeAreStillIn” the Paris agreement.

Context

At the 2015 UN climate negotiations in Paris, nations agreed to a goal of limiting global warming to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.” The scientific consensus on climate is clear: over 97% of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening, that it is caused primarily by use of fossil fuels, and that the impacts could be devastating. [US government research](#) has shown that climate change is harming all 50 states today and that without dramatic reductions in global emissions, the damage will become far more severe.

Subnational Actions

The states and cities you represent are already committed to action on climate change. Some examples:

- Over 100 U.S. cities have committed to transitioning to 100% renewable energy.¹
- 11 northeast and mid-Atlantic U.S. states are successfully reducing their greenhouse gas emissions while growing their economies under RGGI, a regional carbon pricing initiative.²
- Over 30 U.S. states have developed comprehensive climate action plans.³

Scale

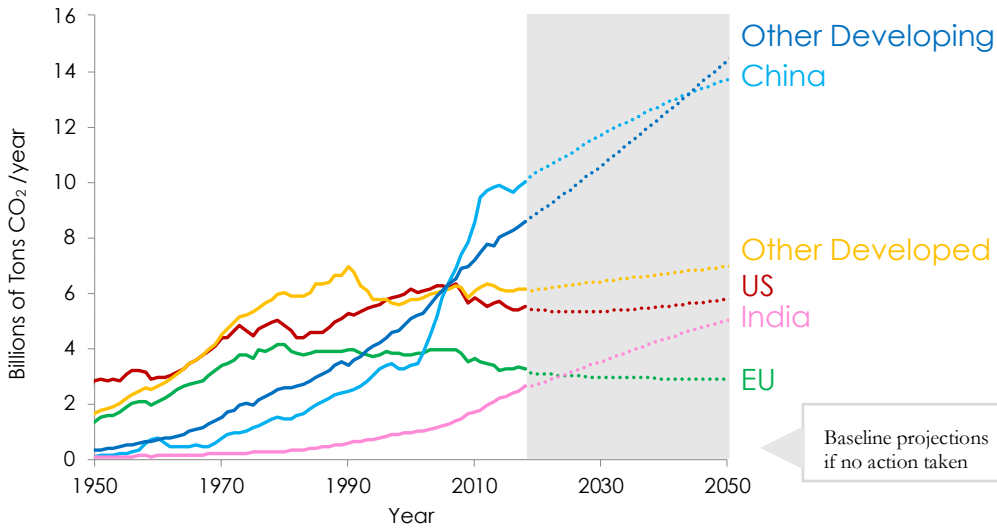
- You represent signatories from all 50 states, which amounts to a constituency of over half the U.S. population.⁴
- Your combined GDP is over \$9 trillion/year—if you were a nation it would be the world’s third largest, larger than that of countries like Japan, Germany, and India.⁵

Public Opinion

- Over 70% of the US public believes climate change is happening and are worried about it. Nearly half of Americans have already experienced its effects, and also believe it will harm them personally in the future.⁶
- About 60% of Americans believe policies intended to transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy will improve economic growth and create new jobs.⁷
- A large majority of registered voters in the United States support requiring utilities in their state to produce 100% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2050.⁷

1. <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2019/03/100-us-cities-are-committed-100-percent-clean-renewable-energy>
2. <https://www.rggi.org/program-overview-and-design/elements>
3. <https://www.c2es.org/document/climate-action-plans/>
4. <https://www.wearestillin.com/about>
5. <https://www.wearestillin.com/>
6. <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/a-growing-majority-of-americans-think-global-warming-is-happening-and-are-worried/>
7. <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/energy-in-the-american-mind-december-2018/2/>

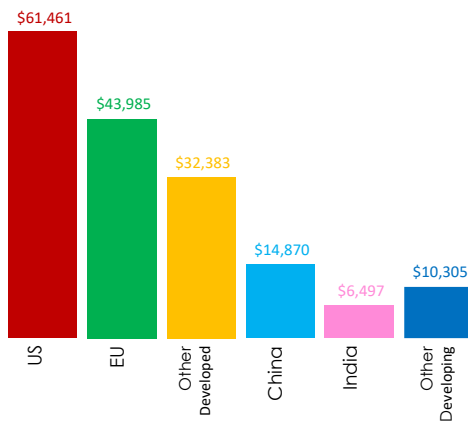
CO₂ Emissions from Energy Use



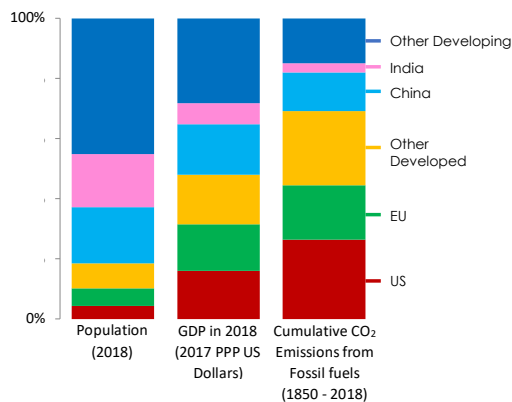
China is the world's largest emitter of CO₂. Without action, developing countries' emissions from fossil fuels are projected to double by 2100.

Sweden sustained annual CO₂ emissions reductions of 4.5% to reduce their dependence on oil (1976-1986). France and Belgium saw similar reductions around this time. Otherwise, most significant historical emission reductions have come from financial or political crises. More recently, the UK reduced emissions by an average 3.5% annually between 2007-2017.

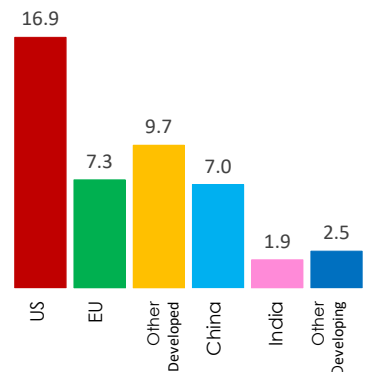
GDP per person in 2018 (2017 PPP US Dollars)



Population Wealth and Cumulative Emissions



Emissions from energy per person 2018 (tons CO₂ per year)



While cumulative emissions so far have been higher in the developed countries (i.e., the **US**, **EU**, and **other developed countries**), the growth of population, GDP per person, and emissions in the developing nations far outpaces growth in the developed countries. If no action is taken, cumulative emissions of all developed countries (**US**, **EU**, and **other developed**) are expected to fall to 42% of total by 2100.

Since 1980, emissions from energy per person have risen dramatically in **China** and **India** (by 380% and 360%, respectively) but have fallen in the **US** and **Europe** (by 20% and 28% respectively).