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Open Letter on Climate Action from over 170 Higher Education Leaders to Incoming Administration and Congress

BOSTON (December 19, 2016) – Presidents and Chancellors from more than 170 Colleges and Universities, including 35 states in the U.S., have joined together to urge president-elect Trump and the incoming congressional representatives to accelerate progress towards a clean energy future. Through their open letter, organized by a diverse group of higher education institutions and the Boston-based nonprofit [Second Nature](#), they call on elected officials to support participation in the Paris Agreement, climate research, and investment in the low carbon economy.

“The upcoming transition of federal leadership presents a unique opportunity to address head-on the challenges of climate change by accelerating the new energy economy and creating strong, resilient communities,” wrote the group. “We are committed to developing and deploying innovative climate solutions that provide a prosperous future for all Americans.”

The group of schools – which includes institutions such as New York University, Wheaton College, Central Community College and University of California, Berkeley – expressed their alignment with the [business and investment communities](#) in supporting the science-based targets outlined in the Paris Climate Agreement. Many of the institutions have been taking climate action on their own campuses for years, voluntarily setting carbon neutrality goals and publicly reporting progress through a program called the [Climate Leadership Commitments](#).

“Climate change cannot be reversed by a single institution nor a single country.” – said Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor of the State University of New York system – “A collective intervention in the multitude of factors that impact climate change is necessary for success. [...] all of higher education must be a driving force in the continued examination of climate change and the development of opportunities to assure a cleaner more secure planet for future generations.”

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"Rural America has been hard-hit by weather-related events in this century." – added Linda Lujan, President of Lamar Community College – "Our country's reliance on the farming and ranching industries makes it critically important to ensure we continue to research and act on ways to mitigate that impact and adapt to the effects of global warming. Regardless of your beliefs about the cause, the effects are being felt strongly in rural areas."

A full list of the schools supporting the open letter can be found here: secondnature.org/higher-education-climate-action-letter

About Second Nature

[Second Nature](#) works to proactively build a sustainable and positive global future through initiating bold commitments, scaling successful actions, and accelerating innovative solutions among leadership networks in higher education. The [Climate Leadership Commitments](#) are a signature program of Second Nature and include a Carbon Commitment (focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions), a Resilience Commitment (focused on climate adaptation and building community capacity), and a Climate Commitment that integrates both. The Climate Leadership Network comprises more than 600 colleges and universities in every state and the District of Columbia who have committed to take action on climate and prepare students through research and education to solve the challenges of the 21st century. Learn more at: secondnature.org.

Second Nature and Climate Leadership Network institutions will continue to discuss ways of positively influencing and driving national climate action at the [2017 Presidential Climate Leadership Summit](#) on February 13-15, in Tempe, Arizona. Held in partnership with Arizona State University and GreenBiz, it will provide a forum for collaboration across the higher education, business and local communities sectors. Learn more at: secondnature.org/2017-summit

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