Higher Education Supports Ambitious Climate Investments in Build Back Better Act

December 2021

Dear Esteemed Members of the United States Senate:

As the co-chairs of the Climate Leadership Network - the oldest and broadest network of higher education leaders assembled in support of climate action in the United States - we urge you to swiftly pass the Build Back Better Act.

The Climate Leadership Network includes more than 450 colleges and universities across the U.S. who are committed to eliminating carbon emissions from their operations, and mobilizing their institutional resources to combat climate change beyond their campuses. Climate Leadership Network signatories include higher education presidents and chancellors who recognize higher education’s vital role in helping the U.S. meet emission-reduction targets at the speed and scale necessary to solve the climate crisis.

While the passage of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act bill was an important step, on its own, it is not sufficient to achieve critical climate and economic goals. The Build Back Better Act is the largest climate legislation in U.S. history, offering our nation an unprecedented opportunity to enact critical federal climate policy to put our country on a path to cut emissions in half by 2030 and strengthen our economy. We urge members of the U.S. Senate to support this legislation as it nears a vote later this month, and in particular, want to note our support for:

- Substantial rebates and tax credits for energy efficiency, which will reduce energy costs for colleges and universities switching to renewables.
- The creation of a Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator, a finance entity that will use public funds to mobilize more private investment in renewable energy projects across the country, leveraging our investments in clean energy research and deployment.
- The Civilian Climate Corps (CCC), which will employ thousands of young people to address the threat of climate change and help recent college graduates find full-time work in clean energy deployment, resilience, and conservation.

Higher education leaders recognize that urgency to act on climate has never been greater, and we call on our United States Senators to support this transformative legislation.

Thank you,

Tim Carter, President
Second Nature

Elsa M. Núñez, President
Eastern Connecticut State University

David Finegold, President
Chatham University