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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

RICHARD M. RUSSELL, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
MARY FRANCES REPKO, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

January 24, 2019

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
Room 478, Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand,

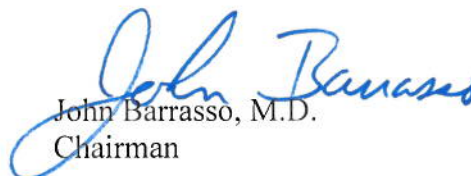
Thank you for your letter dated January 23, 2019. The climate is changing and we, collectively, have a responsibility to do something about it. I believe the best ways for the committee to address this is by passing bipartisan legislation to support innovation and the development of advanced technology. Attached to this letter you will find a *New York Times* op-ed I wrote on these important issues.

Last Congress, we passed the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. Nuclear energy is produced with zero carbon emissions and has been a source of reliable power for decades. The Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act will make it simpler for innovators who are developing state-of-the-art nuclear reactors. These advancements in nuclear energy technologies will contribute to America's energy security without increasing carbon emissions. While you could not support the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act in committee, I am pleased to inform you that President Trump signed it into law on January 14, 2019.

We should also support research efforts to develop carbon utilization and capture technologies. The Utilizing Significant Emissions with Innovative Technologies (USE IT) Act is bipartisan legislation to assist efforts that seek to find profitable uses for captured carbon dioxide. These technologies will help remove carbon from the air and grow our economy. Last Congress, with your support, the USE IT Act passed the committee unanimously. I will work with committee members this Congress to see it passed into law.

Thank you again for your letter. I look forward to continuing to work with you and all of the members of the committee as we pass legislation that will protect our environment and allow our economy to grow.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member

# The New York Times

## Cut Carbon Through Innovation, Not Regulation

By: U.S. Senator John Barrasso

December 18, 2018

New York Times

Leaders from nearly 200 countries met in Katowice, Poland, last week and agreed to rules to carry out the Paris climate accord. Now that the 22,000 delegates have returned home, there are three truths they need to recognize to make actual progress in the hard work of lowering carbon dioxide emissions across the globe.

The first is, the climate is changing and we, collectively, have a responsibility to do something about it. Second, the United States and the world will continue to rely on affordable and abundant fossil fuels, including coal, to power our economies for decades to come. And third, innovation, not new taxes or punishing global agreements, is the ultimate solution.

People across the world are rejecting the idea that carbon taxes and raising the cost of energy is the answer to lowering emissions. In France, the government just suspended a planned fuel tax increase after some of its citizens took to the streets in protest. And in the United States, the results of November elections showed that these plans and other government interventions are just as unpopular.

Voters in Washington State rejected the creation of an expensive tax on carbon emissions. In Colorado, a ballot measure to severely restrict drilling was defeated. And in Arizona, voters rejected a mandate to make the state's utilities much more dependent on renewable energy by 2030 — regardless of the cost to consumers. All three of these states elected liberal Democrats to Congress on election night.

The United States is currently on track to reduce emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, according to one recent analysis. That's roughly two-thirds of the way to the original United States target under the Paris climate agreement.

The nation is leading the way not because of punishing regulations, restrictive laws or carbon taxes but because of innovation and advanced technology, especially in the energy sector.

Over the past decade, American energy-related carbon dioxide emissions have been falling. Technology breakthroughs have led to an American energy renaissance and a growing economy. As our economy has strengthened, we have lowered emissions.



While the United States cut its emissions in 2017, global emissions moved in the opposite direction. Emission levels increased in China and India, and even rose in the European Union in 2017.

Making energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs to consumers will be accomplished through investment, invention and innovation.

As chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I am working across party lines to support the development of new technologies that will further decrease America's carbon emissions.

Nuclear energy is produced with zero carbon emissions. It has been a source of clean, affordable and reliable power for decades. Nuclear energy provides more than twice the global electricity of wind power and more than five times the amount of solar energy.

Washington needs to make it simpler for innovators who are building state-of-the-art nuclear reactors. These advancements in nuclear energy will create jobs, lower costs and contribute to America's energy security without additional carbon emissions.

Groundbreaking new research in the area of carbon utilization to turn emissions into productive commodities, and even direct air capture of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, also hold keys to major emission reductions. We have made meaningful progress on bipartisan legislation to help researchers engaged in cutting-edge carbon capture and utilization technologies.

The legislation supports efforts to find profitable uses for the captured carbon dioxide. The legislation will also simplify the process for building carbon dioxide pipelines, so that we can safely move the gas to where it is needed.

A leading commercial use of captured carbon dioxide is a process called enhanced oil recovery. By injecting carbon dioxide into an otherwise unproductive well, oil can be economically extracted. This is good for the environment and the economy — producing more American energy and sequestering carbon dioxide underground.

In addition to being used for enhanced oil recovery, carbon has the potential to be repurposed in building materials, medical supplies and manufactured goods.

Citizens around the world will continue to reject climate policies that cost them personally, either by direct taxation or by undermining the competitiveness of their own economies. The sooner the world's leaders accept this reality, the sooner we will be able to put new and lasting solutions in place.

*Senator John Barrasso was an orthopedic surgeon before joining the Senate in 2007. In addition to heading the Environment and Public Works Committee, he is a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.*