

MEDIA ADVISORY

November 10, 2021

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U.S. Elected Officials at COP26 who are Veterans and Indigenous leaders urge Presidential Climate Emergency Declaration and Plan to phase out fossil fuels with letter signed by 400+ lawmakers

At Glasgow, Elected Officials to Protect America's COP26 delegation calls for world action on climate and the passage of the Build Back Better Act

In-Person Media

COP26 Blue Zone, D building

Multilevel Action Pavilion (Scottish Government Pavilion with ICLEI, Cities & Regions)

Pavilion #51: From D Concourse, **enter at Door 4C and turn left:**

Media should register for the online Multilevel Action Pavillion pavilion (hosted by the Scottish Government in partnership with ICLEI):

<https://app.hopin.com/events/cop26-multilevel-action-pavilion/stages> .

All access: EOPA Zoom Live: <https://protectingamerica-net.zoom.us/j/86433616099>

WHEN: Wednesday Nov. 10th, 6:00 PM (UK Time), 1 pm EST, 11 am MST, 10 am PST, 8 am in HI

SPEAKERS:

- AZ State Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai, US Army Veteran, Navajo of the Tangle People Clan
- Fawn R. Sharp, the 23rd President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Vice President and past President, Quinault Nation, Taholah
- OR State Rep., Paul L. Evans, US Air Force Veteran, Co-chair EOPA Leadership Council
- NM State Rep. Debbie Sarinana, Air Force Veteran, Co-chair EOPA Leadership Council
- MD Del. Pat Young, US Marine Veteran, EOPA Leadership Council
- NC State Sen. Natalie Murdock, EOPA Leadership Council
- CO State Sen. Faith Winter, EOPA Leadership Council
- CA Director East Bay Municipal Utility District, Andy Katz, Co-founder EOPA

BACKGROUND: Lawmaker members of the Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) delegation at the Glasgow [COP26](#) climate summit say that COP26 must become humanity's moment of hope to achieve the Paris accord and restore a safe climate.

On Remembrance Day and Veterans Day eve, the EOPA lawmakers including veterans and indigenous leaders, are calling for a Presidential Climate Emergency Declaration and Plan to phase out fossil fuels.

The officials will speak about the humanitarian disasters and security threats caused by the worsening climate crisis. They will highlight that climate change is a threat multiplier that leads to armed conflicts. The EOPA COP26 delegation will also urge immediate passage of the President's Build Back Better Act (BBBA).

The officials will call for international cooperation to phase out fossil fuels. Around the world, dignitaries are calling for an international Fossil Fuels Nonproliferation Treaty, including 150 parliamentary officials from more than 30 countries, 101 Nobel laureates, 2,500 scientists, and 100,000 nurses and doctors. The officials will call for leadership in the United States with a Climate Emergency Plan that sets in motion a just transition to phase out fossil fuels.

A preview video can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA1mArFz9Ok&t=1s>

"As veterans we have experienced how the climate crisis is a threat multiplier that helps spark and intensify conflicts," said **Alex Cornell du Houx, former Maine state Representative, Marine combat veteran, President of the Elected Officials to Protect America**. "Safeguarding our nation from the economic, health, and security threats caused by the climate crisis is an opportunity to lead the world and stimulate our economy. We urge Congress to pass the second half of the Build Back Better Act so America can lead the world in mitigating the threats of climate change."

Last spring, President Biden issued an [executive order](#) that called for the preparation of a [National Intelligence Estimate \(NIE\)](#) on the threat climate change poses to U.S. security. NIEs are formal, classified assessments of major security questions, incorporating intelligence gathering from eighteen agencies, thereby the President officially tied the climate crisis to security.

EOPA has gathered [over 400 signatures from lawmakers throughout America](#) on a letter that supports a national clean energy plan and asks for a Presidential climate emergency declaration. More elected officials are signing the letter daily. The EOPA clean energy plan and the BBBA's climate provisions match in many areas.

"We are at an inflection point. The world must mobilize together in emergency action or face catastrophe. At the Paris talks, EOPA cheered the global agreement, but it has not translated to action on the scale needed to mitigate the worsening climate crisis. We need international cooperation to phase out fossil fuels," said **Dominic Frongillo, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Elected Officials to Protect America, former Councilmember and Deputy Supervisor Caroline, New York**. "In this global crisis, America must lead. Our EOPA delegation

represents elected officials from across America who are doing their utmost in their states and communities. Now, we need our elected officials in Washington D.C. to swiftly act with the passage of the Build Back Better Act. We also urge President Biden to enact a Climate Emergency Declaration and Plan that phases out fossil fuels.”

“This year, Hawaii made history as the first U.S. state to declare a climate emergency and called for accelerated action to address the climate crisis to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees,” said **Hawaii State Representative Nicole Lowen, Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection Chair**. “It’s time for the federal government to follow Hawaii’s lead, by declaring a National Climate Emergency, and to take swift action to mitigate the climate crisis by passing the Build Back Better Act. There is no time to waste.”

In a May 20th [executive order](#), President Biden ordered government agencies to [prepare for climate-related shocks across the economy](#) as home prices, investments, banking and other aspects of the global economy are now deemed at risk from the effects of climate change.

“The lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of Americans have already been affected by climate change. The United States experienced [22 climate caused disasters](#) that exceeded a record \$1 billion each in damages in 2020. California is in the midst of an historic drought that has fueled deadly wildfires,” said **Andy Katz, Director, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Oakland, California and EOPA Co-Founder**.

Critical investments in the President’s BBBA, working in tandem with his Infrastructure Bill that just passed, will support and create American jobs in the clean energy sector, help slash climate pollution, prepare communities for rising seas, droughts, and storms, and protect the nation’s public lands, safeguarding lives, livelihoods and the economy.

“Climate change is a clear and present danger—a national security threat, New Mexico’s climate is getting hotter and drier. Our droughts and fires are more intense. Spring comes earlier, summer is excruciatingly hot and our winters see more rain than snow. Climate change has been responsible for businesses closures and family relocations. If we don’t mitigate the crisis, more people will suffer,” said **Debbie Sarinana, New Mexico State Representative Air Force Veteran, EOPA National Leadership Council Chair**. “We have a historic opportunity here at COP26 to see nations band together to combat this existential threat to humanity. In America, we need Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act to cut pollution in half by 2030, establish millions of good paying clean energy jobs, and invest in environmental justice on our road to a clean energy economy. With America leading the world we all will literally breathe easier.”

“I am Navajo of the Tangle People Clan, born for the Red House Clan and I represent legislative district number 7 in Arizona. We have 23 tribes and eight of those are in my district, the largest legislative district in the country. We are directly impacted by climate change,” said **Jamescita Peshlakai, Arizona State Senator, US Army Veteran**. “Federal policies and State policies have always put Native American communities on the back burner. We are living in Third World conditions within the midst of the United States, the most developed and powerful country in the world. The

Build Back Better framework has infrastructure dollars in there that would create, for the very first time, infrastructure to communities and populations that have never had running water or electricity. We are desperately awaiting a ray of hope from Glasgow and Congress. The Build Back Better Act will create a foundation for all future generations to move forward.”

“Most think of Oregon as having a wet climate with rich soil and forested lands. The climate crisis has changed that paradigm. We’re in the midst of a years-long drought that has fueled dry timber. Families are homeless, and lives and livelihoods have been lost. Regionally it has been a never-ending rollercoaster of crises—Oregonians across the state are feeling the consequences of global inaction. Any nation that suffers from extreme natural disasters has its national security threatened,” **said Paul L. Evans, Oregon State Representative Major, USAF Major (Ret.), EOPA Leadership Council Co-Chair.** “While lawmakers across the nation are making strides to protect their own constituents with clean energy solutions and resiliency plans, extreme weather has no borders. Critical action on the federal level to mitigate the climate crisis is imperative. That starts with Congress passing President Biden’s Build Back Better Act.”

The Colorado River Basin covers over 246,000 square miles and provides vital water resources to Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and northern Mexico. The region’s hydroelectric infrastructure provides up to 42 gigawatts of electrical power annually to area customers. But the river is drying up with the historic twenty year plus drought.

“The Colorado River Basin is a primary water source for farm and rangeland irrigation across 5.5 million acres of land and is also used for municipal and industrial purposes by the region’s 40 million-plus residents. This year, for the first time in history its largest reservoirs reached their lowest water levels, which triggered the first shortage declaration in history and with it a range of water allocation curtailments. The mega drought has changed the lives of millions and sparked apocalyptic fires,” **said Faith Winter, Colorado State Senator, Elected Officials to Protect America Leadership Council,** “Time is running out. The Build Back Better Act (BBBA) represents historic progress when we need it most. Once enacted, it will provide a record \$550 billion to help advance the shift to cleaner, smarter ways to power our future, thereby lessening greenhouse gas emissions so the climate can eventually stabilize.”

In America communities already hardest hit by systemic racism and environmental injustice tend to be located in areas most susceptible to deadly [heat waves](#), flooding and other extreme weather events. These communities also face [increased health burdens from pollution](#) compared to the overall population.

“With extreme flooding and hurricanes becoming the norm, more North Carolinians are put at unnecessary risk. The world needs America to lead to stop the worsening climate crisis. We are in a Code Red for humanity. We have to mitigate the climate crisis with the President’s Build Back Better Act,” **said Natalie Murdock, North Carolina State Senator, EOPA Leadership Council.** “Communities that have been systematically neglected need the transformative change the Build Back Better Act could bring. This is the hopeful promise of a more inclusive America, one where one’s zip code doesn’t predetermine your future.”

EOPA sees that there are more opportunities in the clean energy fields than ever before.

“Ecosystems have changed because of the climate crisis thereby hurting Maryland’s time-honored relationship with the Chesapeake Bay. Extreme weather has endangered our coastal communities and continues to threaten fishing, crabbing, and the livelihoods of our watermen. Many people now live under the constant threat of flooding. Climate change is a clear and present danger,” said **Maryland Delegate Pat Young, Marine Veteran, Elected Officials Leadership Council**. “We have a historic opportunity to see nations band together to combat this existential threat to humanity. Stateside we need the Build Back Better Act to cut pollution in half by 2030. With America leading the world by combating climate change we can come together with a united mission and grow a clean energy economy.”

Worldwide renewables are the [cheapest form of power in most places](#), which is 38 percent of the global total. Expected continued investments could drive that number to more than 55 percent by 2030 and 74 percent by 2050, yet that’s not fast enough to avoid catastrophic climate disasters. That’s one reason why action at COP26 is imperative. Governments that promote investments in the clean energy economy will invigorate this growth.

On September 14th over 137 lawmakers attended an Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) White House Summit on the climate crisis to support urgent climate solutions with a National Climate Emergency Plan and a Presidential Climate Emergency Declaration.

Part of the EOPA letter reads:

We call on the President and Congress to develop a [federal Climate Emergency Plan](#) that can include, but not limited to the following objectives:

- Declare a national climate emergency
- Create millions of jobs transitioning to a 100% clean energy economy
- Invest in communities on the frontlines of environmental injustice and the climate emergency, especially Indigenous, Black and Brown, and economically vulnerable communities
- Invest in clean, affordable transportation and smart renewable energy grids
- Phase out fossil fuels and shift financing to clean energy
- Transition to regenerative agriculture
- Ensure everyone has access to clean and safe water
- Phase out plastics and toxins threatening global ecosystems and oxygen supply
- Improve building, industrial, and appliance efficiency
- Prevent foreign states from unsustainably extracting American water

In America, a major obstacle to humanity combating the climate crisis continues to be fossil fuel companies. Between 2000 and 2016, [fossil fuel interests spent](#) nearly \$2 billion to derail climate legislation.

Important facts: [66 percent](#) of Americans supported the BBBA in September. 70 percent of Americans are worried about global warming and 55 percent are saying that people in the US are [being harmed](#) by it right now.

According to an early estimate by the United Nations World Meteorological Organization 2021 is expected to qualify among the [hottest](#) seven in history, all of them recorded since 2014. According to the IPCC's report, the world has already warmed by more than 1.1 C and current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7 C by the year 2100. That would melt much of the earth's ice, raise global sea levels and increase the intensity and frequency of extreme weather. Tens of millions of people would be left without homes or food.

Fawn R. Sharp serves as the 23rd President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native tribal government organization in the country. President Sharp was elected on October 24, 2019 at NCAI's 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace.

[About Elected Officials to Protect America](#): Elected Officials to Protect America is a network of current and former elected officials who care deeply about protecting the planet and people. EOPA is committed to solving the climate crisis, ensuring environmental justice, and protecting our lands and waters. EOPA educates through value-based storytelling, training lawmakers, and connecting elected officials to inspire strong environmental leadership.

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