

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R Biden, Jr., President of the United States
The Honorable Kamala Harris, Vice-President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500



Dear President Biden and Vice-President Harris,

We, the undersigned cultural institutions, appreciate and support the Administration's forceful commitment to addressing climate change. The "whole-of-government" approach reflects the systemic nature of the challenge while aligning with our commitment to a "whole-of-society" approach.

An ambitious commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement is critical for building a just, healthy world where all can thrive. That level of climate ambition requires all of us to participate. The cultural sector must not be overlooked as an asset and an ally in combating climate change. As charitable, educational and community-focused institutions, museums have a responsibility to not only limit the impact of their energy-intensive buildings and operations, but to use their research, education, and communication skills to engage the public in building climate action that supports beneficial and equitable outcomes for us all.

The 35,000 museums, zoos, gardens, aquariums and historic sites in the country welcomed 850 million visitors a year, before COVID-19: totaling more than those who attend professional sporting events in 2018. They are trusted organizations that are expected to share important information to help people understand and make choices about critical issues. Their visitors, as constituents, consumers, employees, and business people, help drive the "whole of society" approach to the carbon reduction equation. Beloved institutions of all types and locations, such as The Science Museum of Minnesota, The Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (PA), Discovery Museum (MA), Vizcaya Museum and Gardens (FL), and the Abbe Museum (ME), and so many others signing this letter, are paving the way. They and their peer institutions look to federal leadership and support to encourage them.

We call on the Administration to adopt the necessary, ambitious and attainable target of reducing the nation's greenhouse gas emissions to at least 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 so that net-zero emissions by 2050 becomes achievable.

You can count on museums to support this work by their own actions and, in so doing, support the climate jobs, equity, and literacy so critical to achieving our national goal. As an example, the Science Museum of Minnesota implemented an advanced heat recovery system six years ago that has reduced operating costs by \$300,000 a year and the museum's carbon emissions by one third. The savings support continued investment in efficient and clean energy use and public education. The 18-month project also helped employ factory workers, truck drivers, riggers, pipefitters, electricians, software technicians, and numerous other skilled tradespeople.

That experience convinced the museum's leaders that addressing climate change is an enormous opportunity, helping them adopt goals of reducing its carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 (already completed) and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest. Imagine the economic, employment, educational, equity and environmental benefits that could be realized if energy-efficient buildings in the U.S. were not rare but commonplace, and if the federal government vigorously recruited cultural institutions as partners in the work of engaging all Americans in an "whole of society" approach to addressing climate change.

We look forward to your ambitious commitment and to working with you to accelerate the nation's climate action.

Signed: *Please return to webpage and click on "Leaders" link to see updated list.*