Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2007

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned about reports that the United States is seeking to weaken a proposed G-8 declaration regarding global climate change. We are writing to urge you to reverse course and strengthen the G-8 declaration. The United States must no longer delay action to address this major threat.

According to press reports, Administration officials are seeking to strike a pledge to limit the global temperature rise during this century to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, as well as an agreement to reduce worldwide greenhouse gas emissions to 50% below 1990 levels by 2050.[1]

We have also learned that the Administration officials may be trying to delete sections of the declaration that call on the industrialized world to modify activities linked to recent warming and to delete one of the document's opening phrases, which highlights the urgency of the necessary actions. This is a disappointing retreat after finally acknowledging the urgency of the issue just last month.

The scientific consensus tells us that it is too late to avoid some warming, but we may still have time to prevent dangerous warming. Preventing the global average temperature from rising more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit in comparison to pre-industrial levels must be a top priority. Scientific studies show that a 3.6 degree increase in global temperature could result in the extinction of nearly 30% of all living species, bleaching of much of the world's coral, increased risk of the wider spread of diseases like malaria, more damage from floods and storms, and increased drought in already dry regions.[2] To prevent this from occurring, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently suggested reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% to 85% below 2000 levels would be necessary.[3]

The G8 Summit should be an opportunity to galvanize international support for addressing this looming threat, not an opportunity to prevent and undermine international action. The leaders of the world's largest economies must let the rest of the world know

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[1] U.S. Aims to Weaken G-8 Climate Change Statement, Washington Post (May 13, 2007).

[2] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, 13 (April 2007).

[3] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation of Climate Change*, 23 (May 7, 2007).

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that they are serious about addressing the threat posed by global warming and are committed to meaningful action to reduce global warming pollution.

U.S. leadership is critical to tackling this global threat. Congress is now preparing to do its part. Support is growing for aggressive legislation to cap global warming pollution and cut it dramatically over the coming decades. But we need an Executive Branch that engages the rest of the world to solve this problem rather than stubbornly ignoring it.

Without strong leadership from our nation's federal government, we will fall behind our economic competitors in the development of clean energy technologies and miss the economic opportunities to provide these technologies to world markets. We urge you to embrace these opportunities for economic growth and aggressive action, and to demonstrate America's commitment to leading the fight against global warming by producing a strong G-8 declaration.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Chair, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Tom Lantos
Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs

Charles B. Rangel
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

George Miller
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor

Bart Gordon
Chair, Committee on Science and Technology

Barney Frank
Chair, Committee on Financial Services

James L. Oberstar
Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

John Conyers
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary

Nydia M. Velázquez
Chair, Committee on Small Business

Louise Slaughter
Chair, Committee on Rules

Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Chair, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

Bob Filner
Chair, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Edward J. Markey
Chair, Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming

David R. Obey
Chair, Committee on Appropriations

John M. Spratt
Chair, Committee on the Budget