



Submission to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF)

April 2026

1. Introduction

The United States Climate Action Network (USCAN) is the largest network of environmental and climate justice organizations in the U.S. With over 175 members, we represent a uniquely broad and experienced coalition spanning national environmental groups, frontline community organizations, faith-based institutions, academic institutions, public health advocates, youth leaders, and policy experts. Our deep membership ensures that our work is grounded not only in technical and policy expertise, but, crucially, also in the lived experiences of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. To this end, USCAN led the creation of the [Vision for Equitable Climate Action](#) policy platform following a multi-year, collaborative process which charts a path forward for climate policy grounded in equity and justice in the United States.

Collectively, we build political power to ensure the United States delivers its "Fair Share" of climate action through domestic mitigation and global support. We fight for a future that centers people and working families over corporate profit, and we believe it is essential to advance a just transition from extractive economies to ones that are regenerative and rooted in community, care, and cooperation.

USCAN has long campaigned and advocated for an equitable and just transition away from fossil fuels. We welcome the leadership of the COP30 Brazilian presidency in advancing a Roadmap to Transition Away from Fossil Fuels and for this opportunity to share the perspectives of our network and membership.

2. Critical Barriers Preventing the Transition

2.1 Wealth and political power of the fossil fuel industry

The fossil fuel industry's immense wealth and lobbying power stands in the way of the transition away from fossil fuels. Their influence significantly affects political will in the United States, with global implications. It is well demonstrated today that oil and gas corporations like ExxonMobil [knew about](#) the planet-warming impacts of greenhouse gas emissions as early as the 1950s. In fact, some of the earliest climate science was not done by government scientists in the US, but scientists working for Exxon. Instead of publicizing these findings, Exxon and other oil and gas majors buried the science, and engaged in [decades long public misinformation and lobbying campaigns](#) to undermine scientific consensus and weaken public support and political will to lead a global transition off fossil fuels.

2.1.1 Domestic impacts

In no country has this decades-long investment in misinformation campaigns (otherwise known as lying) borne more fruit than in the United States, where climate denial is still an acceptable political position for a significant portion of elected officials. 14% of U.S. citizens [surveyed](#) said they doubt or deny climate change – twice as many as the 7% in the European Union, and more than quadruple China's 3%.

Other notable outcomes of the fossil fuel industry's economic and political power are:

- **Prevalence of fossil fuel subsidies in the U.S. and globally:** Internationally, in 2022 governments provided an estimated USD [1.4 trillion in subsidies](#). In the U.S. alone, estimates of fossil fuel exploration and production subsidies from 2017 are roughly [\\$20.5 billion annually](#).
- **Direct influence on electoral outcomes:** A 2020 study found that oil and gas companies [contribute more](#) to legislators that vote against the environment. The oil and gas industry spent a staggering [\\$219 million](#) to influence the 2024 U.S. election.
- **Regulatory capture:** The fossil fuel industry utilizes its massive lobbying operations to influence policy decisions. It spends over [\\$100 million](#) each year to lobby politicians to enact legislation favorable to the industry, such as [voting against climate policy](#), [slowing the adoption of cleaner energy](#), [adopting a lenient stance on pollution](#), and [imposing strict punishments on peaceful protests](#).
 - There is also a broader “revolving door” pattern between industry leaders and government roles. The Trump administration's appointment of former fossil fuel executives and cronies to critical administrative positions demonstrates this pattern in the extreme – such as former CEO of ExxonMobil Rex Tillerson's appointment as Secretary of State. But in fact this has long been a facet of U.S. government operations and explains in no small part, the hesitance of domestic governments to regulate. The now-defunct Minerals Management Service was castigated in 2010 for having a [“cozy relationship”](#) with oil companies, inspectors responsible for oversight of drilling [accepting](#) meals, tickets to sporting events and gifts from at least one oil company.

- **Zero accountability:** Supreme Court cases and precedents have [in large part shielded U.S. corporations](#) for consequences even when their actions violate laws in other countries where they are doing business. Texaco (now Chevron) was found liable for environmental damage in the Ecuadorian Amazon, including [knowingly dumping](#) more than 16 billion gallons of toxic wastewater into the rainforest. Not only did the U.S. courts find in favor of Chevron, perversely a recent decision resulting from a countersuit by Chevron found the government of Ecuador liable and ordered it to [pay millions of dollars in fees to Chevron](#) – a reflection of the international system of impunity that allows foreign corporations to violate environmental laws without accountability. Multiple cases across state and municipal jurisdictions in the US (and increasingly, globally) are attempting to hold fossil fuel corporations [legally liable](#), but thus far the message to fossil fuel corporations is that with enough money they can largely escape accountability for the impacts of their actions.

2.1.2 Fossil fuel economic dependence:

Structural economic dependence underpins much of the fossil fuel industry's influence, particularly in U.S. states where oil and gas extraction constitute a major share of public revenue and employment. In New Mexico, for example, [around 35 percent](#) of the state's budget is related to oil and gas.

This economic entanglement reinforces political resistance to climate policy at the state level. Efforts to regulate emissions, limit drilling, or accelerate the transition to renewable energy are often framed as threats to jobs, public services, and fiscal stability. As a result, even modest policy shifts can encounter strong opposition from both industry actors and state leaders concerned about revenue loss.

Importantly, this dependence is not inevitable but reflects policy choices about revenue management. States have underinvested in longer-term diversification strategies. Simultaneously, volatile and uncertain commodity markets are [creating increasing risks](#) for communities reliant on fossil fuels for employment, community identity, and public revenues. Many U.S. oil- and gas-producing communities have already experienced [significant declines](#) in output due to aging fields. Without deliberate efforts to transition their economic base, these states risk becoming increasingly vulnerable – not only to climate impacts, but also to the global economic shift away from fossil fuels.

We explore solutions to these barriers in Section 3.1, which emphasizes that a just transition framework must protect the individual and collective rights of workers moving out of the fossil fuel sector.

2.1.3 International impacts

While the previous examples have largely focused on the fossil fuel industry's power in a U.S. domestic context, the tentacles of the fossil fuel industry extend globally. Research from the Kick Big Polluters Out campaign and the Guardian have highlighted year after year how [thousands of fossil fuel lobbyists](#) are flooding the UN climate talks, often outnumbering multiple government

delegations from smaller countries. The failure of Parties to adopt and enforce a strong conflict-of-interest policy to firewall the climate negotiations from fossil fuel lobbyists and other business interests is undermining a just and equitable transition off fossil fuels.

2.2 Policies and actions of the current U.S. administration

In addition to the long-run barriers to a transition resulting from the concentrated power and might of the fossil fuel industry, the current U.S. administration is waging an all out war on climate and clean energy. A small sampling of the actions and policies undertaken by this administration to slow down the inevitable transition off fossil fuels in the United States includes:

- Weakening agencies that protect the public and facilitate a transition, like the Environmental Protection Agency
- Repealing well-established, science-backed key climate laws like the [Endangerment Finding](#)
- Defunding green projects and community grant programs - [including the Environmental and Climate Justice Program \(ECJ\)](#) passed under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in 2022
- Reinforcing reliance on dirty energy while stripping the fiscal architecture needed for a just transition. These actions include federal actions to [extend the lifespan](#) of coal-fire power plants (despite it being more expensive than to close them down) and [cancelling permits](#) for offshore wind and other renewable energy sources.

Under this administration, we have also observed a systemic attack on organizations advocating for climate justice – including [threats](#) to use tax law to undermine the funding of climate organizations or the foundations that fund them (challenges to 501(c)(3) tax status). Administration officials and Republicans in Congress have also used inflammatory rhetoric [portraying](#) climate and human rights activists as “domestic terrorists”.

2.3 Barriers at the international level

The U.S. and Global North countries are utterly failing to do their fair share of climate action. A critical element of this is the failure to lead on mitigation of emissions in the domestic context, while simultaneously weakening agreements at the international level. For example, successive U.S. administrations withdrew the U.S. out of the legally-binding Kyoto Protocol and then pushed to negotiate the non-binding “Paris Agreement” as a pre-condition for US re-entry into a global climate regime.

The long track record of insufficient action include:

- **The Global North’s refusal to acknowledge its climate and ecological debt:** The countries of the Global North—especially the United States—are historically responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions through industrialization and unsustainable consumption. Yet in the climate talks, they persistently refuse to formally acknowledge their deep-seated climate and ecological debt to the Global South. This denial undermines the foundational principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and

respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), and dismisses the severe, disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on most-impacted nations that have contributed least to the problem.

- **U.S. withdrawal from the UNFCCC:** The administration's decision in January 2026 to withdraw from 66 international organizations, including the UNFCCC and IPCC, represents a profound retreat from global cooperation. In terms of responsibility for the global climate crisis, the U.S. is not just another one of the more than 190 countries in the world. It is the world's largest cumulative greenhouse gas emitter, and the largest producer and exporter of oil and gas today. Walking away from the table marks a clear refusal by the U.S. to take responsibility for its own actions.
- **Failure to meet climate finance obligations amidst escalating militarization:** There is a stark and unacceptable contrast between the Global North's consistent failure to meet established climate finance obligations—specifically the unmet commitment of \$100 billion per year—and the substantial, often increasing, allocation of public funds toward wars, militarism, and “national security” agendas. At the COP29 talks in Baku, Global North governments shortchanged the new climate finance goal, agreeing only to commit to 300 billion USD/year by 2035. Yet, many of the same countries, who are North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, found the money to increase their defence spending by 20% in 2025, bringing [combined military spending to \\$1.4 trillion](#) in the last year. This prioritization of military spending over essential climate action not only violates the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity, but funnels essential resources away from critical adaptation, mitigation, and Loss and Damage funding necessary for developing countries. This discrepancy highlights a deeply hypocritical and dangerous set of global priorities.
- **Absence of an Equitable Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Mechanism:** Current global climate governance lacks a dedicated, enforceable, and equitable mechanism for discussing, agreeing upon, and implementing a coordinated phase-out of all fossil fuels. The absence of such a space prevents the establishment of clear timelines, differentiated responsibilities, and a just transition framework that protects workers and communities. Crucially, there is no effective system to hold industrialized nations—the primary historical beneficiaries of fossil fuel extraction—accountable for failing to make rapid and transformative progress on this phase-out, thereby allowing major polluters to continue business-as-usual under the guise of weak voluntary commitments.
- **Systemic undermining of the IPCC's scientific authority:** There have been [increasing efforts](#) to weaken the independent and critical role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the preeminent global climate science advisory body. This includes [political interference](#), attempts to [dilute](#) the language and urgency of its consensus reports during approval sessions, and a general trend by powerful nations to disregard the panel's established scientific findings when they conflict with economic or political interests. This erosion of scientific integrity and authority threatens to decouple policy decisions from the best available, peer-reviewed science.

2.4 Promotion of False Solutions

The promotion of offsets and other false solutions – such as carbon capture (CCS), geoengineering, extractive hydrogen, and nuclear – crowds out **investment in readily available renewable energy alternatives**. Some examples include:

- **Carbon markets:** The expansion of carbon markets (primarily through carbon offsets) allows corporations and governments to continue emitting greenhouse gases while claiming progress towards “net zero,” despite mounting evidence that many carbon offsets have [failed](#) to deliver real, permanent emissions reductions.
- **Carbon Capture and Storage:** USCAN member Center for Biological Diversity [writes](#): “Globally 80% of the CO₂ captured at CCS facilities is then used to extract oil through “enhanced oil recovery,” worsening the climate crisis. When burned, that oil produces more CO₂ in a vicious cycle that generates yet more greenhouse gases and other toxic pollutants.” Additionally, “CCS projects have systematically overpromised and underdelivered on carbon capture. Most recently Chevron’s Gorgon plant in Australia, self-described as the “world’s biggest CCS project,” failed to meet its five-year CO₂-capture target of 80%, instead capturing only 30% of its CO₂ emissions despite billions of dollars of investment and tens of millions in subsidies.”
- **Nuclear energy:** Nuclear Information and Resource Service has [extensively detailed](#) concerns around radioactive waste and pollution, nuclear safety, environmental justice, and high costs of nuclear energy. Despite the hype – the result of a well-financed propaganda campaign by the nuclear industry – nuclear power is polluting, expensive and dangerous.
- **Bioenergy:** The scaling up of bioenergy poses serious risks to biodiversity, to socio-economic well-being, and to the climate itself. [Logging](#) to feed wood pellet facilities releases vast amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, and in fact, biomass fuel often generates [more carbon](#) than coal per unit of energy produced. Additionally, the co-firing of biomass with coal can [prolong](#) the operational life of coal-fired plants, ultimately delaying the transition to genuinely renewable sources of energy. Pellet mills also generate significant pollution to people living nearby. In the U.S., [a recent survey](#) across Southeastern communities—where wood pellet plants are disproportionately sited—found that more than two-thirds of people living within a half-mile of pellet mills experience dust every day. In four of the five surveyed communities, 86 percent of households reported at least one family member diagnosed with a disease associated with or exacerbated by pellet mill pollution.

3. Potential Levers for Accelerating the Implementation of the Transitioning Away Commitment

3.1 Implement a Just and Equitable Phase-Out Plans for Fossil Fuel Production

A just and equitable phase-out requires an immediate end to new fossil fuel exploration, licensing, and infrastructure development. Transition strategies must center and be informed by workers and their representative organizations through collective bargaining and social dialogue;¹ Indigenous Peoples through Free Prior and Informed Consent; and communities, and fossil fuel-dependent economies through inclusive governance and social dialogue.

A rapid and equitable fossil fuel phase-out must be fundamentally anchored in the rigorous protection of human rights and labor rights, and result in decent work in adherence to International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. A just transition framework must mandate robust social and environmental safeguards for renewable energy deployment, preventing the replication of extractive harms while preserving the individual and collective rights of workers moving out of the fossil fuel sector.

This includes:

- Economic diversification and public investment in affected regions
- Job retraining, social protection, and labor rights guarantees
- Community-led planning processes
- Alignment with the COP30 Just Transition framework
- Protecting Indigenous People's rights to self-determination and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
- Centering Afro-descendant and Indigenous leadership in the design and governance of just transition policies at community, local, national, and international levels

Simultaneously, governments must accelerate renewable energy deployment, modernize grids, expand storage, and at least double energy efficiency improvements.

False solutions—including CCS, geoengineering, and nuclear expansion—must not displace proven, scalable renewable pathways. (See Section 2.4.)

¹ The ILO defines social dialogue as all types of negotiation, consultation, or information exchange between the government, employer and worker representatives on issues of common interest related to economic and social policy. Collective bargaining, one of the most effective and necessary forms of social dialogue, along with tripartism, can serve to incorporate rights-enhancing clauses into binding collective agreements, including on occupational safety and health, protection during climate disasters, and green procurement. Additionally, the ILO emphasizes that social dialogue must be integral to policymaking and implementation in just transition, while distinguishing that engagement and consultation should take place with all relevant stakeholders.

3.1.1 Responsible actors for implementation include:

- National & subnational governments who must enact phase out laws
- Countries at COP31: who must adopt a coordination mechanism (the Belem Antalya Mechanism) to ensure communities & workers lead transition planning
- Multilateral development banks: which must responsibly divest from fossil fuels and back debt cancellation measures.
- The leadership of frontline communities, affected workers and their unions, and Indigenous peoples must be centered in transition fund governance

3.1.2 Key instruments for implementation include:

- A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty
- Windfall profit and wealth taxes
- Reallocation of fossil fuel subsidies and military expenditures
- Grants-based public finance
- UN tax and sovereign debt frameworks
- Trade reform to eliminate investor-state dispute settlement
- Large-scale ecological restoration programs

3.2 100% Renewable & Equitable Energy for All

This pathway focuses on rapid electrification powered by renewable energy, combined with systemic demand reduction and democratized energy governance. Key elements include:

- Phasing out fossil fuel generation
- Scaling distributed renewable systems (e.g., community and rooftop solar)
- Electrifying transport systems and expanding public transit
- Shifting freight from road to rail
- Deploying mini-grids and storage to ensure universal energy access

This approach redefines energy as a public good, prioritizing affordability, accessibility, and community ownership.

3.2.1 Responsible actors for implementation include:

- Subnational leaders and governors who must lead on distributed energy mandates.
- Transportation authorities who must manage the intermodal freight and transit shift.
- National energy regulators who must enforce the retirement of coal and gas plants.
- Community-owned cooperatives will manage local generation and storage assets.

3.2.2 Key instruments for implementation include:

- Mandatory renewable portfolio standards (RPS)
- Net-metering laws protecting community solar
- Public transit funding for zero-emission fleets and expansion of service
- Energy efficiency resource standards (EERS)
- Subsidies for building electrification and high-speed rail.

4. How can a just, orderly and equitable transition best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development and with different degrees of dependence on fossil fuels?

4.1 Delivering our Fair Share of Climate Action (and Finance)

Here, we redefine climate diplomacy by making U.S. and Global North participation in international fora conditional on fulfilling "Fair Share" obligations. We propose a mechanism where the re-entry of the U.S. into international climate spaces is only permitted upon a binding commitment to scale-appropriate, grants-based finance. Furthermore, it advocates for international sanctions as punishment for the U.S. and Israel's exacerbation of and refusal to own up to documented climate and environmental harms. Other Global North governments, especially Germany, France, UK and Canada should also be held accountable for their violations.

This shifts the focus from voluntary pledges to mandatory reparations for historical emissions. It demands a transformation of the global financial architecture to serve people over creditors, enabling the Global South to transition without incurring debt. Countries credit ratings must reflect their actions in support of a transition.

4.1.1 Responsible actors for implementation include:

- The UN General Assembly and UNFCCC Secretariat must enforce participation conditions. Global South coalitions must lead the call for sanctions. The U.S. Treasury and Congress are responsible for domestic appropriation of Fair Share funds to meet international obligations.
- The IMF and its member countries must overhaul SDR reallocations as well.

4.1.2 Key instruments for implementation include:

- A UN-led International Sanctions Framework for Climate Debt
- Binding Fair Share allocation formulas with [equity-informed](#) timelines
- A UN Tax Convention
- Redirection of military spending toward the International Just Transition Fund