



Agreement in Poland Advances Climate Action—But Not Enough

December 15, 2018—This Saturday, 197 countries—including the United States—agreed on a rule book for the Paris Climate Agreement, which calls on the world's nations to keep global warming significantly below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). Participating countries have already submitted written pledges to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, by transitioning to cleaner energy sources and by promoting energy efficiency. But rules were needed to ensure that countries could monitor each other's actions, and properly measure their impacts.

“Today's agreement is a solid step in the right direction,” said EESI Executive Director Carol Werner. “The details still need to be ironed out, but the agreed-upon rules set the stage for the effective implementation of the commitment made in Paris to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The international community also agreed to increase its greenhouse gas reduction commitments by 2020, and to provide more financing for vulnerable nations. But does this get us to where we need to be? No. The global community has failed to seize an opportunity to take the truly decisive, urgent action we need to see. The latest U.N. climate report, Global Warming of 1.5 °C, warns that we really should be aiming to keep warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius—not 2—and that we only have 12 years left to act if we want to avoid drastic consequences.”

Shockingly, the United States joined three other major oil-producing countries—Kuwait, Russia, and Saudi Arabia—to block language that would have embraced the 1.5 C Report and called for more urgent, ambitious climate action. The Trump Administration has already indicated that the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement at the earliest opportunity, in 2020. In addition, Brazil, under a new administration, blocked rules that would have helped set a carbon trading system.

“The failure of the United States to lead on climate action, as it has in the past—it played a key role in getting the Paris Climate Agreement past the finish line—is mortifying and saddening,” said Carol Werner. “Fortunately, U.S. states, cities, and businesses are stepping up to the plate and pledging to decisively curb their carbon emissions. They are being joined by activists, nonprofits, tribes, and educational and religious institutions, which is much more reflective of American public opinion. And, we are looking to the new Congress to provide robust discussion of climate and resilience actions. Many in the large incoming freshman class and new House Committee chairs are deeply concerned about climate change and want to take action on behalf of the country.”

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- [Success of COP24 in Katowice – we have a global climate agreement.](#)
- [Paris Agreement](#) (full text).
- [Paris Agreement – Status of Ratification](#) (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
- [Paris Withdrawal: A Disservice to the Global Environment and American Business](#) (May 31, 2017)
- [Marrakech Action Proclamation Reaffirms Global Climate Deal](#) (November 18, 2016)
- [Record-Fast Ratification of Paris Agreement Shows Global Solidarity and Resolve](#) (October 4, 2016)
- [Progress Outweighs Uncertainty in Paris Climate Deal](#) (December 12, 2015).

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