

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Climate change impacts all aspects of life and requires a whole-of-government approach to address its many monumental challenges. We applaud your efforts to tackle the environmental and energy issues facing the United States and the world from Day 1 of your Administration. The recent creation of a White House Task Force on Climate and Trade (Task Force) is a continuation of your commitment to address climate change head on. This complex issue requires representatives from across government and private sector industries to create an appropriate mix of policy and initiatives to ensure we are all doing everything we can to address this 21st Century challenge. Unbeknownst to many, fashion and textile-related industries are a fundamental missing piece to many of these conversations. We encourage you to include representatives from the textile and fashion industries in this new Task Force.

Fashion and textiles span many sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, retail, reuse, repair, and recycling. It is a multinational industry valued at an estimated \$9.81 trillion in the United States alone. Americans are the largest consumers of fashion and textiles in the world, and these various sectors employ millions of people domestically. There are growing business and job opportunities in all skill levels in areas of fashion like sustainable textiles and textile manufacturing, reuse and recycling technology, logistics, and science. The opportunity to capture the nascent promise of this sector, which will in turn bolster our economy and create jobs in our communities, is one the United States should not overlook.

Capturing the moment with sustainable fashion will not only help the United States lead the way with this economic opportunity but it will also help address some of the significant environmental challenges with textile and fashion manufacturing. The fashion and textile industry is estimated to be responsible for approximately 4% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.¹ In the United States, textile waste has increased by 80% since 2000, making it the fastest-growing waste stream in the country. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, over 14 million pounds of textile waste were sent to landfills and incinerators in 2018, taking close to 8% of all U.S. landfills.² These landfills are the third-largest source of methane emissions, equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from more than 24 million cars.³

The United States lags sorely behind many other nations in sustainable textile policy, both in regulations and incentives. The co-benefits that new sustainable innovations, businesses, and developments in these sectors will bring are key to America's competitive advantage, prosperity, and contributions to decarbonizing our planet. Some policies to consider that will help address the economic and environmental opportunities with fashion and textiles include: incentives for sustainable fashion efforts; the expansion and amendment of international trade provisions; supportive policy for innovation and decarbonized manufacturing; regulation of poor environmental

¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/industries/retail/our%20insights/fashion%20on%20climate/fashion-on-climate-full-report.pdf>


² <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/textiles-material-specific-data>

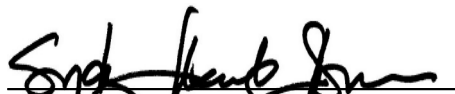
³ <https://www.epa.gov/lmop/basic-information-about-landfill-gas>


practices; and better environmental data and standards. As an industry, fashion has the capacity to drastically reduce its emissions. As a leader in global trade, we seek to engage with you and your team on designing robust policies to catalyze the sustainability of the fashion industry.


Following the announcement of the Task Force, your senior advisor on international climate policy, John D. Podesta, offered some comments that the Administration is “open to proposals from our colleagues on Capitol Hill and policy thought leaders from inside and outside government.” We are encouraged by this desire to engage all stakeholders in this critical policy discussion. We request you include members from the fashion and textile industries into the Task Force to ensure their voices and policy recommendations are incorporated into these climate discussions.


Sincerely,


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress


Jared Huffman
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


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