

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

April 28, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The Winter White House  
Mar-a-Lago Club  
1100 South Ocean Boulevard  
Palm Beach, Florida 33480

Dear Mr. President:

As thousands gather in Washington, D.C., this weekend to express the need to take decisive action to address climate change, I write out of profound concern regarding your recent Executive Orders and directives that recklessly propose to rescind and eliminate policies designed to address the long-term economic costs of carbon pollution. You've recognized these costs when it comes to your own business interests; but these same impacts are threatening the American economy.

Data prepared by the Rhodium Group and the World Resources Institute suggest that the policies announced during your first 100 days in office will, by 2025, increase annual U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases by 900 megatons – more than Germany's total emissions. Your actions will raise annual global emissions by 2%, causing even greater damage.

I was deeply dismayed to learn earlier this spring that, when pressed about the economic impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather, senior White House officials responsible for briefing the contents of your March 28 Executive Order on climate change reflected ignorance of their associated costs.

I was also shocked to hear OMB Director Mulvaney tell a group of reporters that government programs designed to prevent and minimize the impact of climate change are "a waste of [taxpayer] money."

According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program's National Climate Assessment, ignoring the threat of climate change will cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. This is because of the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, which will grow more costly over time.

This appears to be a fact you have acknowledged, when it comes to protecting your own assets. According to reports, you applied to build a 200,000-ton rock wall to

**EVERETT**  
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EVERETT, WA 98201  
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FAX: (425) 303-8351

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protect one of your golf courses in Europe from, as the application states, “an increase in sea level rise as a result of global warming.”

Out of similar concerns, Senator Collins and I have asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate what it will cost the Federal government to respond to the damage caused by climate change. That analysis is due to be completed this summer, and I strongly suggest you pay attention to its conclusions. The attached analyses compiled by GAO paint a very stark picture.

For example, without mitigation, climate change is expected to cause \$5 trillion in damage to coastal properties in the next 75 years. Coastal damage will be one of the largest drivers in federal climate change-related spending—totaling a projected \$78 billion by late century just in coastal disaster relief. As you know well, Mar-a-Lago is located on a barrier island off the Florida coast. These are the kinds of locations particularly vulnerable to catastrophic weather events.

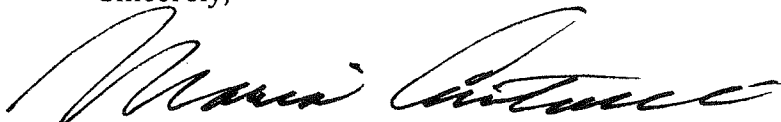
But in addition, flood insurance costs are expected to rise. And as the GAO has noted, “the federal government owns and manages facilities and land vulnerable to climate change--DOD alone estimates its property replacement value is close to \$850 billion.” Moreover, it’s estimated policies that further delay needed reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will cost our economy \$150 billion a year.

Mr. President, the economic impacts of rising sea level and extreme weather are precisely the kind of phenomena that require us to take collective action to address climate change. Taking measures to protect your own assets from climate change while simultaneously sabotaging our nation’s efforts to do the same is duplicitous and unacceptable.

Today I am asking Donald Trump, the President, to acknowledge what Donald Trump, the businessman--and 97% of the world’s scientists--already know: climate change is real and we must do something about it. If you do that, I am confident we can work together to protect the American people and economy from the fallout associated with climate change with the same zeal you’ve shown for protecting your golf courses.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator