

October 29, 2020

ESA Statement on the U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Accord

How we address climate change is a defining issue for the country, the planet and the well-being of all people now and in the future. The Trump administration's choice to withdraw the United States from the Paris agreement is an irresponsible and environmentally disastrous decision that can legally go into effect Nov. 4—the day after the general election.

More than 190 signatory nations pledged in the Paris accord to take actions toward reducing future temperature increases and addressing the serious threats posed by a warming planet. The U.S., once a leader in confronting climate change, now stands alone as the only country to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. Abandoning the Paris accord is but one action in the administration's efforts to systematically dismantle American commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reverse the catastrophic impacts of a warming climate.

In renegeing on its commitments, the Trump administration ignores decades of scientific research pointing to our current situation. Climate change is not the future; it's the present. Current climate trends bring disruption to the ecosystems on which humanity, and all biodiversity, rely. Wildfire, drought, and storms occur with greater frequency and intensity. Increasing ocean acidity and warming temperatures lead to fishery losses, destabilize coral reefs and other critical marine ecosystems and reduce the critical function of carbon storage that the oceans provide. The inexorable rise of sea levels and the inundation of heavily populated coastal cities and infrastructure threaten homes and industry for a large portion of the global society.

Along with clean energy solutions, healthy ecosystems improve soil, filter water, store carbon and cycle nutrients. They buffer communities from urban heat waves, floods, erosion and storm surge. **Ecosystems provide many benefits, but climate and other global changes are overwhelming their capacities to protect us.** This U.S. withdrawal will also delay development of ecosystem-based adaptation strategies critical to sustainable stewardship of the services ecosystems provide to humanity.

Despite U.S. withdrawal from the Paris accord, there is independent, science-driven action that continues in the United States. Business leaders and leadership in state and city governments across the country have forged ahead to curb emissions by cleaning up their supply chains, electrical grids and transportation infrastructure. They have also invested heavily in mitigation and adaptation to the environmental consequences of climate change.

The science is indisputable: humans are driving climate change. ESA remains committed to ensuring that science helps us understand the drivers and consequences of climate change and informs and guides policy and management efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon and drive sustainable adaptation to changing ecological conditions.

The United States is facing a global challenge that requires a global solution based on the best available science. It is time for our leaders to honor the nation's commitments to the Paris accord and re-join the rest of the world in the global climate effort.

Kathleen Weathers, President
Osvaldo Sala, Immediate Past President
Dennis Ojima, President Elect
Catherine O'Riordan, Executive Director