United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6150

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

In addition to the staggering cost of the conference, I am concerned that what appears to be a bloated US delegation will prove counterproductive to the COP's mission. The conference is intended to "accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change." However, these commitments strike a tone of insincerity as a majority of COP 26 delegates will have contributed a significant amount of carbon emissions to attend COP 26.

Originally scheduled to take place in late 2020, COP 26 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. People all over the world made the transition to teleconferencing as a means of maintaining communication with friends and coworkers, and even attending conferences. For many individuals, this new method of interaction is here to stay. It is rather perplexing that in this new age of digital communication and during an ongoing pandemic, executive branch departments and agencies are unnecessarily choosing to contribute directly to carbon emissions and risk exposure to COVID-19.

As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. DOE's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand DOE's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from DOE are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has DOE spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of DOE officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

4. What is DOE total carbon footprint (CO2e) as a result of COP26 travel?

5. Has DOE made any effort to offset its carbon emissions resulting from its COP26 travel? If so, what is the total cost of these offset measures?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

In addition to the staggering cost of the conference, I am concerned that what appears to be a bloated US delegation will prove counterproductive to the COP's mission. The conference is intended to "accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change." However, these commitments strike a tone of insincerity as a majority of COP 26 delegates will have contributed a significant amount of carbon emissions to attend COP 26.

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As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. DOT's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand the DOT's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from DOI are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has DOI spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of DOI officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

4. What is DOI's total carbon footprint (CO2e) as a result of COP26 travel?

5. Has DOI made any effort to offset its carbon emissions resulting from its COP26 travel? If so, what is the total cost of these offset measures?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

In addition to the staggering cost of the conference, I am concerned that what appears to be a bloated US delegation will prove counterproductive to the COP's mission. The conference is intended to "accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change." However, these commitments strike a tone of insincerity as a majority of COP 26 delegates will have contributed a significant amount of carbon emissions to attend COP 26.

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As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. DOI's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand DOI's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from DOT are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has DOT spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of DOT officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

4. What is DOT's total carbon footprint (CO2e) as a result of COP26 travel?

5. Has DOT made any effort to offset its carbon emissions resulting from its COP26 travel? If so, what is the total cost of these offset measures?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Rick Spinrad
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Spinrad,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

In addition to the staggering cost of the conference, I am concerned that what appears to be a bloated US delegation will prove counterproductive to the COP's mission. The conference is intended to "accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change." However, these commitments strike a tone of insincerity as a majority of COP 26 delegates will have contributed a significant amount of carbon emissions to attend COP 26.

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As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. NOAA's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand NOAA's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from USDA are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has USDA spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of those USDA officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

4. What is USDA's total carbon footprint (CO2e) as a result of COP26 travel?

5. Has USDA made any effort to offset its carbon emissions resulting from its COP26 travel? If so, what is the total cost of these offset measures?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

In addition to the staggering cost of the conference, I am concerned that what appears to be a bloated US delegation will prove counterproductive to the COP's mission. The conference is intended to "accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change." However, these commitments strike a tone of insincerity as a majority of COP 26 delegates will have contributed a significant amount of carbon emissions to attend COP 26.

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As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. EPA's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand EPA's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from Treasury are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has Treasury spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of Treasury officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

4. What is the Treasury total carbon footprint (CO2e) as a result of COP26 travel?

5. Has Treasury made any effort to offset its carbon emissions resulting from its COP26 travel? If so, what is the total cost of these offset measures?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Power,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

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As you know, this expenditure of millions of dollars in travel and accommodations for executive branch employees comes directly at the expense of taxpayers. USAID's decision to attend COP 26 comes as many executive branch employees have been forced to work from home for more than a year and a half. If they cannot go to work here in the U.S., they should not be permitted to attend extravagant conferences across the globe.

In an effort to understand USAID's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from USAID are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
    a. Please provide a complete and full list of those attending.

2. How much money has USAID spent in order to send employees to COP26 including expenditures for travel, lodging, food and beverages, emission offset measures, and lost work productivity?

3. Of USAID officials attending, which attendees have worked from home more than 50 percent of their total hours worked since March 2020?

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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

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In an effort to understand USDA's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

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John Barrasso

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Questions

1. How many individuals from EPA are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
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November 1, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen,

I am writing to obtain answers regarding the U.S. Department of the Treasury's (Treasury) decision to send employees to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

According to *Time* magazine, COP26 will be the "most expensive COP on record." In an effort to understand the full cost the taxpayers will bear for this two week international conference, I ask that you answer the attached questions.

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In an effort to understand Treasury's current position on COP26 attendance, I ask that you answer the following questions no later than November 15, 2021.

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John Barrasso

John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. How many individuals from NOAA are attending COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland?
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