



Citizens' Climate Lobby

LTE Topic Ideas

[Letters to the editor](#) (LTEs) are a great way to signal to your member of Congress that climate change is an important issue in your community.

If you'd like to write a letter but aren't sure what to write about, CCL's Communications staff has suggested some topics to choose from and helpful information you can include in your letters. This document includes:

- [Topics about CCL's virtual climate conferences](#), including our Dec. event & lobbying
- [Topics currently in the national news](#), including COVID & the incoming administration
- [Topics about CCL's preferred climate policies](#)
- [Topics about bipartisanship](#)
- [Helpful stats to reference](#)

When you have your letter written, you can submit it directly to your local newspaper or send it in through CCL's [online LTE tool](#).

Topics about CCL's virtual climate conferences and lobbying:

- To lay a strong foundation for climate action in the new Congress, CCL held a virtual climate conference last month with 5,010 climate activists from across the country (3,725 on Zoom and approximately 1,285 tuning in via live streams on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube). Attendees were from all 50 states and from 27 other countries. This event sent a message to Congress that it's time to act on climate change.
- Last month, CCL volunteers held 403 virtual lobby meetings with members of Congress to encourage them to support climate legislation. Of those meetings, 93 were face to face with a member of Congress. Your letter could thank your member of Congress for meeting with your group, and/or emphasize your desire to see swift climate action in the new Congress.
- One key message from our conference and lobbying is that carbon pricing is a popular policy. Your letter could reinforce that message using any information from our lobbying handouts [here](#), underscoring that the new Congress should move forward on this policy.

Topics currently in the national news:

The Capitol insurrection is still a big topic in the news, as is the incoming administration. The COVID pandemic is still ongoing. Here are some angles you might explore on those topics:

- **On the insurrection:**

- Your letter could share your reaction to the attack, and then contrast the behavior of the rioters with your approach as a Citizens' Climate Lobby volunteer on Capitol Hill.

- **On the incoming administration and new Congress:**

- Our country is ready for climate action. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden outlined an ambitious climate plan on the campaign trail; he won the election; and he is now assembling a cabinet with members like John Kerry and Janet Yellen who are favorable to bipartisan climate action. It's encouraging to see climate change being prioritized at such high levels of America's politics.
- Climate voters were an important part of the 2020 electorate. CCL volunteers showed up to the polls as climate voters, and during the final months of the election, they helped get out the vote from more than half a million other potential climate voters by making phone calls with Environmental Voter Project. As we head into a new Congress and a new administration, our elected leaders should keep this climate constituency in mind and push for swift, bold climate action.

- **On climate and COVID:**

- Pandemics are disruptive. Climate change is too. Let's work to limit future disruption from climate change.
- Science should guide our crisis responses, whether it's a health crisis or a climate crisis.
- When we act together, we can be successful, whether it's slowing the spread of a virus or reducing our global carbon emissions.
- It's important to act as soon as possible. The pandemic, and climate change, both only get worse if we let them continue without necessary intervention.

Note: Local news also creates many opportunities to write letters to the editor. Have someone in your CCL chapter regularly monitor your local newspaper(s) to make note of articles dealing with extreme weather, such as wildfires, storms, flooding, drought, or other climate-related impacts. Your letters can point out how those local impacts are driven by climate change, and you can call on your member of Congress to act.

Topics about CCL's preferred climate policies

CCL is focused on moving major bipartisan climate legislation through Congress—primarily the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763)—as well as supporting asks such as the RECLAIM Act and the Growing Climate Solutions Act. You can highlight these policies in your letters. Here are some different angles you can explore:

- Carbon pricing is a popular policy. You can always write a letter using any of the messages or statistics in [these documents](#), which we used in our December lobby meetings.
- The RECLAIM Act will ensure additional support for coal communities as America transitions to a clean energy economy, and it has bipartisan support. It passed the House on July 1, 2020, and deserves bipartisan consideration in the Senate, too.
- The Growing Climate Solutions Act, introduced in both the Senate and House in June 2020, will make it easier for farmers and foresters to participate in carbon markets so they can be rewarded for climate-smart practices. It is also a great example of productive, bipartisan work on climate in the U.S. Congress. In October, the House version reached 20 cosponsors (11 Democratic, 9 Republican).
- The Energy Innovation Act is simple, comprehensive, and effective. It will reduce America's emissions by at least 40% in the first 12 years.
- Poor air quality causes an estimated 114,000 U.S. deaths each year and sickens thousands more. The Energy Innovation Act will improve health and save lives by reducing the pollution that Americans breathe. (This is particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, because people living in areas with higher air pollution are more likely to die from the disease.)
- The Energy Innovation Act is good for people's personal finances. The carbon dividend puts money directly into people's pockets every month to spend as they see fit, like a "cashback" reward. The majority of Americans will see a financial benefit.
- The Energy Innovation Act has support in Congress: 85 representatives have signed on as cosponsors. [See the full list here](#). In your letter, you can praise your member of Congress if they are a cosponsor, or you can ask your member of Congress to become a cosponsor.
- The Energy Innovation Act has support outside of Congress: more than 2,000 businesses, faith groups, prominent individuals, etc. have publicly endorsed the legislation. [See the full map here](#). In your letter, you can mention local endorsements.

Topics about bipartisanship

In order to pass strong climate policy that can withstand future changes in political winds, CCL prioritizes bipartisanship. Here are some angles you can explore in your letters:

- Statistics and polling show that voters want Congress to act on climate in a bipartisan way. Young Republicans especially want their party to come to the table on climate change. (Stats below to support this.)
- Some members of Congress are showing bipartisan climate leadership by joining the Climate Solutions Caucus groups. There is a Climate Solutions Caucus in both the House and the Senate — [see both of their membership lists here](#). Your letter can praise your member of Congress for being part of their respective group, or your letter can simply praise the bipartisan climate discussion happening in those groups.
- CCL’s work happens in the “[Far Middle](#)” — a “radical” place where we work together to solve our biggest problems, like climate change. You could introduce this concept in a letter and urge Republicans and Democrats in Congress to work together, too.

Helpful stats to reference in your letters

- 80% of voters say they want Congress to put politics aside and reach a bipartisan solution on climate change ([Luntz Global](#) - May 20, 2019).
- 75% of Republicans under 40 support putting a price on carbon pollution and giving regular dividends to households ([Luntz Global](#) - May 20, 2019).
- Americans are still concerned about climate change, even during the pandemic. 73% of people polled understand that climate change is happening, which is as high as it’s ever been (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, May 19, 2020).
- About two-thirds (65%) of Americans say the federal government is doing too little to reduce the effects of climate change ([Pew Research Center](#) - June 23, 2020).
- 79% of Americans say the priority for the country’s energy supply should be developing alternative sources of energy, such as wind and solar ([Pew Research Center](#) - June 23, 2020).
- You can always reference the Yale Program on Climate Change Communications “[Climate Opinion Maps](#)” to see statistics for your congressional district, county, or state.

For thorough training on when to write an LTE and how to craft your letter, [check out our LTE training here](#).

If you have questions about writing LTEs, post them in the [Media Relations forum](#) on CCL Community, or reach out to CCL’s Communications staff, Flannery Winchester (flannery@citizensclimate.org) or Steve Valk (steve@citizensclimate.org).