

Submitted by: Waterkeeper Alliance (Observer NGO)



Waterkeeper Alliance
180 Maiden Lane - Suite 603
New York, NY, 10038 USA

Designated Contact Point: Jacqueline Esposito jesposito@waterkeeper.org

UN Mandate: Action for Climate Empowerment FCCC/SBI/2022/L.23, para. 8

Statement is also submitted in accordance with UNFCCC guidelines and mandates:
FCCC/SBI/2010/27, paragraph 148; FCCC/SBI/2004/10 , paragraph 104; and
FCCC/SBI/2017/L.10, paragraph 19

Submitted on behalf of:



November 8, 2024

To: Mukhtar Babayev, President of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP29)
Parties to the UNFCCC
UNFCCC Secretariat

A Call to Immediately Phase Out Fossil Fuel Extraction

Presented at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Waterkeeper Alliance submits this statement to the Parties of the UNFCCC, urging immediate and sustained action in response to escalating climate impacts and disasters. While we acknowledge the importance of COP29 negotiations—especially regarding climate finance and the Loss and Damage Fund—we emphasize that without addressing the core driver of the climate emergency—the ongoing extraction of fossil fuels—vulnerable populations will continue to suffer disproportionately, and the world will fall short of the Paris Agreement goals.

The Critical Importance of Reducing Fossil Fuel Extraction

Reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) are clear: to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, we must drastically reduce fossil fuel extraction and usage, prioritize the reduction of energy demands, and implement strategies aimed at promoting energy efficiency and sustainability. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report states, "limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires rapid, deep, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, including the phase-out of fossil fuels" (IPCC, 2023).

Despite this urgent call to action, governments continue to approve new fossil fuel extraction projects. These projects can harm local communities and economies while at the same time locking in decades of greenhouse gas emissions. Fossil fuel extraction is at the heart of climate destabilization, yet far too little has been done to confront this issue directly.

The UNFCCC COP process must focus on the necessity of urgently phasing out fossil fuel extraction. New fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure—from pipelines to oil platforms—lock nations and corporations into fossil fuel dependence and divert resources from a just transition. The IEA's Net Zero by 2050 report makes it clear: there is no room for new fossil fuel development if we are to remain within a 1.5°C trajectory (IEA, 2021).

The Consequences of Inaction

In recent years the world has witnessed some of the most destructive climate-driven events in recorded history, from deadly heat waves to catastrophic wildfires and tropical cyclones. These extreme events displace millions, flood communities, and result in significant loss of life and infrastructure. The alarming pace of recent polar ice sheet losses indicates that irreversible tipping points may be closer than previously thought.

If we continue to allow new and expanded fossil fuel extraction, we will see an increase in global emissions at a time when even a fraction of a degree of warming compounds risks to vulnerable populations. Recent extraction projects, not only contradict the Paris Agreement but also ignore climate justice principles. These dirty fossil fuel projects disproportionately impact frontline communities, exacerbate pollution, and threaten human rights and ecosystems.

A Call for an Immediate Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

It is no longer sufficient to rely on voluntary pledges or isolated national policies to phase out fossil fuels. We call upon the Parties of COP29 to adopt a legally binding international agreement mandating the rapid phase-out of fossil fuel extraction. This agreement must prioritize:

1. **A Halt to New Extraction Projects:** Implement immediate moratoria on new oil, gas, oil sands, and coal projects, including offshore drilling and pipeline expansions.
2. **A Just Transition:** Ensure equitable support for workers and communities reliant on the fossil fuel economy through investment in safe, renewable energy and social, customary, and ecological protections.
3. **Phasing Out Existing Infrastructure:** Transition plans must include the eventual decommissioning of existing fossil fuel infrastructure with a focus on environmental restoration.
4. **International Cooperation and Climate Justice:** Wealthy nations must provide financial and technical support to developing countries, enabling them to transition away from fossil fuels while addressing climate impacts.
5. **Responsible Renewable Energy:** Ensure that renewable technologies respect communities and ecosystems and investment in clean energy solutions includes a just transition for workers in traditional energy sectors.
6. **Uphold Indigenous People's Rights:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples emphasizes the right to say no to extraction on Indigenous lands and to halt projects that pollute.

Conclusion

COP29 is a critical moment for climate action. While discussions on climate finance and loss and

damage are vital, they should not overshadow the urgent need for an international framework to phase out fossil fuel extraction. The scientific consensus is clear: phasing out fossil fuel extraction is the most impactful step we can take to mitigate climate change and secure a livable future for all.

The world is watching. Now is the time for bold, unified action.

We, the undersigned organizations, demand an immediate international agreement to end the expansion of fossil fuel extraction and begin a rapid phase out of fossil fuel production.

This statement is submitted with the hope that the Parties of COP29 recognize the gravity of this moment and take decisive action.

References:

- IPCC, 2023. Sixth Assessment Report.
- International Energy Agency (IEA), 2021. Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector.
- Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty: fossilfuel treaty.org

Our endorsements can be added as below:

Mahanadi River Waterkeeper
Water Initiatives
Grand Riverkeeper Labrador
Tualatin Riverkeepers
Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper
Yuba River Waterkeeper
Savannah Riverkeeper
Seti Gandaki Waterkeeper
Waterkeepers Nepal
Russian Riverkeeper
Puget Soundkeeper
Kissimmee Riverkeeper
Columbia Riverkeeper
Los Cabos Coastkeeper, A. C
Futaleufú Riverkeeper
Mahanadi River Waterkeeper
Water Initiatives

Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Local Environmental Action Demanded (LEAD) Agency
South County Coastkeeper
Water Climate Trust
San Antonio Bay Waterkeeper
Suwannee Riverkeeper
Waterkeepers Bangladesh
Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society
Mahaweli River Riverkeeper
Rivers Savers Association Sweden
Chautauqua-Conewango Consortium
San Quintín Bay Waterkeeper
Seneca Lake Guardian
Peoria Riverkeeper
Hudson Riverkeeper
Hunter Waterkeeper
Bargny Coastkeeper