

Representative Ken Buck  
1130 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

November 9, 2017

The Honorable Ken Buck,

In a letter of October 23, 2017 addressed to U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions you and eighty-three other members of Congress question whether existing federal statutes are sufficient to discourage climate direct actions aimed at disrupting fossil fuel pipelines, and press the Attorney General to take action on the October 11, 2016 Shut It Down climate direct action in which we took part.

You quote a letter to the editor from an unknown person printed in an unnamed Colorado newspaper as the basis for your belief that climate direct actions such as ours promote violence.

Not so, and we would like to take this opportunity to explain directly to you why nonviolent climate direct action is the last resort in a desperate and necessary effort to avert catastrophic climate change.

You, of course, dismiss the threat of climate change, going so far as to sponsor an amendment to block the Defense Department from assessing climate impacts on military preparedness. Your effort to defund Department of Defense Directive 4715.21 is of a piece with the Soviet-style effort by the Trump administration to suppress thought and shut down debate about how to address climate change.

Some facts are incontrovertible, however.

This week, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced that “Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surged at a record-breaking speed in 2016 to the highest level in 800,000 years... The abrupt changes in the atmosphere witnessed in the past 70 years are without precedent.”

The WMO reminded us, once again, that the last time carbon levels were this high, 3-5 million years ago, “the temperature was 2-3°C warmer and sea level was 10-20 meters [33-66 feet] higher than now.”

No reasonable person, and certainly no elected official, should deny such basic information about a lethal global threat, let alone take steps to try and suppress it. And frankly, for all that you may feel emboldened in the effort to deny climate reality, your attempt to do so will fail. Ideological ignorance cannot sway physics, increasingly backed by the evidence of the senses. You will not prevail in a world ablaze and awash.

At present, thanks to fossil fuel industry funded efforts, we the people cannot turn to our federal government for relief in addressing this single greatest threat to our health, wellbeing and security. Our own government has become an occupying force for interests inimical to our welfare. Our history and tradition shows us that in such a predicament, citizens do have a right,

indeed, the obligation, to act in our own defense - directly and forcefully - to address imminent harm. Like those who dumped boxes of tea into the Boston harbor, we take direct action to halt the flow of fossil fuels, the use of which is undermining the conditions that make civilization possible and destroying the web of life which sustains us.

You who stand for short-term profit at the expense of life will eventually be held accountable, and the questions which will be asked in the not too distant future, will be these:

1. How is it possible that the government of the United States, alone among the nations of the world, chooses to suppress evidence and deny the reality of climate change?
2. What actions should be taken against individuals and corporations who acted to prevent our government from properly assessing threats to global security from catastrophic climate change?
3. How should we hold accountable members of Congress who knowingly colluded or conspired to suppress information necessary for US government assessment, planning, mitigation and emergency response to climate change threats?
4. Should the effort to suppress climate science reports in the interest of maintaining fossil fuel sector profits be construed as treason?

We acted appropriately, peacefully, openly, carefully and with great concern for safety. Congress should do the same.

Sincerely,



Michael Foster



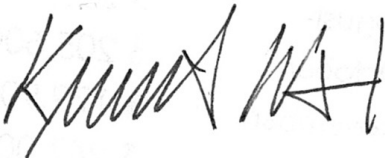
Leonard Higgins



Emily Johnston



Annette Klapstein



Ken Ward

cc:

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Rep. Lamar Smith  
Rep. Steve Scalise  
Rep. Trent Franks  
Rep. Doug Lamborn  
Rep. Steve Chabot  
Rep. Randy Weber  
Rep. Andy Biggs  
Rep. Blake Farenthold  
Rep. Pete Sessions  
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