



July 1, 2025

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The Honorable Scott Bessent
U.S. Secretary of the Treasury
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The Honorable Howard Lutnick
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The Honorable Dorothy Camille Shea
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The Honorable Lindsey Graham
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The Honorable Andy Harris
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The Honorable John Hoeven
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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
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U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on
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The Honorable Brad Finstad
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The Honorable Tracey Mann
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The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
U.S. Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on
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and Research
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Dear Cabinet Officials, Congressmen and Senators:

As duly elected and appointed statewide officials responsible for supporting and regulating the agriculture industry, protecting consumers, and ensuring the safety of food supplies for millions of Americans, we write to encourage the immediate cessation of funding for organizations that are actively operating in ways harmful to U.S. agricultural interests.

The federal government should stop using American taxpayer dollars to fund the United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(FAO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), because each of these organizations' net-zero policies will have devastating effects on American consumers, farmers, and ranchers, and further endanger food security for the poor in America. Those policies include: (1) IMO's ongoing efforts to impose emissions charges on shipping, including agricultural imports and exports, over U.S. opposition, and (2) FAO's and UNEP's efforts to push dangerous and destructive net-zero agriculture policies, such as staggering decreases in beef consumption, onto farmers, ranchers, and societies. Each organization is acting, in the words of President Trump's executive order regarding U.S. funding of the UN and other international organizations, "contrary to the interests of the United States," and should not receive taxpayer funds.ⁱ

These IMO, FAO, and UNEP strategies would all harm American agriculture, and agricultural commissioners are uniquely positioned to warn of these risks to America's farmers, ranchers, and consumers. Federal officials should take action to protect American agriculture by withdrawing from and eliminating funding to these groups.

I. IMO, FAO, and UNEP Promote a Net-Zero Agenda That Will Have Devastating Effects on American Farmers, Ranchers, and Consumers

IMO, FAO, and UNEP have each adopted aggressive policies to attempt to achieve net-zero global greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions by 2050 that "call[] for nothing less than a complete transformation of how we produce, consume, and move about."ⁱⁱ Most recently, the IMO advanced plans to make "shipping the first sector with a global carbon price," even though the "draft plan is expected to increase transport costs by around **80%** in the period to 2050."ⁱⁱⁱ These increases could have devastating effects on America's farmers and consumers.

As multiple studies have demonstrated,^{iv} increasing shipping costs will only aggravate the problem of food inflation for Americans, and hurt American farmers because increased shipping costs means decreased demand for U.S. agricultural exports. A large portion of U.S. agricultural trade depends on ocean shipping: in 2023 alone, U.S. ports exported over \$100 billion of agricultural products.^v Adding a charge for emissions will function as a regressive tax, raising prices and disproportionately harming poorer consumers who spend a greater fraction of their income on food. The Trump administration has opposed the IMO's efforts,^{vi} but the IMO nevertheless pushed ahead, and intends to finalize these plans in October 2025.^{vii}

Similarly, FAO's and UNEP's net-zero ambitions will hurt the poor by raising food prices—and put American cattle ranchers out of business. A 2024 FAO report suggested that governments increase food prices to account for trillions of dollars in "hidden costs," including environmental costs—even if some poor families "would no longer be able to afford food as they did before the price increase"—and proposed "[t]axes on . . . animal source foods."^{viii} Indeed, the FAO's net-zero "roadmap" suggests that a dramatic decrease in beef consumption is necessary to "reduce the GHG impacts of animal-food based products."^{ix}

Net-zero roadmaps forecast near unrecognizable American farming and ranching operations: electric machinery and equipment;^x on-site solar panels and wind turbines;^{xi} organic fertilizer;^{xii} and cutting U.S. beef consumption in half by 2050.^{xiii} Net-zero advocates predict that 19 million ruminant meat farming jobs could be lost globally by 2050,^{xiv} and a recent study found that net-zero compliance costs could increase farm operating expenses by at least 34%.^{xv} All of this means higher food prices for American consumers, as net-zero mandates would increase Americans' grocery bills by 15%.^{xvi}

Net-zero goals also require reducing the global population. Even if farmers undertake the heavy burdens outlined above, global agriculture cannot reach net-zero emissions without reducing demand for food. A

2019 report from UNEP and the World Resources Institute (WRI) stated that fertility rates in Sub-Saharan Africa should be slashed from 3.2 to 2.16 children per mother to reduce that region’s projected population “by 446 million.”^{xxvii} Shockingly, the UNEP/WRI report framed this population decrease as a positive because it would “close the global GHG mitigation gap,”^{xxviii} as 446 million fewer people would need to be fed.

UNEP’s net-zero food system goal has already been proven to be disastrous when attempted. In 2019, with support from UNEP, Sri Lanka set into motion the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management.^{xix} UNEP claimed that this would “lead to US\$100 billion in savings” and promote the “increase[d] use of organic fertilizers.”^{xx} Sri Lanka banned the importation of chemical fertilizers in 2021, to disastrous effect. Agricultural production was cut in half.^{xxi} Over 5 million people needed humanitarian assistance due to food insecurity, and 62% of households were significantly less capable of affording nutritious foods.^{xxii} Sri Lanka defaulted on its international debts and experienced “an economic crisis, a political crisis, [and] a food crisis.”^{xxiii} Yet UNEP and FAO continue to push net-zero agricultural policies.

II. The U.S. Should Withdraw from and Eliminate Funding to IMO, FAO, and UNEP

The federal executive branch and Congress should take action to respond to IMO’s, FAO’s, and UNEP’s harmful policies by both withdrawing and cutting off funding.

A. Withdraw from IMO, FAO, and UNEP

The U.S. should withdraw from IMO, FAO, and UNEP. President Trump has already issued an executive order (“Executive Order on International Environmental Agreements”) recognizing the need to “put[] America first in international environmental agreements” that do not reflect U.S. values, and directing the withdrawal from “any agreement, pact, accord, or similar commitment made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” (UNFCCC or “Paris Agreement”).^{xxiv} This Executive Order further instructs the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to certify a report describing “any further action required to achieve the policy objectives” of the Executive Order.^{xxv} The IMO, FAO, and UNEP all aim to effectuate the Paris Agreement, so withdrawal is consistent with the policy objectives of the Executive Order.^{xxvi}

If the U.S. withdrew^{xxvii} from any of these groups, it would send a powerful message of support for American farmers, ranchers, and consumers, and an equally powerful message of opposition to the UN continuing to use its power to enforce harmful net-zero goals.

B. Eliminate U.S. Funding to IMO, FAO, and UNEP

The U.S. should also eliminate funding for these organizations due to the harmful effects of their policies on American agriculture. The U.S. contributed (by far) the largest share of any country to FAO’s 2023 budget, accounting for \$391 million of the \$1.5 billion total.^{xxviii} This contribution was over two-and-a-half times more than the second-highest contributor (Germany with \$154 million).^{xxix} And the U.S. was the second largest contributor to UNEP in 2023, providing over \$49 million of a \$502.6 million budget.^{xxx} The U.S. (one of IMO’s 176 member states) contributed \$1.5 million of IMO’s \$20 million 2023 budget, making it the 14th-largest funder of the IMO.^{xxxi}

The President’s Executive Order on International Environmental Agreements directs the UN Ambassador, in collaboration with the Secretaries of State and Treasury, to “immediately cease or revoke any purported

financial commitment made by the United States under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.”^{xxxiii} President Trump has also signed executive orders directing the Secretary of State to review “all international intergovernmental organizations of which the United States is a member and provides any type of funding or other support” to determine whether any of those organizations are contrary to U.S. interests.^{xxxiii} As part of these reviews, department heads should recommend eliminating all funding to IMO, FAO, and UNEP on the basis that U.S. strategy with regard to those organizations’ goals has changed.^{xxxiv}

In sum, the net-zero ambitions and actions of IMO, FAO, and UNEP are contrary to the interests of the United States. Eliminating funding and withdrawing from these UN organizations would prioritize American farmers, ranchers, and consumers; signal strong opposition to destructive net-zero goals; and enhance food security for the poor in America.

Sincerely,



Wilton Simpson
Florida Commissioner of Agriculture



Tyler Harper
Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture



Mike Naig
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture



Jonathan Shell
Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture



Andy Gipson
Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture



Chris Chinn
Missouri Director of Agriculture



Sherry Vinton
Nebraska Director of Agriculture



Doug Goehring
North Dakota Commissioner of Agriculture



Hugh Weathers
South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture



Sid Miller
Texas Commissioner of Agriculture



Kent Leonhardt
West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture

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- ⁱ Executive Order 14199 (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/10/2025-02504/withdrawing-the-united-states-from-and-ending-funding-to-certain-united-nations-organizations-and>.
- ⁱⁱ United Nations Climate Action, *For a Livable Climate: Net-zero Commitments Must Be Backed by Credible Action*, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Declan Bush, *IMO Approves Historic Carbon Price Agreement*, Lloyd's List (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://www.lloydslist.com/LL1153160/IMO-approves-historic-carbon-price-agreement> (emphasis added).
- ^{iv} See Maria Ogbugo, et al., *Navigating Climate Action: Assessing the Economic Impacts and Trade-offs of a Shipping Carbon Tax for African States*, Africa Policy Res. Inst., 20 (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://afripoli.org/navigating-climate-action-assessing-the-economic-impacts-and-trade-offs-of-a-shipping-carbon-tax-for-african-states> (levy “will increase global food and agricultural prices” and may lead to a decline in the availability of food in some countries); Zhaojun Wang and Amanda Countryman, *Island Economies in the Wake: Assessing Carbon Taxes on Maritime Trade*, 1, 10 (June 28, 2024), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4875381 (finding that an IMO tax would “generally lead to a decrease in welfare and other macroeconomic indicators including GDP, exports, and imports for most countries and regions,” with the largest negative impacts on agriculture and energy); Marie Fricaudet, et al., *Food Security, IMO Mid-Term Measures' Impact on States and Revenue Distribution – Analysing Synergies and Risks*, 2 (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.shippingandoceans.com/post/new-analysis-shows-a-shifting-landscape-with-strong-support-for-a-carbon-price> (click “Food security risks analysis”) (IMO tax “will have a negative impact for consumers, at least and in particular in the short run,” especially for poor households).
- ^v Daniel Munch, *\$1.4B in Weekly Ag Trade at Risk*, Am. Farm Bureau Market Intel (Sept. 25, 2024), <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/port-strike-could-sink-access-to-foreign-markets>.
- ^{vi} Fonie Mitsopoulou, *Trump Tells Countries to Ax Talks on Shipping Carbon Tax, or Else*, Politico (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-scrap-maritime-decarbonization-talks/>.
- ^{vii} Declan Bush, *IMO Approves Historic Carbon Price Agreement*, Lloyd's List (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://www.lloydslist.com/LL1153160/IMO-approves-historic-carbon-price-agreement>.
- ^{viii} See FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, 4, 76, 102 (2024), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b49c8100-3e00-4cc6-b617-226edd7a9662/content>; see *id.* at 68 (admitting harmful impact on the poor but contending that “the revenue generated can be strategically allocated to programmes and services that ultimately benefit and uplift these communities in the long term”).
- ^{ix} See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Achieving SDG 2 Without Breaching the 1.5°C Threshold: A Global Roadmap*, Cover Page, 12 (2023), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/61c1ab4e-32f7-47c4-b267-d6410bb1dac3/content> (promoting “changing the livestock population to match . . . environment constraints” by shifting from cows to chickens).
- ^x McKinsey & Company, *The Net-Zero Transition*, 167 (Jan. 2022), <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/sustainability/our%20insights/the%20net%20zero%20transition%20what%20it%20would%20cost%20what%20it%20could%20bring/the-net-zero-transition-what-it-would-cost-and-what-it-could-bring-final.pdf>; see Eleanor McCrary, *Fact Check: False Claim that John Deere Is Rolling Out All-Electric Combines, Large Tractors*, USA Today (Sept. 29, 2022), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2022/09/29/fact-check-john-deere-does-not-plan-offer-all-electric-combines-large-tractors/8123931001/> (explaining infeasibility).
- ^{xi} Climate Action 100+, *Global Sector Strategies: Recommended Investor Expectations for Food and Beverage*, 24 (2021), <https://www.climateaction100.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Global-Sector-Strategies-Food-and-Beverage-Ceres-PRI-August-2021.pdf>.
- ^{xii} Climate Action 100+, *Global Sector Strategies: Recommended Investor Expectations for Food and Beverage* 23, 27–28 (2021), <https://www.climateaction100.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Global-Sector-Strategies-Food-and-Beverage-Ceres-PRI-August-2021.pdf>.
- ^{xiii} Ceres, *The Investor Guide to Climate Transition Plans in the U.S. Food Sector*, 20 (May 2022), <https://www.ceres.org/download/84a30993-4747-47f2-aa5c-d6f945e8030a> (“[G]lobal per capita meat consumption must be reduced to around 1.5 burgers per person per week by 2050 to align with a 1.5°C scenario.”); Richard Waite et al., *6 Pressing Questions About Beef and Climate Change, Answered*, WORLD RES. INST., (Mar. 7, 2022), <https://www.wri.org/insights/6-pressing-questions-about-beef-and-climate-change-answered> (“1.5 burgers per person per week [is] about half of current U.S. levels”).
- ^{xiv} McKinsey & Company, *The Net-Zero Transition*, 25 (Jan. 2022), <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/sustainability/our%20insights/the%20net%20zero%20transition%20what%20it%20would%20cost%20what%20it%20could%20bring/the-net-zero-transition-what-it-would-cost-and-what-it-could-bring-final.pdf>.

[ero%20transition%20what%20it%20would%20cost%20what%20it%20could%20bring/the-net-zero-transition-what-it-would-cost-and-what-it-could-bring-final.pdf](#).

^{xv} See Buckeye Institute, *Net Zero Climate Control Policies Will Fail the Farm*, 3 (Feb. 7, 2024), <https://www.buckeyeinstitute.org/library/docLib/2024-02-07-Net-Zero-Climate-Control-Policies-Will-Fail-the-Farm-policy-report.pdf>.

^{xvi} See Buckeye Institute, *Net Zero Climate Control Policies Will Fail the Farm*, 37 (Feb. 7, 2024), <https://www.buckeyeinstitute.org/library/docLib/2024-02-07-Net-Zero-Climate-Control-Policies-Will-Fail-the-Farm-policy-report.pdf>.

^{xvii} World Res. Inst., *Creating a Sustainable Food Future*, 119, 122-23 (July 2019), https://research.wri.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/WRR_Food_Full_Report_0.pdf.

^{xviii} World Res. Inst., *Creating a Sustainable Food Future*, 119, 122-23 (July 2019), https://research.wri.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/WRR_Food_Full_Report_0.pdf.

^{xix} Press Release, UNEP, *Colombo Declaration Calls for Tackling Global Nitrogen Challenge* (Oct. 24, 2019), <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/colombo-declaration-calls-tackling-global-nitrogen-challenge>.

^{xx} Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, *Launch of the UN Global Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen Management* (Oct. 23, 2019), <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/launch-un-global-campaign-sustainable-nitrogen-management>.

^{xxi} See UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Sri Lanka Food Security Crisis – Humanitarian Needs and Priorities 2022*, 5 (June 9, 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-food-security-crisis-humanitarian-needs-and-priorities-2022-june-sept-2022-ensita>; Mujib Mashal & Skandha Gunasekara, *Sri Lanka Is Calm Again. That Doesn't Mean Things Are Any Better*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 2, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/business/sri-lanka-economy.html>.

^{xxii} See UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Sri Lanka Food Security Crisis – Humanitarian Needs and Priorities 2022*, 5 (June 9, 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-food-security-crisis-humanitarian-needs-and-priorities-2022-june-sept-2022-ensita>.

^{xxiii} Shikha Singh, S&P Global Commodity Insights, *Sri Lanka Waking Up to Reality of Food Shortages After Failed Organic Farming Dream* (Aug. 11, 2022), <https://www.spglobal.com/commodity-insights/en/news-research/blog/agriculture/081022-sri-lanka-crisis-food-organic-farming>.

^{xxiv} Executive Order 14162, (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/30/2025-02010/putting-america-first-in-international-environmental-agreements>.

^{xxv} Executive Order 14162, (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/30/2025-02010/putting-america-first-in-international-environmental-agreements>.

^{xxvi} See IMO, *IMO's Work to Cut GHG Emissions from Ships*, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Cutting-GHG-emissions.aspx> (“IMO is committed to supporting . . . the Paris Agreement by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping.”); FAO, *Climate Change*, <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/action-areas/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement/en> (“The Paris Agreement includes strategies for the participatory global reduction of greenhouse gases and FAO is working with countries to ensure these strategies are implemented.”); UNEP, *UNEP at the Climate COP*, <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/climate-action/what-we-do/unep-climate-cop> (“[T]he ‘Conference of the Parties’ (COP), is the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC. . . . Climate Action is a key area of focus for UNEP, and the organization is present at COP to help deliver the action that the world needs.”)

^{xxvii} No legal obligations appear to prevent a member state such as the U.S. from leaving UNEP immediately, and the U.S. has left other UN bodies (including, most recently, the Human Rights Council). If the U.S. left the FAO and/or IMO, its exit would be effective one year later. See Constitution of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (1945), <https://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/14/14-01/food-organization.html> (Article XIX); Convention on the International Maritime Organization (1948), https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1958/03/19580317%2005-05%20PM/Ch_XII_1p.pdf (Article 59).

^{xxviii} See UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *Revenue by Government Donor*, <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor>.

^{xxix} See UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *Revenue by Government Donor*, <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor>.

^{xxx} See UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *Revenue by Government Donor*, <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor>.

^{xxxi} See UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *Revenue by Government Donor*, <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor>.

^{xxxii} Executive Order 14162, (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/30/2025-02010/putting-america-first-in-international-environmental-agreements>.

^{xxxiii} Executive Order 14199 (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/10/2025-02504/withdrawing-the-united-states-from-and-ending-funding-to-certain-united-nations-organizations-and>.

^{xxxiv} Congress previously has conditioned funding to U.N. agencies based on various issues, and other countries previously withheld UNEP funding until misconduct allegations were resolved. *See, e.g.*, Damian Carrington, *Nations Halt Funding to UN Environment Programme As Outcry over Chief Grows*, *The Guardian* (Sep. 25, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/25/nations-halt-funding-to-un-environment-programme-as-outcry-over-chief-erik-solheim-grows>.