**Nobel Laureates’ Statement to Climate Summit World Leaders:**

**Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground**

As Nobel Laureates from peace, literature, medicine, physics and economics, and like so many people around the globe, we are seized by the great moral issue of our time: the climate crisis and commensurate destruction of nature.

Climate change is threatening hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods across every continent and is putting thousands of species at risk. The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – is by far the major contributor to climate change.

We write today, on the eve of Earth Day 2021 and the Leaders’ Climate Summit, hosted by President Biden, to urge you to act now to avoid a climate catastrophe by keeping fossil fuels in the ground.

We welcome President Biden and the US government’s acknowledgement in the Executive Order that “Together, we must listen to science and meet the moment.” Indeed, meeting the moment requires responses to the climate crisis that will define legacies. Qualifications for being on the right side of history are clear.

For far too long, governments have lagged, shockingly, behind what science demands and what a growing and powerful people-powered movement knows: urgent action is needed to end the expansions of fossil fuel production; phase out current production; and invest in renewable energy.

The burning of fossil fuels is responsible for almost 80% of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution. In addition to being the leading source of emissions, there are local pollution, environmental, and health costs associated with extracting, refining, transporting and burning fossil fuels. These costs are often paid by Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities. Egregious industry practices have led to human rights violations and a fossil fuel system that has left billions of people across the globe without sufficient energy to lead lives of dignity.

For both people and the planet, continued support must be given to tackling climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement. Failure to meet the Paris Agreement’s temperature limit of 1.5°C risks pushing the world towards catastrophic global warming.

Yet, the Paris Agreement has no mention of fossil fuels. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry continues to plan new projects. Banks continue to fund new projects. According to the most recent United Nations Environment Programme report, 120% more coal, oil, and gas will be produced by 2030 than is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C. Efforts to meet the Paris Agreement and to reduce demand for fossil fuels will be undermined if supply continues to grow.

The solution is clear: fossil fuels must be kept in the ground.

Leaders, not industry, hold the power and have the moral responsibility to take bold actions to address this crisis. We call on world leaders to work together in a spirit of international cooperation to:

* **End new expansion** of fossil fuel production in line with the best available science as outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and United Nations Environment Program;
* **Phase out existing production** of fossil fuels in a manner that is fair and equitable, taking into account the responsibilities of countries for climate change and their respective dependency on fossil fuels, and capacity to transition;
* **Invest in a transformational plan** to ensure 100% access to renewable energy globally, support dependent economies to diversify away from fossil fuels, and enable people and communities across the globe to flourish through a global just transition.

Fossil fuels are the greatest contributor to climate change. Allowing the continued expansion of this industry is unconscionable. The fossil fuel system is global and requires a global solution – a solution the Leaders’ Climate Summit must work towards. And the first step is to keep fossil fuels in the ground.

**Signatories**