The Honorable John Carney  
Governor of the State of Delaware

Secretary Shawn Garvin  
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Representative Peter Schwartzkopf  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Senator David Sokola  
Senate President Pro Tempore

May 10th, 2022

Governor Carney, Secretary Garvin, Speaker Schwartzkopf, and President Pro Tempore Sokola,

“It’s now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5C. Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible.”  
- Jim Skea, Co-chair of Working Group III of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

“The climate crisis is upon us, and its effects will only become more apparent in the years to come. We need to both adapt to this reality and continue to take bold action to fight it.”  
- Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont

“In my view, we’ve already waited too long to deal with this climate crisis and we can’t wait any longer. We see it with our own eyes, we feel it, we know it in our bones, and it’s time to act. We know what to do, we’ve just got to do it.”  
- President Joseph Biden

These are the words of a world-renowned climate scientist, a governor who has recently taken action on climate in a state similar to Delaware, and our own President Joe Biden, all of whom are telling us that the time is now to act boldly to combat climate change in Delaware.

We, the undersigned, comprising 42 organizations, faith communities, and businesses, representing over 110,000 members, customers, and constituents, respectfully request that you work together to declare a Climate Emergency and establish robust greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by the end of the legislative session.

We appreciate the work that the Governor, the legislature, and DNREC have done to date on these fronts. This includes producing our first Climate Action Plan and Governor Carney joining the US Climate Alliance in a swift response to then-President Trump pulling the United States out of the Paris Accord. These actions have already begun to make an impact in Delaware. However, now it is time to write the next chapter in our shared history of combatting the climate crisis.

In 2021, the Hawaiian legislature passed a resolution formally declaring a Climate Emergency in that state. We believe, given the climate risks to Delaware, that it is time for us to do the same. While a Climate Emergency declaration does not grant any additional powers or privileges to anyone in the Government, it is an important step to take nonetheless. We cannot hope to solve an issue as complex and perilously daunting to our existence as climate change without first
even admitting the extent of the problem. By officially declaring a Climate Emergency we are stating clearly the existential threat that climate change poses to our state so we can move forward in taking action to resolve it.

Since our Climate Action Plan was released, things have continued to evolve, both in Delaware and nationally. With the election of President Biden, strong commitments have already been made through executive orders, administrative action, and the passage of the infrastructure bill. We now know that with these new developments the 41% reduction by 2035 included in the Climate Action Plan can and must be improved upon.

New Jersey’s legislature has adopted a goal of a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The Maryland legislature just adopted a new goal of a 60% reduction by 2031. Even the US Climate Alliance, of which Delaware remains a part, has expanded its goals to 50-52% by 2030 and net-zero by 2050. These goals are in line with what the science is telling us is needed to prevent warming greater than 1.5 C. It is time for Delaware to catch up to our neighbors and the rest of the region by formally adopting and codifying greenhouse gas emission reduction goals in line with the US Climate Alliance and President Biden’s goals of at least 50% reduction over 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero by 2050.

However, we cannot simply place goals in our state code and not lay out a process by which they can be achieved. That is why we are calling on the legislature to codify the responsibility of DNREC to work with state agencies to identify specific actions that can be taken while meeting the needs of all stakeholders and communities. We also need a specific climate directive requiring these state agencies to consider these new goals and climate change in their planning and any external or internal processes. In this way, state agencies can bring creativity and innovation to a coordinated effort to reach these ambitious targets. Our neighboring states have already started taking these actions, and now it is our turn.

So many vulnerable communities in Delaware are already being impacted by climate change from sunny day flooding events in Sussex County to historically devastating flooding from Hurricane Ida in Wilmington. These communities need to have an integral part in the development of their emission reduction plans. That is why we need to require that DNREC and other agencies work directly with under-resourced and overburdened communities in the development of their plans. In this way, we can ensure that emission reductions are equitable and effective for those who need our help the most.

This legislation needs to be introduced and passed this legislative session; of which there are less than 30 legislative days left. The IPCC could not be clearer in their latest report. We have nine years to make big changes to prevent warming greater than 1.5 C. We understand this is a challenge, but this crisis also brings a unique opportunity for bold, transformative change. What we need is courage and a vision for a better future. Please take this historical next step that will have positive impacts on our state for generations to come.
Sincerely,

Dustyn Thompson
Sierra Club Delaware Chapter

Karl Stomberg
Delaware Working Families Party

Charlie Garlow
Delaware Electric Vehicle Association

Shyanne Miller
Campaign Manager, Building People Power
(A Campaign of Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League)

Dale Davis
CMI Solar

Elizabeth Cerceo, MD, FACP, FHM

Mary Stewart Douglas
Environmental Attourney

Shweta Arya
Delaware Interfaith Power & Light

Kristin Brubaker
Chair of Delaware Community of Green Building United
Green Building United

Gwendolyn Miller
President
League of Women Voters of Delaware

Jeffrey Richardson
Imani Energy

Gordon Simmons, Pastor
Delaware Lutheran Office for Public Policy

Carl Nelson-Poteet
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Sunrise Newark
Karen Lienau  
Social Activist  
Honeybee Kitchen and Market, Inc

Tonyehn Verkitus  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
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Drew Serres  
Network Coordinator, Network Delaware

Linda Whitehead  
Delaware Concerned Residents for Environmental Justice

Steve Cottrell  
Delaware Audubon Society

Rick Kotowski  
President & CEO  
Clean Energy USA

Dale Davis  
Delaware Solar Energy Coalition

Dr. Mujahid Nyahuma  
Delaware Community Benefits Agreement Coalition

Jane Pierantozzi  
Plant Powered Delaware

Peggy Schultz  
People For Offshore Wind Energy Resources (POWER)

Carol Forsythe, President  
Radnor Green Civic Association

Alan Greenglass  
Mid-Atlantic Alliance For Climate and Health
Reji Gregoire
Green New Deal Network - Delaware

Andy Wall
Ad Energy

Jack Thompson
Fridays for the Future - Delaware

Lynne Kielhorn
Westminster Peace & Justice Work Group