June 14, 2021

The Honorable John Kerry
Special Presidential Envoy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to you today to request information about your position as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. Your cabinet-level position, which includes a place on the National Security Council, appears to have an outsized role within the Biden Administration. It appears that in your role, you have some ability to set foreign policy and to bind the United States to international agreements, despite not being confirmed with advice and consent of the Senate. We are particularly concerned with how you, as the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, may handle an increasingly adversarial U.S. relationship with the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

You joined the Biden Administration as the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, a newly created position as of January 20, 2021. President Biden said he selected you, in part by because you are “one of [his] closest friends . . . “ Your position is apparently distinct from Gina McCarthy’s role as National Climate Advisor—another unconfirmed position that President Biden says “run[s] everything.” It is unclear what the scope of your duties are or how your role plays into the National Security Council, as your mission is a highly nebulous one to simply “combat[] the climate crisis to meet the existential threat that we face.”

5 Id.
Nevertheless, you appear to be negotiating on behalf of the United States with foreign
governments, including the PRC. The Trump Administration made significant strides toward
commitments with the PRC to emissions reductions without sacrificing economic prosperity. Yet, the Biden Administration appears poised to make further commitments without regard to
economic repercussions, and without a reciprocal agreement from the PRC, the world’s largest polluter.

The Biden Administration recently released a joint statement with the PRC, which
conveniently fails to bind the PRC to anything in terms of concrete and measurable steps it must
take to remedy its environmental degradation. The Biden Administration has set a 2030
greenhouse gas emissions target of 50 to 52 percent below 2005 levels, which will greatly impact
the economy of the United States, while it is not clear that the PRC is even attempting to follow
suit.

The PRC’s own Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng has stated recently that notions of
China accelerating carbon reduction targets are “not very realistic” and that “China is at a
different stage than the U.S., Western nations and other developed countries.” Even as the
PRC pretends to cooperate with the international community by pledging to be carbon neutral by
2060, the PRC has not cut its emissions and is actually increasing its ability to grow its
emissions.

It is of paramount importance that we conduct oversight over your position as the Special
Presidential Envoy for Climate and how the position will impact the interests of the United
States, especially where the role appears to intersect with the U.S. response to a hostile foreign
regime such as the Chinese Communist Party. To date, the White House has failed to provide
any information about your security clearance, which Committee Republicans requested on May
4, 2021. This lack of transparency appears to be a pattern of avoiding Congressional oversight

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while Democrats maintain majorities in the House and Senate.\textsuperscript{13} The American people deserve to understand your role in the government and what authority you have to negotiate with foreign adversaries.

To assist us in conducting oversight of these important issues, please provide the Committee with the following information no later than June 28, 2021:

1. All documents and communications regarding the nature and scope of the role of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate;

2. A detailed explanation of the scope of the role played by the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, the authorities exercised by the incumbent, and why the incumbent would sit on the National Security Council;

3. A detailed explanation of why the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate would have a need to know classified national security information and maintain a security clearance;

4. All documents and communications from January 20, 2021 to the present regarding negotiations between the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate and PRC officials.

To make arrangements to deliver documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Thank you for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

\[\text{Signature}\]

James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary

\textbf{cc:} The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight and Reform
The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary