

# THE JACKSON FOUNDATION

*Tackling tough problems. Fostering effective leadership.*

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Winter 2021

## Understanding the U.S. role in COP26

Deemed by America's climate envoy John Kerry as the "last best hope for the world to get its act together," the 26th annual United Nations climate change summit in Glasgow, Scotland, held particular importance due to the limited time remaining to act on global warming and the required scale of action. The U.S. delegation also had the added pressure to reestablish its role as an international climate leader.

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) recently convened public briefings in partnership with the Jackson Foundation to prepare for this event. Part of the larger series [\*What Congress Needs to Know in the Lead Up to COP26\*](#), the briefings were aimed toward a Congressional audience as major greenhouse gas reductions require new policies and investments, and Congress plays an essential role in passing that legislation.

In the briefing [\*The Negotiations: What's on the Table\*](#), panelists provided background about the Conference of Parties (COP) and highlighted key issues that they anticipated would be thorny. These included how to count emissions reductions fairly, who will pay for climate adaptations, and whether some countries will be compensated for losses and damages from the permanent effects from climate change.

Given the significant resources needed to address the climate crisis, another briefing highlighted [\*The Role of International Climate Finance\*](#). Utilizing experts from the Green Climate Fund, the U.K. government and USAID, this session focused on the mechanisms of international public funding, and how Congress needs to fulfill U.S. commitments, integrating equity and climate justice. Bella Tonkonogy, Associate Director of the Climate Policy Initiative, explained that funding is important because, "Climate change stands to reverse many of the development gains that countries have made. From a U.S.-centric perspective, that can contribute to increasing instability



*Clockwise from top left: Daniel Bresette, EESI; Sashi Jayatileke, USAID; Kate Hughes, UK Government; Ricardo Nogueira, Green Climate Fund; Bella Tonkonogy, Climate Policy Initiative; and Joe Thwaites, World Resources Institute.*

globally and can affect the U.S. directly through supply chain disruptions."

In the final event, EESI shared highlights in [\*Recap of COP26: Key Outcomes and What Comes Next\*](#). Dr. Joanna Depledge from Cambridge University spoke to the strides made in COP26, which were far from perfect yet meaningful. In particular, she noted that a wave of countries announced net-zero targets as a result of the conference. She added, "I don't want to sound too optimistic: many of these net-zero

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***"I don't want to sound too optimistic: many of these net-zero targets are vague . . . with no clear pathway for their achievement, but they are there, and that really matters."***

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targets are vague, with little detail, with no clear pathway for their achievement, but they are there, and that really matters." She also noted that just two years ago, these commitments were inconceivable, and she credited the U.S.' commitment earlier this year to making this possible.

Videos and summaries of each briefing can be found on [\*EESI's website\*](#). We are pleased to have partnered with EESI to produce these programs. ■

# NEPA revisited

Last year, the Jackson Foundation had many serious concerns about proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and weighed in on this federal rule making. Senator Jackson crafted NEPA to help protect our environment for future generations. For a half-century, it has served an essential purpose by requiring that the best information be gathered, that all reasonable alternatives be considered, that federal agencies work

together, and that the public be fully included in the process. This year, we again submitted public comments, applauding the first round of two proposed revisions which we hope will restore the intent of NEPA. In light of the growing concern that we share about the climate crisis and the threat it poses to life as we know it, we eagerly anticipate the second phase of rulemaking that will incorporate elements to tackle global warming. ■

## Fellows on the Move

**Amaury Ávalos** just became the Director of Communications at the City of Philadelphia's Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

**Laura Baird** moved to the Washington State Attorney General's Office in Seattle as an Assistant Attorney General.

**Monica Guzman's** book, *I Never Thought of it That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*, due to be released in March 2022, is available for preorder.

**Keelcy Perez Woolley** recently joined Meta (formerly known as Facebook) as a U.S. Immigration Partner focusing on immigration strategy.

## Fellows featured in Town Hall Seattle's Civics Series

In her role as Town Hall Seattle's Program Director, Jackson Leadership Fellow Shin Yu Pai has invited Jackson Fellows to serve as conversation partners at two recent events and one upcoming program:



Gathering at the holidays: from left to right, Jackson Fellows Jed Bradley, Keelcy Perez Woolley, Becka Johnson Poppe, Laura Baird, and Andrew Lewis.

[Kiana Scott spoke with journalist Joshua Prager](#) about his book that tells the story of Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" in Roe v. Wade; [Senator Joe Nguyen discussed state versus federal policy with The Honorable Jeffrey S. Sutton](#); and [Sarah Reyneveld will talk with David Cay Johnston](#) on December 15 about his book on Donald Trump.



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