It’s time to lead on climate policy.

The following are three essential actions to execute a science-based climate policy agenda.

**Advocate**
- for policies consistent with achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

**Align**
- your trade associations’ climate policy advocacy with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

**Allocate**
- advocacy spending to advance climate policies, not obstruct them.

Climate change poses an unprecedented threat to companies’ operations, value chains, employees and communities. The economic costs of climate change— from damage to facilities, disrupted operations and supply chains and lost productivity— are already in the hundreds of millions of dollars and expected to reach trillions. While voluntary actions to reduce emissions are important, only public policy can deliver reductions at the speed and scale needed to limit the worst impacts of climate change.

That’s why climate policy advocacy is an essential element of corporate sustainability leadership.

**ALIGN** your trade associations’ climate policy advocacy with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

It’s no longer tenable for companies to say the right things on climate policy while allowing their trade associations—which have far greater political clout—to lobby against those policies.

Here’s how to lead:
- Speak out. Publicly distance your company from statements or lobbying against climate policy by your trade associations. Explain how it is inconsistent with your own emission reduction goals and with your support for climate policy.
- Change their position. Work to end trade association lobbying against climate policy through transparent and time-bound engagement with those organizations.
- If necessary, leave. Where attempts to change an association prove ineffective or insufficient, discontinue your membership.

Here’s how to get started:
- Conduct an audit. Complete a thorough assessment of your trade associations’ lobbying activities on climate, and whether or not they’re aligned with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Make the audit results public and commit to re-auditing associations on a regular basis.
- Make a plan. Decide how to resolve cases of misalignment. What must happen in order for you to remain a member, and by when? Set explicit criteria and timelines for success and communicate them to your trade associations’ leadership.

**ALLOCATE** advocacy spending to advance climate policies, not obstruct them.

Direct advocacy and lobbying by trade associations aren’t the only ways to influence policymakers. Through your political giving and funding of third-party organizations, you send a strong message about the kind of climate policy agenda you want to see enacted.

Here’s how to lead:
- Contribute to organizations and initiatives to advance climate policy.
- Stop contributing to those that oppose it.
- Ensure that the net effect of company contributions to candidates or elected officials (if applicable) is to advance climate policy, not obstruct it.

Here’s how to get started:
- Publicly disclose spending on organizations or activities that influence climate policy. Start by disclosing contributions to trade associations that lobby on climate policy.

**SILENCE IS SUPPORT:** stakeholders will assume your trade association speaks for you unless you say otherwise. Further, companies seeking to change their associations from the inside will be evaluated based on visible outcomes. Does the association change its behavior or not?

**A FINAL WORD.** Until now, most measures of climate leadership have focused on governance (how climate is integrated into the company’s goals, management systems and stakeholder engagement) and disclosure of climate risks and mitigation activities. While these are foundational elements of leadership, they do not constitute leadership actions in themselves. Ultimately, what matters is what companies do to advance climate policy through each pillar of the AAA framework: Advocate, Align and Allocate.

Learn more at [www.medium.com/@timetolead](http://www.medium.com/@timetolead)
The AAA Framework for Climate Policy Leadership: A Guide for Companies

The Standard for Climate Leadership

Your political influence is a critical tool in the fight against climate change. Corporate leadership in the climate crisis means embracing a science-based climate policy agenda with the goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions — producing no more climate pollution than can be removed — by 2050. That’s consistent with what the IPCC says is needed to limit the worst impacts of climate change. It means making climate pollution above zero by 2050. That’s consistent with what the goal of achieving net-zero emissions -- producing no more climate pollution than can be removed -- by 2050.

The AAA Framework: Advocate, Align and Allocate

The AAA Framework

Advocate policies consistent with achieving net-zero emissions by 2050

Align trade associations’ advocacy with the net-zero emissions goal

Allocate advocacy spending to advance climate policies, not obstruct them

Goal: Net Zero Emissions by 2050

The BUSINESS CASE FOR CLIMATE POLICY.

Why support policies that drive down GHG emissions?

RISK REDUCTION

U.S. climate policy is essential for mitigating climate-related risks to your business and the economy, raising global ambition, and spurring action in other countries.

COST REDUCTION

Swift action is critical to address the climate crisis at the lowest possible cost. The longer we delay, the more drastic and expensive the inevitable policy response will be.

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Your success in meeting your climate goals may depend on policies that increase access to low-carbon energy and reduce emissions globally.

STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS

Investors are increasingly asking companies to align their lobbying with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Climate leadership is becoming a key factor in attracting and retaining employees. And consumers expect businesses to be part of the solution to climate change.

REGULATORY CERTAINTY

Prolonged uncertainty about climate policy is bad for business. By contrast, clear and predictable policies enable long-term planning and investment.

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Comprehensive climate policy ensures that all businesses play by the same rules, so companies that lead in reducing emissions aren’t undercut by laggards.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Sooner or later, there will be a public policy response to climate change. Companies that engage early will have an opportunity to shape it.

REPUTATION

Supporting climate policy shows you’re serious about environmental stewardship. And more people want to buy from companies that share their values and are making a positive impact.

Here’s how to lead:

• Talk to policymakers about why climate change is a business risk for your company, how you are reducing your own emissions and what climate policies you support. Bring up climate policy whenever you meet with elected officials, agencies and regulators — not just when environmental groups invite you. Testify at hearings and file written comments.

• Promote your position and why climate change is an imperative for your company, your CEO and trustees on board. Make sure your suppliers, peers and customers understand what you are doing and why.

Here’s how to get started:

• Take a position. Embrace the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and commit to advancing public policies consistent with it.

• Socialize your position internally. Get your employees, your CEO and trustees on board.

• Mobilize your networks — your employees, suppliers, peers and customers — to advance climate policy, as you would for any other top advocacy priority.