12 December 2019

Patricia Espinosa
Executive Secretary,
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFCCC secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany

Dear Executive Secretary Espinosa and members of the Conference of the Parties:

As you meet for the COP 25 in Madrid, landscape architects are heartened to see the world coming together to seek solutions to the climate crisis. Your perseverance in the face of obstacles, including the last-minute relocation of this summit, shows the commitment world leaders have to addressing the climate crisis immediately. We cannot wait to address the threats to health, safety, and welfare of the environment and all people.

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) is not letting the U.S. government’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement prevent us from taking action. That is why ASLA signed the "We Are Still In" Declaration, joining state and local governments, business leaders, university heads, cultural institutions, and many others in agreeing to remain actively engaged in global efforts to combat climate change. As the only signatory organization within the design profession, ASLA has long been committed to fighting climate change, especially by using green infrastructure and sustainable planning and design.

The Society agrees with the findings in the 2018 UN Climate Change Annual Report that green infrastructure is one of the world’s greatest tools to create a more sustainable future. Additionally, the IPCC’s Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C also highlights the importance of green infrastructure, sustainable land use and water management, and nature-based solutions as adaptation options to reduce the risks and perils related to climate change. As you move forward, we urge you to continue to heed these and other recommendations in the reports.

Landscape architects are leaders in using green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to plan and design projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make communities more resilient to climate impacts. They design green roofs, green complete streets, living shorelines, and other forms of green infrastructure projects that sequester greenhouse gases, manage water and air quality, and provide other benefits. These solutions can help us adapt to the changing climate while also shrinking our carbon footprints and protecting vulnerable communities.

The climate crisis affects everyone on this planet, particularly our vulnerable and underserved communities. We must work to create climate solutions that benefit all. Landscape architects look forward to our continued efforts with you, and our local, state, and national leaders to design a resilient, sustainable, and equitable future.

Sincerely,

The American Society of Landscape Architects