

Dear FIS Congress Attendee

The world of competitive Snowsports is feeling the impact of climate change right now. With competitions being cancelled due to extreme weather events or lack of snow, pre-season training slopes becoming less available and increased injury rates due to poor quality, or absence of, natural snow (1) at competition sites. A new study shows that all but one of the previous 21 host cities, Sapporo, Japan, will be too warm and dry to host a safe, fair Winter Games by 2080 if we continue on the current emissions path. (1). In short, the future of our sport is at risk.

This loss of snowpack affects far more than our winter sports activities. Severe and unmitigated climate change could see mountain glacier ice and snow that existed in 2015 reduced by up to 80% by 2100. Glacier ice holds $\frac{3}{4}$ of Earth's freshwater and its loss would put at risk the 1.9 billion people globally that rely on meltwater for their water supply (2).

Protect Our Winters is a multinational NGO that works with athletes, creatives, and business leaders to advance policies protecting not just the future of our sport, but our entire way of life from climate change. We are calling on the organisers of competitive snow sports, whether FIS or national federations, to become leaders and role models in the fight against climate change.

FIS athletes are already taking the initiative with around 500 competitors including the sport's biggest names Mikaela Shiffrin (USA), Aleksander Aamodt Kilde (NOR), Federica Brignone (ITA) along with Olympic cross-country skiing champion Jessie Diggins (USA), signing Julian Schutter's open letter to FIS with the following calls:

- FIS representatives must commit to reaching net zero for all FIS operations and events by 2035 or prior.
- FIS must create a sustainability strategy of how to achieve a 50% emissions reduction by 2030, as committed to through the UN Sports for Climate Action framework and present it to the public before the start of the 2024 season.
- FIS must install a sustainability department that ensures that sustainability becomes a key aspect of all governance processes and operations, which must be controlled and certified by an independent organization.
- Full transparency is needed to back up FIS's role as a much-needed pioneer.

You can read the full letter and list of signatories [here](#).

This athlete action was initiated by Austrian alpine racer Julian Schutter who is continuing to work with Protect Our Winters and is a co-signatory of this letter.

With the spring congress approaching we urge you to consider climate and sustainability first and foremost when voting. Whether on the expansion to new areas, the running of events, or the scheduling of the race calendar, the impact on climate and therefore the future of the sport should be the prime consideration in the decision-making process.

Key areas for action are:

- Ending the current FIS model of relying on offsets to mitigate the climate impact of its operations, especially considering the lack of transparency in its offsetting programme (3). Instead, calling for a clear strategy for reducing the emissions caused by FIS activities and competitive skiing.
- Reducing the need for athletes to travel unnecessarily by optimising the race calendar. Last year's calendar required a double crossing of the Atlantic for some competitors and travel is the largest component of an individual athlete's carbon footprint.
- Ensuring FIS events are run to the recognised sustainability standard ISO 20121. FIS has spoken proudly that the World Championships in Courchevel 2023 reached this standard but did not make clear that this was only achievable as the organisers excluded all FIS activities from the accreditation process (4).

Reduced emissions by FIS will only play a small part in the overall fight against climate change. But as an organisation at the forefront of winter sports, the very existence of which is under threat, FIS must take a leadership role in climate action.

By using the inspirational performance of its athletes as a guide FIS could push for climate action that has impacts far beyond its own sector, but only if it takes credible action on its own emissions first.

As a voter in the FIS Congress, you have the power to make this happen, to be a leader in positive actions with global repercussions.

Yours Faithfully

Protect Our Winters Europe – Alistair Maltby, President

Protect Our Winter US - Mario Molina, Executive Director

Protect Our Winters Canada - Ali Wines, Executive Director

Julian Schütter - FIS Athlete

Atomic - Christian Hoeflehner, Racing Manager

Nidecker Snowboards - Tom Wilson-North, Marketing Manager

Picture Organic Clothing - Florian Palluel, Head of Sustainability

(1) Daniel Scott, Natalie L. B. Knowles, Siyao Ma, Michelle Ruddy & Robert Steiger (2023)
Climate change and the future of the Olympic Winter Games: athlete and coach perspectives,
Current Issues in Tourism, 26:3, 480-495, DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2021.2023480

(2) Bethan Davies, Senior Lecturer in Glaciology, Royal Holloway University of London. <https://theconversation.com/the-worlds-mountain-water-towers-are-melting-putting-1-9-billion-people-at-risk-128501>

(3) <https://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2023-01/co2-certificates-fraud-emissions-trading-climate-protection-english>

(4) https://protectourwinters.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-04-11_BILAN_demarche_RSE_CDM2023.pdf