

House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Members Day Testimony
November 14, 2019
Congresswoman Deb Haaland of New Mexico

Chairwoman Castor, Ranking Member Graves, members of the committee including my good friend from New Mexico, Assistant Speaker Luján, thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership on this important issue.

This summer, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that the climate crisis is undermining the ability of our lands to sustain people, wildlife, and plants.

Deforestation, intensive farming practices, and fossil fuel production are contributing to worsening drought, increasing soil erosion, more intense wildfires, and diminishing crop yields.

We see this in New Mexico, where we have a methane cloud the size of Delaware hovering over the northwest portion of our state due to leakage from oil and gas extraction. Our state is the fifth driest state in the nation, and we've been experiencing a long-term drought for years.

All communities have a right to breathe clean air, live free from toxic pollution, have access to healthy food, and share the benefits of economic prosperity, but in New Mexico and elsewhere, low income communities and communities of color have borne the greatest burdens from pollution, climate change, and economic inequality

Fortunately, New Mexico is blessed with over 300 days of sunshine each year and abundant wind resources, and our state passed legislation to support the swift transition to clean energy and away from dirty fossil fuels and support the state's energy workforce.

I urge you to develop legislative recommendations that will drive a vibrant renewable energy economy that will create millions of high-quality, safe, family sustaining jobs and reduce our impact on the climate.

I've been working on some legislation to address this existential challenge.

My Climate Stewardship Act aims to support natural climate solutions by boosting funding for programs that encourage sustainable farming practices, reforestation, and wetland restoration. It also promotes urban forestry and re-establishes the Civilian Conservation Corps, creating job opportunities for low income youth.

As Vice-Chair of the Natural Resources Committee and Chairwoman of the National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands subcommittee, I'm working with Chairman Grijalva on upcoming legislation to reduce the impact of our public lands on the climate.

I'm also part of an effort to build support for the goal of a 100% Clean Economy with net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which the science tells us is necessary to protect public health and our environment.

Our bill, which we will introduce soon, tasks federal agencies with developing plans to achieve this goal that must protect vulnerable communities and ensure a just transition from fossil fuels that will create millions of jobs for all Americans.

And I support the Green New Deal, which would build on this goal and revamp the American economy to reduce emissions and create a more just and fair economic system.

I also urge you to recommend tax policies that drive investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy including: investment and production tax credits; incentives for energy efficiency retrofits, alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure, and energy storage; and to ensure that these benefit all communities.

To increase integration of renewable energy, I also encourage you to support the deployment of a modernized, smart electric grid, including advanced transmission technologies to improve efficiency and making it easier to build transmission lines, a topic that I am working on legislation on.

We can also reduce our impact on the climate by supporting recycling and composting and promoting waste prevention, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and incinerators, returns carbon to the ground, and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.

Thank you again for your leadership on these issues and for the opportunity to testify. The future of our planet is in our hands.