

Statement for the Record  
Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis  
Member’s Day Hearing  
November 14, 2019

Thank you, Chairwoman Castor, Ranking Member Graves and members of the Committee on the Climate Crisis for providing me this opportunity to discuss some of the priorities I believe should be reflected in this Committee’s work.

I represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district of Virginia where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth Rivers, which presents both challenges and opportunities. Our waterways are essential to Virginia and the nation. Hampton Roads is home to the largest naval base in the world, Naval Station Norfolk, the one of the busiest ports on the eastern seaboard, the Port of Virginia and multiple shipyards. The recurrent flooding that we are already living with poses a severe national security risk. With 95 percent of our nation’s trade moving by water, it is also essential that the port is able to maintain operations as the waters continue to rise. Our waterways keep our economy moving and the communities that support these operations are already living with the effects of climate change and rising waters.

I had the pleasure of showing Chairwoman Castor around Hampton Roads earlier this year. We heard from state and local elected officials in Virginia who already recognize the significant threat that sea level rise poses and have been working to combat these effects. Unfortunately, the cost to proactively and aggressively address this problem head-on is far too great for any city to bear by itself. While Norfolk and other cities in Hampton Roads have already spent considerable sums of money to study the recurrent flooding issues and implement resilient infrastructure, the sheer scope of the project to address the problem will cost billions of dollars and require the federal government to step in and assist.

I encourage you to review the Building Up Infrastructure and Limiting Disasters through Resilience (BUILD Resilience) Act, legislation that I introduced last Congress with Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine and that I intend to introduce again soon. The BUILD Resilience Act would establish a competitive grant program for resilient infrastructure investment to bolster the ability of regions, such as Hampton Roads and New Orleans, to implement projects and strategies to reduce regional vulnerability to threats like sea level rise and recurrent flooding. Analyses by the Congressional Budget Office and the Multi-hazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences estimate that every \$1 invested in resilient infrastructure upfront saves \$3 to \$4 in future losses on the back-end after a major disaster strikes.

As this committee continues to hear and plan for the effects of climate change, I urge you to make federal investments in resilient infrastructure a priority. Investing upfront can help save taxpayers and impacted communities potentially billions of dollars in avoided costs. Recognizing the disproportionate risk that climate chaos poses to low-income communities and communities of color, I urge the committee to center equity in such efforts.

Ms. Chairwoman, thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to share my priorities for addressing climate change as we deal with the effects in Hampton Roads. I look forward to working with you to ensure that we put forth policies that effectively deal with the changes we are already seeing.