

**Testimony before the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis
Rep. Brad Schneider – November 14, 2019**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to testify. And thank you for the leadership of this committee. Congress must address climate change with the dire urgency the situation requires, because climate change is not a future threat, it is a present danger. On a near weekly basis we see news of catastrophic floods, record setting tornadoes, and longer and more devastating fire seasons.

The need for urgent action is now. The decisions we make today will determine the future we pass on to our children.

Subcommittee

Climate change is a global problem that evades the single jurisdiction of just one congressional committee. It affects our natural resources, our national energy grid, our emergency response, transportation infrastructure, foreign policy, and more. And the tools we'll need – from tax incentives to spur development to assistance for vulnerable communities – come from every corner of government.

I propose that every committee in Congress empower one of its subcommittees to address climate-related policy within its jurisdiction. To properly address climate change, we will need a whole-of-government approach and for all hands on deck. Congress must approach the issue with the same level of thoroughness.

Resiliency

In this as in previous Congresses, we are pushing for federal investment in our nation's infrastructure. We have the opportunity to spur investment in infrastructure through regularly authorized legislation like that governing surface transportation that we will address this Congress, and through more comprehensive infrastructure packages like that which we all hope we can pass this Congress.

As we look at these opportunities to make significant federal investments in infrastructure around the country, we must ensure that these investments are made with climate change in mind. In my own district, for instance, we have seen climate change first-hand through increased rainfall and flooding in recent decades, challenging our stormwater infrastructure. We must make sure that our future investments in infrastructure are prepared to handle the capacity and demands climate change will bring—from increased natural disasters to adapting to the needs of an electrical grid run by renewables.

Natural Disaster Funding

Climate change has already significantly increased dangerous and damaging natural disasters around the world, including six Category 5 hurricanes in the past four years, the first-ever Extreme Red Flag Warning for wildfires, and the increasingly common occurrence of the so-called “100-year” floods.

There are vital federal programs that help communities prepare for and respond to these disasters, but we know that these programs will be stretched thin as climate change exacerbates the cost and frequency of these events. I believe this Committee must make sure funding for

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natural disasters is examined through the lens of climate change so that we can be sure future events have adequate funding prepared to respond.

GLRI

Finally, we must look to existing, successful federal programs to address local and regional climate-related issues. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has been a successful federal program that promotes conservation, stewardship, and environmental programming in the Great Lakes Region. As this Committee looks for ways to address regionally-specific concerns stemming from climate change, I encourage you to look at GLRI as a means of addressing Great Lakes issues specifically, and to follow the successful partnership model of GLRI more generally when considering new programs.

Addressing climate change will require an all of government response. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this committee to chart a more sustainable and prosperous future for our planet, and to address this with the fierce urgency the issue requires.