



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
CLIMATE CRISIS

Opening Statement of Chair Kathy Castor
Hearing on “A Big Climate Deal: Lowering Costs,
Creating Jobs, and Reducing Pollution with the Inflation Reduction Act”
September 29, 2022

As prepared for delivery

In today’s hearing, we’ll examine the financial benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act to American families. The Inflation Reduction Act is a “cost cutter” that puts money back into the wallets of Americans. And it includes the largest investment in clean energy and energy efficiency in our nation’s history, answering the call to mitigate the growing impacts and costs of the climate crisis.

Action to combat the climate crisis is urgent. And I want to thank everyone who has relayed concern for my Florida neighbors in the path of monster Hurricane Ian. As the scale of the devastation unfolds, we owe it to the hard-working people of this nation to reduce the risks and costs of climate-fueled disasters, whether they be juiced-up hurricanes, scorching heat, droughts, or wildfires like we see out West. In Puerto Rico, nearly 350,000 homes and businesses remain without power long after Hurricane Fiona made landfall. And in Alaska, a powerful storm brought floods, power outages, and new threats to food security. These costly harms underscore the need to strengthen our infrastructure and reduce climate pollution. That’s why the Inflation Reduction Act is so important. It will put the United States on a path to reduce our heat-trapping pollution by roughly 40% by 2030. And as you’ll hear today, it will do so while strengthening our energy security, lowering costs for Americans, and creating millions of jobs.

By reducing our dependence on expensive and volatile fossil fuels, the Inflation Reduction Act will allow more Americans to enjoy the cost-saving benefits of cleaner, cheaper energy. Renewables like wind and solar are now the cheapest source of power. And by installing more, we’ll pass cost savings to consumers while meeting their energy needs. Speaking of savings, the rebates and credits in the climate law will make it cheaper for Americans to electrify their homes and make them more energy efficient. That includes rebates to switch to cost-saving electric appliances and vehicles; to buy clean water heaters and cooling systems; and to install rooftop solar and battery storage. According to Rewiring America, the average household could receive more than \$10,000 in benefits to fully electrify their lives, leading to an additional savings of \$1,800 a year on energy bills. Those who buy electric vehicles will get thousands off the sticker price – and they could save more than \$500 a year on fuel costs alone. Imagine that: No more pain at the gas pump!

The new law will also create millions of good-paying jobs. Under President Biden, America reached 3.5% unemployment this summer, matching the lowest unemployment rate we’ve had in half a century. President Biden’s climate law builds on that progress. According to the

BlueGreen Alliance, the Inflation Reduction Act will help create more than 9 million good jobs over the next decade. That includes 5 million jobs expanding renewables and bolstering our grid; 900,000 jobs expanding clean energy across rural communities through electric cooperatives; 900,000 jobs in clean manufacturing; and much more.

Crucially, the Inflation Reduction Act will also put 150,000 Americans to work expanding environmental justice. That's because the climate law invests in Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants, which will support community-led projects to address environmental harms and public health in vulnerable neighborhoods. Thanks to the climate law, we're also deploying zero-emission buses and garbage trucks in areas with poor air quality. And we're incentivizing new solar and wind energy projects in low-income communities and Tribal lands. Finally, the new law directs at least 60 percent of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to EJ communities, empowering our workers to deploy rooftop and community solar where they are most needed.

The Inflation Reduction Act is an enormous step forward. It was recently described by the head of the International Energy Agency as the "single most important action" in addressing climate change since the Paris Agreement. But we know there is more to do. Our Select Committee will keep pushing for further progress. Congress will keep working with the Biden Administration to fulfill this Big Climate Deal. And together, we'll keep forging the path to energy independence, which will require harnessing the immense potential of American clean energy and American ingenuity to lead the world in this transition. For now, I look forward to today's discussion with our witnesses.