



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
CLIMATE CRISIS

Opening Statement of Chair Kathy Castor
Hearing on “Solving the Climate Crisis: Key Accomplishments,
Additional Opportunities, and the Need for Continued Action”
December 6, 2022

As prepared for delivery

Here at the end of the 117th Congress, we can take great pride in our historic accomplishments in spurring the clean energy economy and making progress in solving the costly climate crisis. It is an important moment to review the headway we have made and look ahead to further action. Speaker Nancy Pelosi created our Select Committee at the start of the 116th Congress in 2019 and directed us to develop the policies and innovations needed to help solve the climate crisis. To a Member, she appointed climate champions from the Democratic Caucus that reflected the “know how” and commitment to tackling this enormous task. And we got right to work. We followed the science and bridged coalitions. We channeled the energy of climate protests into meaningful policy. We built a framework for action that charted a path to net zero. And we helped Congress turn hundreds of solutions into law.

From the outset, we’ve been intensely focused on helping families and businesses across America create good-paying local jobs, slash energy bills, bolster our domestic manufacturing, uplift disadvantaged communities, and position America to lead the world in emerging clean economy. We’re proud of our progress. But at the same time, we know that there’s much more we must do. That is why we have devoted this hearing not just to evaluating what we’ve accomplished, but also to future action as we prepare a new and revised Climate Crisis Action Plan to spur further innovation.

Our work remains urgent. Climate disasters are putting America’s security and stability at serious risk – threatening our economy, our way of life, and our communities. The crisis is no longer a distant threat. Higher costs, harsh impacts, and greater injury and loss of life are upon us now. This summer, brutal heat waves shattered more than 7,000 daily temperature records across the nation. Persistent drought is drying up our life-giving lakes and rivers, including the vital Colorado River and many of the lakes that support local economies across the West. Wildfires and massive floods are unleashing unprecedented levels of destruction. So are climate-fueled storms like Hurricane Ian, which recently joined the growing list of superstorms – like Katrina, Sandy, Harvey, Ida, and Maria – whose names have become synonymous with destruction.

Given the growing costs of these catastrophes, House Democrats have used the power of our majority to take bold action to solve the climate crisis. That includes progress we made through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which makes communities more resilient to droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. And it includes our passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which is the largest clean energy and climate investment

in U.S. history, and which puts the United States on a path to reduce heat-trapping pollution by roughly 40% by 2030. Our Action Plan provided a roadmap to solve the climate crisis and Democrats used every opportunity in every piece of legislation over the past few years to lower costs through cleaner, cheaper energy and build safer, more resilient communities.

Solving the climate crisis is hard work, but the results already are encouraging – and the opportunities are exciting. Thanks to our work incentivizing clean technologies, companies in states like Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Alabama are racing to manufacture the batteries and technologies of the future, creating thousands of jobs along the way. Car manufacturers in states like Michigan and Ohio are investing in our workers as they build electric vehicles that will help reduce pollution. Utilities are increasingly adding cheap wind and solar into their energy mix, lowering costs for consumers and bolstering our energy independence. And we're deploying zero-emission school buses, clean postal trucks, and other clean investments that put families over polluters.

Our final majority staff report, which we will release next week, will look at these key victories and identify new opportunities to meet the goals of our Climate Crisis Action Plan. As the 117th Congress draws to a close, it will also serve as a reminder that the fight for climate action must continue — guided by science, rooted in justice, and powered by American workers. We have a moral obligation to our kids and future generations to continue our work. And I will add with great humility, it has been an honor and a privilege to lead such an impactful committee – with incredibly talented professional staff members led by Staff Director Ana UnruhCohen. You all have truly made a difference, and I am grateful to you for answering the call to service to help solve the climate crisis and give our kids a fighting chance for a livable planet.