

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Natural Resources Committee, US House of Representatives:

We write to you to express our strong support for the *Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act* (CASC Act). We are the Provost of North Carolina State University and the University Director of the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center (SE CASC), based at NC State University. Climate change is one of the greatest threats facing our nation and our region, and there is urgent need for actionable science to help fish, wildlife, ecosystems, and people adapt to a changing climate. The CASC Act will provide consistency and continuity for the national and regional CASC centers to deliver science to natural and cultural resource managers to make climate-smart adaptation decisions. The CASC Act will also provide long-term continuity to:

- Train the next generation of climate adaptation professionals,
- Support climate adaptation planning with Tribal governments and communities,
- Help species and ecosystems respond to climate change, and
- Act as a hub for climate adaptation work that unites federal, state, and local agencies and entities.

As with each regional center, the SE CASC is a collaborative partnership between the US Geological Survey and a University Consortium. The SE CASC is hosted by NC State University. As a land-grant university, NC State University is committed to the creation and application of knowledge, engagement with partners, and transdisciplinary student training. Climate services are very much a pressing and growing area of NC State's extension portfolio. The SE CASC partners with the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) and our Tribal Climate Liaison to provide climate adaptation planning support to federally recognized Tribes in the Southeast. And our Consortium provides exceptional scientific and student training capacity to serve the needs of resource managers and communities throughout the Southeast region. The SE CASC Consortium members are:

- Auburn University
- Duke University
- University of Florida
- University of South Carolina
- University of Tennessee
- North Carolina State University (Consortium host)

To support SE CASC activities in science, student training, communication, Tribal engagement, and outreach, funds are provided by the US Geological Survey to the SE CASC University Consortium.

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In addition, the SE CASC has leveraged over \$5M in additional funds in support of climate adaptation science and student training in our Southeastern region.

The increased severity of storm events, warming, and sea level rise are urgent issues facing the Southeast, and they are occurring in a region that is a hotspot for biodiversity, hosts many endemic and federally listed endangered plant and animal species, and has significant cultural resources in peril. The SE CASC delivers science on issues specific to the Southeast identified by our partners but are relevant on a national scale as well, including coastal resilience, water supply and demand, game and wildlife management, and optimizing cultural resource preservation under a changing climate. The SE CASC also meets these urgent issues by training the next generation of climate professionals through our Global Change Fellows program. Upon completion, these scholars are ready to enter state, federal and university sectors. They are well versed in transdisciplinary work that includes research and working with partners in civil society.

The CASC Act will provide the SE CASC, other regional CASCs, and the National CASC program the ability to operate in a manner requested by the natural and cultural resource managers who we serve. The Act will also provide long-term stability of funding for the CASC network, create consistent and timely grant processing, and introduce an evaluation process on performance rather than competition. The flexibility to conduct new research, provide education, mentor students, develop new data and tools, as well as work with other agencies and institutions, is important to serving manager needs – and this consistency over time is critical for effective outreach and science decision making, especially with Tribal and state partners, without lapsing in commitments. Please support the CASC Act to continue this important work.

Sincerely,



Warwick A. Arden  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost  
NC State University



Rebecca E. Irwin  
University Director, SE CASC  
Professor, Dept of Applied Ecology  
NC State University