

The Honorable Salud Carbajal

Testimony on H.R. 3541, the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act

Remarks/Testimony Prepared for the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife

July 25, 2019

RE: the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act

Thank you, Chairman Huffman, for the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee in support of my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3541—the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today because we know that climate change is real and we need to take action.

Nearly 97 percent of climate scientists agree that the earth’s climate is warming due to increased greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere.

We also know that climate change is real because millions of Americans are currently experiencing the effects of this crisis.

We are seeing extreme weather events on a massive scale.

Wildfires have become year-round in the West.

Flooding is prevalent in the East.

Dangerous heatwaves are becoming the norm—not only throughout our country, but across the globe.

It is imperative that communities begin to plan for this new reality. Coastal communities, like mine, are at the forefront of this crisis.

The City of Santa Barbara expects sea levels to rise by over 6 feet by the end of the century.

In San Luis Obispo County, Morro Bay conducted a vulnerability assessment that found the city and its infrastructure are susceptible to the threats of rising sea levels.

It identified major infrastructure like Highway 1 and the Morro Bay waterfront as being at risk to the impacts of rising sea levels.

These are valuable assets that support San Luis Obispo County’s \$1.2 billion-dollar tourism economy.

Dealing with the impacts of climate change puts a significant strain on all of our coastal communities throughout the nation.

Currently, coastal counties account for 39 percent of the United States population and produce \$6.6 trillion in gross domestic product.

It is important we start planning now for the harmful impacts that climate change will have on our communities and our local economies.

We know that it pays to be prepared.

Already, we have seen how rising sea levels are impacting coastal regions across our country.

That is why I have worked with Representative Francis Rooney and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick to help address this problem.

We introduced this bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3541, the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act of 2019, because partisan politics should not get in the way of finding good solutions to this issue.

The Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act would help coastal states plan and implement climate change mitigation strategies to prepare for sea level rise and other impacts.

This program would provide grants to coastal states to voluntarily modify their current coastal management plans to address climate change impacts.

Additionally, states could use this grant funding to implement strategies that help them adapt to climate change, such as identifying areas of greatest risk and developing performance measures to protect infrastructure and coastal ecosystems.

We all know that climate change poses a significant threat to our public health, infrastructure, and economy.

We also know that there are bipartisan solutions that we can take as policymakers to address this crisis.

We have a moral responsibility to act now.

Failing to act will only mean that the impacts of climate change will intensify, and we will be leaving the world worse off for our children and grandchildren.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to move this legislation forward.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify in support of my legislation—the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act.

I yield back the balance of my time.