

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE CHRIS PAPPAS

Before the Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife

H.R. 3431, the “Community Access to Resiliency Grants Act of 2021”

We are facing an existential crisis of climate change in all corners of the globe, including my home state of New Hampshire.

The scientific consensus is now clear and it is stark. It is not a matter of if but when and how extreme weather events will be in New England and across the country.

The United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared our climate crisis “code red” emergency. Rising temperature and negative effects are now certain - even if actions are taken.

By the time a child born today is a grandparent or great grandparent, our sea levels will have risen one to two feet.

Areas on my state’s Seacoast, in towns like Hampton Beach, Rye and Portsmouth Harbor, infrastructure like roads and bridges and ports along their shores will be severely impacted. Just weeks ago Hampton experienced significant flooding from a winter storm surge.

The pictures and images were stark, and while this community is used to occasional flooding, the fact is that because of climate change, we are seeing this sort of extreme weather more and more.

Millions of Americans feel the effects of climate change each year when their roads wash out, airport power goes down, or schools get flooded.

Nearly one in three Americans have been hit by a severe weather disaster and two in three Americans have suffered through dangerous heat waves.

There were 22 climate disasters that cost at least \$1 billion each in the United States in 2020, which bested the previous record of 16.

In fact, the extreme weather events caused by climate change have cost New Hampshire more than \$500 million in damages over the last ten years. We know both the number of extreme weather events and the costs are only going to increase.

That's why I introduced the H.R. 3431, the Community Access to Resiliency Grants Act of 2021, to ease states and localities' ability to access climate mitigation grants.

The ability for coastal communities to access these grants will play an essential role in allowing them to mitigate the environmental and economic impact of rising sea levels and changing weather patterns.

This bipartisan legislation will direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish and update a publicly available website that provides links and information pertaining to all grants administered by NOAA and other federal agencies to assist states and local communities with resiliency, adaptation, and mitigation of climate change and sea-level rise.

Creating a centralized hub for communities to easily identify and apply for grants is a common-sense way to cut down on the bureaucratic hoops our states and municipalities go through and ensure they get the federal support they need.

As sea levels continue to rise, we must ensure we are providing our coastal communities with the resources they need to mitigate its impact on our local environment, economy, and infrastructure.