



Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing—Federal Climate Adaptation and Resilience for the 21st Century

March 8, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson.

As any one of my neighbors in rural Oklahoma could tell you, droughts are getting longer, heat waves are getting hotter, and the task of anticipating and managing risks from the environment has gotten more challenging. Extreme weather events can take lives and destroy property if we don't prepare for them.

We know that many of these trends are related to the changing climate and their effect could continue to grow in the future. In addition to our work in reducing emissions and combating climate change, we must also adapt to what we're currently facing.

We've long recognized environmental risks for individuals and communities, which is why we've tasked agencies like NASA, NOAA, and DOE to provide tools and services to help prepare for and recover from severe events. But as we continue to confront a changing environment across the nation, we must ensure that our federal infrastructure is also protected and prepared to adapt.

We're in the midst of unprecedented investment in our infrastructure. And this Committee has been a driving force when it comes to increasing support for federal research infrastructure. Recognizing that a world-class science enterprise requires world-class facilities and equipment, we invested heavily in infrastructure in the DOE Science for the Future Act, the NSF for the Future Act, and the NIST for the Future Act.

In addition to preserving the facilities and instruments the federal government has already spent billions to build or acquire, these bipartisan bills call for more construction and additional facilities, projects, and tools that will ensure the U.S. research enterprise remains on the cutting edge and attracts world renowned talent. I expect that as part of this investment, agencies will ensure they are considering a future where weather is more extreme and the risks for unique environmental events might be higher. Planning ahead is just as important as putting a shovel in the ground quickly.

So let me issue a serious marker for the future. As part of our support for increased investment in federal research infrastructure, I do not expect to have another hearing in five years where the same agencies before us today come testify that their facilities are

suffering because of environmental changes. We have the ability to identify those risks now, and we should start to work to overcome them immediately. Or at the very least, position ourselves to mitigate their most harmful effects in the future. That responsibility falls on each federal agency.

This preparation also extends beyond existing facilities and to the many new clean energy projects and demonstrations being implemented as a result of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. There is an unprecedented amount of money being spent through this legislation, which makes oversight and careful planning more important than ever. As money for brick-and-mortar projects goes out the door, we need to be sure this money is spent carefully on projects built to last. Long-term operations should be a priority and consideration of climate risk is part of that. A lack of forward-looking planning would be just as wasteful as building an instrument that doesn't work.

Additionally, we have an obligation to provide our citizens the most accurate information on climate and weather events so that they can make informed decisions for their own well-being and resiliency. Today's hearing offers an opportunity for each agency to inform us about the adaptation tools they offer taxpayers and how those tools are being adjusted for changes in future climate risks. Personally, I believe that is best done by maximizing our resources through partnerships with the private sector and academic institutions. I look forward to hearing from NASA and NOAA on how they plan to identify and utilize new commercial data related to atmospheric and weather behaviors.

I also look forward to hearing from DOE on how their new demonstrations and pilot projects are bringing in partners from institutions of higher education and industry to help commercialize these groundbreaking tools. All in all, I think today's hearing is a timely topic and one I am sure we will look back on as a productive precursor. I look forward to hearing each of our witnesses' testimony.

Thank you Madam Chair and I yield back the balance of my time.