



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Full Committee Hearing:

*Now or Never: The Urgent Need for Ambitious Climate Action*

April 28, 2022

Good morning. Thank you all for joining our hearing on the findings of the latest working group reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I also want to thank our expert witnesses for being here today. The reality of the latest IPCC reports cannot be ignored. Global emissions must peak within the next three years to ensure we stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming in the next century. But we must also move swiftly to adapt to our climate future alongside our efforts to cut carbon emissions.

I attended the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Conference of Parties, or COP 26, last November in Glasgow with Speaker Pelosi and a number of my colleagues. Throughout COP26, the need to keep within 1.5 degrees of warming while making global efforts to support community adaptation was a recurring theme. The Science, Space, and Technology Committee has been working to pass legislation needed to curb the worst climate impacts.

Even with current efforts to curb carbon emissions, climate change has already permanently altered the lives of most Americans. Whether it is flooding, drought, or extreme weather, the impacts of climate change are being felt by all our constituents. There are many climate impacts that are already “baked in,” and will occur regardless of how quickly we cut emissions. This means we must move forward with robust climate adaptation approaches alongside emissions mitigation. Many adaptive solutions are already available and have been outlined in the IPCC’s latest report. Many of our Federal science agencies have conducted research to collect the data needed to plan for adaptation. This research includes data on climate, how crop yields will shift with time, and how rising sea levels will impact communities.

Utilizing this data for ambitious and impactful climate action is necessary. However, it is also imperative that in finding solutions, the voices of communities most at risk are not left out of the discussion. Local community leaders see much of the first-hand impacts of climate change, and Indigenous communities hold generational knowledge that focuses on adaptation and resiliency. Indigenous and local knowledge is beginning to be recognized in broader adaptation methods, although more work is needed. We must ensure that this knowledge is not only considered in climate adaptation efforts at all levels of government but is done so equitably.

As I said at COP26, we deal with science and facts on the Science Committee. And we know it is time for us to act on climate backed up by good science policy. The science of climate change has been clear for many years now. It is up to us in Congress to begin implementing the innovative technologies and policies that are already available to us to address climate change. This effort needs to include robust bipartisan legislation to support our Federal science agencies as they work to address the climate crisis.

The next few years will be critical in determining the US response to climate change. We already have much of the expertise and knowledge of researchers and community members to guide us toward an adaptive and equitable future. I am pleased to have such an esteemed panel of witnesses to discuss these issues at today's hearing. Translating recommendations from the IPCC reports is necessary for the US climate science enterprise to take actionable steps to combat the climate crisis. Today's hearing will play an important role in providing further insight on how Congress can support these efforts. With that I yield back.