



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
CLIMATE CRISIS

Opening Statement (*As Prepared for Delivery*)

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Solving the Climate Crisis: Drawing Down Carbon and Building Up the American Economy

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This is the first of many Select Committee hearings that is focused on *solutions* to the climate crisis. The need for solutions is increasingly urgent.

The first major warning Congress received about the impending climate crisis was in 1988. But the Congress didn't act then. Today we know that oil companies' own scientists warned them about climate change, too. But instead of action, executives chose to tell Congress and the American people to ignore the scientists... and that we could afford to wait.

Now the scientific consensus is too unequivocal to deny. What is clear from the science and what diverse voices, including young people across America, are telling us every day is that if Congress continues to delay, we lose. If Congress chooses the status quo, we lose.

In fact, scientists have told us that the world needs to hit net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis. Getting there means cutting greenhouse gas pollution 45 percent below 2010 levels by 2030.

To get there – and to give ourselves a chance of avoiding the most catastrophic consequences of climate change – we have to cut carbon pollution smartly and soon. Taking action *now* gives us the best opportunity to transition to a clean energy economy efficiently and equitably.

We still have time to solve the climate crisis because we've made some good choices: raising fuel economy standards, supporting wind and solar jobs, and investing in research and development that is coming to fruition now. America chose to lead the world in the Paris Climate Agreement, an agreement vital to the clean energy jobs and innovations underway across America now.

But every time Congress and the administration choose delay, American families and business are asked to pay a higher price whether it's through climate catastrophes, extreme heat, dirtier air or higher electric bills.

But as daunting as the climate crisis is, we can make choices and rise to the challenge.

Many businesses and communities across America have been leading the way. More than 3 million Americans work in the clean energy economy. Existing energy efficiency standards will save consumers and businesses \$2 trillion on utility bills by 2030. And fuel economy standards will save the average household another \$2,800 a year at the pump. Still, there is no substitute for bold federal policy initiatives that meet the scale of the challenge we face.

When we choose clear policies with clear goals, businesses innovate. They reduce costs. They put clean technology to work.

Our witnesses today will help us examine and prioritize our policy choices. We're going to look at infrastructure, at deploying more wind and solar, at electrifying home heating and transportation, at cutting the most powerful climate pollutants and more.

We're also going to look at funding research and development and establishing public-private partnerships that move technology from the lab to the market. We are going to look at capturing and storing carbon and pulling it out of the atmosphere.

But we have to be clear: technological breakthroughs are not guaranteed. Choosing to invest in innovation doesn't give us an excuse to choose the status quo elsewhere.

At the end of the day, technology is just a tool. It's *people* who will solve the climate crisis.

The clean energy economy employs millions of people and we can choose policies that will make those jobs family-sustaining jobs.

That includes elevating transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry. They deserve a clean energy economy that delivers for them, in their communities. We need good and patriotic policies for them, too.

And we need climate solutions that work for people who are on the front lines of the climate crisis. That means putting an end to environmental racism and making sure the jobs at the heart of the clean energy economy are accessible to everyone.

We have to pursue many options to meet our goals by 2030 and 2050. The one option we don't have any more is delay. We must choose climate action now.