



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE **CLIMATE CRISIS**

Opening Statement *(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL)

U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

Solving the Climate Crisis: Ramping Up Renewables

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I'm excited to talk about renewable energy today, but before we start, I want to acknowledge what's been happening with the climate crisis since our last hearing.

The headline of my local newspaper last week read: "Florida Got Hot in May – Like Record-Breaking Hot." According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the State of Florida experienced its hottest May in more than a century. And it wasn't just a little hotter. The new record is nearly four degrees hotter than the previous record. While Florida was the only state to break its May temperature record, Virginia had its third-hottest May on record, while North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia all had their second hottest May ever.

Record-breaking heat in the Arctic also pushed temperatures in Finland to levels never recorded before. In America's Arctic, the abnormal heat has led to fatal accidents in Alaska's rural villages. And San Francisco hit a record-breaking 100 degrees on Monday.

In India, heat waves have driven temperatures higher than 120 degrees. When it's that hot, people can't go outside. They can't get to work. They can't go to school. They can't go shopping and buy food for their family.

Last week also saw the release of a new scientific study examining the epidemic of heat waves in 2018. The scientists concluded that these heat waves "would not have occurred without human-induced climate change." They warned that we've entered a "new climate regime" featuring heat waves of a scope and intensity not seen before.

And of course deadly heat isn't the only danger. Right now, America's Midwest is still struggling with flooding, and wildfires are burning in Northern California despite a wet winter. Scientists say we can expect more extreme events. Insurers say plan for greater risk. As policymakers, we know greater risk comes with greater costs for families we represent back home. These are the stakes of the climate crisis.

So I'm glad we finally passed disaster relief with climate resilience last week. But we can't just adapt our way out of this crisis. We have to cut the carbon pollution that is causing the problem in the first place.

Today we're focusing on renewable energy because it is such a big part of the puzzle. Renewables used to provide just a fraction of our electricity. But now they're up to 17 percent and growing. In the past ten years, wind power has quadrupled and costs have fallen by nearly 70 percent. Utility-scale solar has increased 30 times over and costs have fallen by 88 percent. Now more than 350,000 people are working in the wind and solar industries.

Renewable energy has flourished because we finally started giving wind and solar some of the same support the fossil fuel industry has enjoyed for more than a century. States have also led with renewable energy standards. California, Washington, Hawaii, Nevada, and New Mexico have committed to an electricity grid powered by 100 percent clean energy. The new governors of New Jersey, Minnesota and Illinois have called for similar levels of ambition. South Carolina also passed the South Carolina Energy Freedom Act to promote solar energy. It was bipartisan and unanimous and a pro-jobs and economic growth bill.

States have been in the lead. But we know here in Congress we need to do more. As we heard in our second hearing, we need to achieve net-zero carbon pollution across our entire economy by at least 2050 to avoid catastrophic harm from the climate crisis. When scientists do the math, it's clear that the United States will have to generate much of its electricity from renewables to get there. Many experts see a continued role for nuclear power and fossil-fuel plants with carbon capture, but renewable sources are crucial. Clean renewable energy is the linchpin for solving the climate crisis.

We need to move quickly to put more wind, solar and other renewables online. That means making sure everyone has access to clean energy in their communities, whether they own a rooftop or not. And it means making sure that more of the jobs in clean energy are good, family-sustaining jobs. And it means providing good careers for young people who want to solve the climate crisis.

The climate crisis is daunting. But the opportunities we have in front of us for good jobs, clean air and a just future are boundless. So, it is a time for resolve and it is a time for hope. We have the tools and technology we need to succeed. We just need to decide to do it.