

**Testimony of Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo**  
House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis  
Member Day Hearing  
November 14, 2019

Thank you, Chair Castor and Ranking Member Graves, for the opportunity to testify at the Member Day hearing of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. I appreciate your invitation to contribute to your important work as you work toward solutions to the existential threat of climate change.

While there is no denying the scientific consensus that human activity is driving climate change, it is worth reviewing the facts to emphasize the scale of our challenge. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that global temperatures are likely to rise 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels between 2030 and 2052. This will have severe environmental impacts including a rise in sea levels, the loss of snow-pack, a thaw of the permafrost, higher ocean temperatures, increased ocean acidity, more intense hurricanes, stronger storms, longer droughts, and more severe flooding. If temperatures continue to rise to 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, 50 million people will be displaced by rising sea levels; 350 million people will endure severe drought; and more than a billion people will experience extreme heat waves.

The time for debate on the causes of climate change is over, and we have limited time to implement solutions. Fortunately, the Speaker tasked this Committee with recommending “policies, strategies, and innovations to achieve substantial and permanent reductions in pollution and other activities that contribute to the climate crisis which will honor our responsibility to be good stewards of the planet for future generations.” As you finalize your recommendations, I’d like to share a few principles to guide your work.

First, any recommendations must be informed by science and proportionate to the scope of our challenges. The IPCC report estimates that in order to keep average temperatures from increasing beyond 1.5 °C, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent in the next decade and reach net zero emissions by 2050. This should be the benchmark for the Committee’s work because established science should guide informed policy decisions.

Second, while we should be ambitious in our goals, we must be pragmatic in how we achieve them which means embracing a broad range of policies to address the crisis. There are no silver bullets in climate policy. Tax credits and research backed by the federal government have led to the development of many forms of renewable energy, including some invented in my congressional district. As we continue to support renewable energy, we should also discourage the use of fossil fuels through a price on carbon, such as a carbon tax or cap and trade system. These complimentary policies are both necessary because relying on a narrow set of solutions will make it much harder to cut emissions before the science tells us it’s too late.

Finally, I encourage you to look to the example of states that have taken the lead on climate policy, including California. My state has adopted cap and trade, a low carbon fuel standard, a renewable portfolio standard, and a zero-emission vehicles mandate, among other policies.

Thanks to these efforts, California hit its initial carbon reduction goals four years ahead of schedule while our economy continues to grow. Federal policy can learn from and improve upon these successes. The Committee should also ensure that action from the federal government, while sorely needed, does not constrain states and local governments that have led the way in reducing emissions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share these principles with you today. I look forward to your recommendations which I will take back to my committee, Energy and Commerce, as we write comprehensive legislation to address this existential threat. Our challenges are enormous, but we owe it to future generations to leave them a planet that is not greatly diminished from the one we have today.