

**Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17)**

*Submitted Testimony for the Record  
House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis  
Member Day  
November 13, 2019*

Thank you, Chairwoman Castor and Ranking Member Graves for giving me the opportunity to share my policy recommendations for addressing the climate crisis.

Climate change may very well be the most complicated challenge our nation, and the world, has ever faced.

As the national and global conversation continues, I want to be sure to bring the perspective of the region I represent – the center of the country – and what we can offer to the climate change debate.

Illinois' 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District spans 7,000 square miles.

85% of the towns in my district are 5,000 people or fewer, and 60% are 1,000 people or fewer.

There are 9,600 family farms, and along the western border is the largest navigable inland waterway in the world – the Mississippi River.

And this past spring, my district experienced the effects of climate change firsthand. From historic flooding to unpredictable weather, the growers and producers in my district struggled to plant, grow and harvest their crops.

But it is more than just our farmers, these challenges impact every aspect of my region.

Witnessing this, I decided to submit the Rural Green Partnership to this Committee. The Rural Green Partnership is a framework of principles and policies to both combat climate change and spur economic growth.

It brings rural America to the table of the climate debate, a conversation that we've too often been left out of – or worse – simply blamed for.

Specifically, it details a set of policies that work with federal, local and state governments, producers, businesses, unions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to lower greenhouse gas emissions in every economic sector of rural America.

And each of these policies is designed to bring to the table what our region of the country offers. It truly empowers and lifts up the enormous potential of rural America.

Because rural America can...

- Sequester carbon in soils, vegetation and forests
- Grow and produce biofuels and renewable products
- Capture carbon dioxide and store it deep underground or put it to beneficial use
- Build wind farms and solar fields on a large scale
- And employ its wealth of technical training schools, community colleges, tribal colleges, land grant and other universities, union registered apprenticeship programs and research facilities to prepare our workforce, create

thousands of good-paying jobs and boost our local economies.

Tackling the climate crisis is both a moral and economic imperative. I urge my colleagues to make sure rural America is included in any conversation about our path forward.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I yield back the remainder of my time.