

**Testimony of Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04)**

**Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Member Day Hearing**

**Thursday, November 14th, 2019;**

Chair Castor, Ranking Member Graves thank you for providing the opportunity for Members to testify today.

As Chair of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, we have a shared responsibility to work together for the American people to combat climate change and reduce pollution through both policy recommendations and federal funding.

I would also like to thank the Committee for giving young climate leaders, policy specialists, business leaders, and state and local officials the opportunity to provide input on the climate crisis. I have contacted many stakeholders in my district, and throughout Minnesota, who are excited about the committee's invitation to submit public statements.

Climate change is real and affecting people all over the world, in every part of their lives. I recently was in Malawi with the U.S. Forest service and witnessed firsthand the varying impacts of climate change around the globe. This is an issue which Congress cannot solve with one Committee alone. Changing the course of the climate crisis will require all of us to step up and take action. We know that climate change will have devastating economic impacts from agriculture to healthcare to infrastructure. We need to be making federal investments now to understand, address, and adapt to climate change.

We must prioritize funding for climate change. Why? Because climate change is dynamic in all the ways it impacts our planet. That's why the House invested in expanding climate research and protecting our public lands and natural resources. By doing this, we will ensure that Americans will have clean water and air not only today but for generations to come. It is critical that the federal agencies funded through the Interior Bill receive adequate support to carry out the policies recommended by this committee.

Our path forward will also need to include investments throughout the federal government. These investments will help to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, but also help communities to adapt to impacts we are already seeing like rising sea levels and the devastating wildfires in California.

As Vice Chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I know that Climate change is one of the foremost national security threats of our time. A report released in January from the Pentagon laid out the stark reality they face from our changing climate. Two-

thirds of our military's operationally essential installations are threatened by climate change. As the Department considers where to spend military construction dollars or base our most valuable defense assets, climate change must inform every decision they make. Simply put, the cost of inaction on climate change has already had a staggering impact on our national security.

In order to effectively slow and adapt to climate change, we need to fund and protect sound scientific research within the federal government. It is no secret that scientific research is constantly under attack from the Trump Administration.

Under President Trump, for example, we have seen the rules change to favor industry domination on EPA's scientific panels. We need to make smart decisions that are based on science, not politics. As this Administration continues to push an anti-science agenda, congress must do more to protect our scientific institutions.

I look forward to working with this Committee and the authorizing committees on legislation that protects government scientists and invests in research. Scientific integrity is vital to address the serious challenges climate change poses to our natural and cultural resources, ecosystems, and human health.

Action on climate change is at a critical crossroads. The purpose of this Committee is to develop policies that will provide us the best chance at saving our planet for future generations. But it is important to note that these policies come with a price tag. I believe every Appropriations Bill should include a line item on what agencies and departments need to do to combat climate change, mitigate the effects we are already seeing, and establish resiliency. It is crucial we ensure the federal government has the resources necessary to carry out that work. As Chair of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I will continue to prioritize funding to address climate change and build resiliency in our fragile ecosystems, restore funding for programs that have suffered deep cuts in previous Congresses, and conduct the oversight necessary to hold the Trump administration accountable for their climate denial.

Chair Castor, I thank you for the time, and I look forward to working as the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress moved forward.