

Chairwoman Castor, Ranking Member Graves, and Committee members, thank you for the invitation to testify on the issues of importance to my constituents as the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis continues to develop its legislative agenda.

I want to begin by giving you some numbers:

Since 1950, the sea level in South Florida has risen 8 inches, and it is only speeding up. By 2030, the sea level in South Florida is projected to rise up to 12 inches, and by 2100, perhaps 80 inches.

According to UN projections, the average temperature on the planet will rise by 5 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century. This will cause a sea level rise that will virtually submerge all of South Florida.

If we continue to do nothing on climate change, my community, Chairwoman Castor's Florida community, as we know it, will disappear.

We have a moral obligation to mitigate and adapt immediately, as we are already seeing the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

It no longer takes a strong hurricane to flood our streets; they now flood just from a particularly high tide – such as the King tides. In fact, tidal flooding has become three times as common in South Florida in just the past 19 years, causing so-called sunny day flooding – affecting our streets, our schools, our tourism economy.

90 percent of South Florida's drinking water comes from the underground Biscayne Aquifer.

Because of Florida's porous limestone bedrock and the diversion of fresh waterways, as sea levels rise, salt water reaches further inland and our drinking water is seriously threatened.

If we do not address sea level rise through infrastructure, this salt water intrusion will destroy our only source of drinking water long before Miami

is underwater.

With more powerful storms causing more destruction than ever before, category 4 and 5 hurricanes are projected to be at least 45% more common because of rising ocean temperatures.

Combined with higher sea levels, when these storms make landfall, they don't just flood roads and stop traffic, they destroy homes and lives.

But with thorough legislation from this Committee, we can combat rising sea levels and a warming planet by crafting and pushing forward with legislation to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.

Perhaps more importantly, we can reduce emissions and transition away from fossil fuels, so we can leave a healthy planet to future generations.

For those on this committee who also sit on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, my testimony likely sounds very similar to the one I gave at that committee's Member Day in the spring.

That's because, particularly for my constituents, addressing the climate crisis means addressing our crumbling, climate change-exacerbating infrastructure.

We have a real opportunity to use climate-smart infrastructure to prepare for higher sea levels, mitigate the effects of climate change, and protect our communities.

So I ask my colleagues on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis to make sea level rise and climate resilient infrastructure a fundamental component of their climate legislation.

We have already had success designing effective infrastructure projects in Miami that are actionable and scalable to the national level.

In my district, as Chairwoman Castor knows well because she visited us last week, the City of Miami Beach spent \$500 million installing massive

water pumps that can move 30,000 gallons of water a minute from streets into the ocean, draining over 7 inches of water a day.

Combining these projects with natural “green” infrastructure can result in even better - and more environmentally friendly - results.

Miami Waterkeeper, a non-profit organization that advocates for South Florida's watershed and wildlife, is working to address climate change and sea level rise locally by promoting green infrastructure and natural defenses, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and dunes.

North Bay Village, also in my district, is taking an innovative approach, encouraging the private market to take the first step in raising the elevation of this island community, as much of the waterfront property is privately owned.

I've always believed that the federal government should pay close attention to what's happening at the local level. In my district, on the front lines of climate change, local governments and organizations are leading the way, with innovative approaches to tackle one of the most consequential issues we face.

It's on us, here in Washington, to take the giant steps in pushing our country towards a 100% clean energy economy, but we can't forget to look to what's happening at the ground level to address this crisis.

Ultimately, this Committee has the opportunity to address the climate crisis and protect communities across the country by integrating projects such as these into your bills.

We cannot wait. My district, and many others, are already seeing the disastrous effects of sea level rise, as homes and lives are destroyed by flooding and storms.

Our children cannot wait.

Thank you for addressing climate change and sea level rise with the seriousness it demands.