

**Testimony from
REPRESENTATIVE KIM SCHRIER, M.D.**

Member Day Hearing in the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis
Thursday, November 14th

I want to express my appreciation for the work Chairwoman Castor and her staff are putting forth on the critical issue of climate change. In my mind, there is no greater threat facing our world today and our actions, and our inaction or inaction, will have consequences for generations to come.

As a pediatrician, I have seen firsthand the impact climate change is having on our children. Increased rates of asthma, longer allergy season, and increased risk of disease. Pregnant women and children are especially vulnerable to these changes.

According to the Lancet Countdown's 2019 report, which was released yesterday, global air pollution driven by fossil fuels, and compounded by climate change, led to seven million premature deaths. Already in 2016, there were 2.9 million premature pre-mature deaths related to increasing pollution.

A warming climate is resulting in lower crop yields and affecting the overall nutritional density of our foods. Research has shown that carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels this century will alter the protein, micronutrients, and vitamin content of staple crops around the world. One of the few studies which looked at this issue involved researchers from the University of Washington, the USDA and international partners. They looked at 18 rice lines and grew them under conditions that you would expect later in the century. Among the findings included a 30 percent decline in folate. Folate is critical for healthy child development. Pregnant women who don't get enough folate are at much higher risk of having babies with birth defects.

I am working on a bill now to ensure our researchers have dedicated funding to study this issue further and proactively address it.

I also want to note that as temperatures rise, there is more of a chance for disease to spread. Nine of the 10 most favorable years for the spread of dengue fever have happened since 2000, and vector borne disease is on the rise. These things can be mitigated.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on such an important issue and I yield the remaining amount of my time.