



**Opening Statement of Chair Kathy Castor
Organizational Meeting for the 117th Congress
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis
March 19, 2021**

As prepared for delivery

Thank you all for joining us. I'm thrilled to welcome you to the first meeting of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis in the 117th Congress. Before we begin, I'd like to express my gratitude to Speaker Pelosi for her deep commitment to solving the climate crisis - and for allowing our Select Committee to continue building on our work for the American people.

Last year, our Select Committee's Democratic Members released a comprehensive set of recommendations for Congressional action in the staff report titled '*Solving The Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America*'. This plan would put the United States on a path to net zero by 2050 or earlier. It would create much-needed jobs in clean energy, infrastructure, conservation, manufacturing, construction, and a number of other industries. It would protect millions of families and small businesses from climate-fueled risks and harms. And it would advance environmental justice for Black, brown, Native, and low-income Americans.

Our Climate Crisis Action Plan has been described as "the most detailed climate plan in United States political history." Now, the work ahead of us is clear: we must waste no time turning our recommendations into policy. Families across America have given us a strong mandate to act on climate. And entire generations are watching, knowing their futures hang in the balance.

Before we consider our committee rules, I'll quickly go over our jurisdiction and take a moment to introduce our Democratic members. I will then give our Ranking Member an opportunity to give an opening statement and introduce our Republican members.

According to House Resolution 8, our Select Committee will have investigative jurisdiction over policies, strategies, and innovations to achieve substantial and permanent reductions in pollution and other activities that contribute to the climate crisis. It is my hope that our Select Committee will continue to be a forum to advance important solutions for the American people, to find common ground, to follow the science, and to approach our differences constructively.

With that, I would like to introduce our Democratic members:

Suzanne Bonamici from Oregon. She serves on the Science Committee, where she is leading the fight for ocean climate action, and on the Committee on Education and Labor.

Julia Brownley from California. She serves on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where she is pushing for cleaner public transit systems and expanding our use of zero-emission vehicles, and she also serves on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

Jared Huffman from California. He is the Chair of the Water, Ocean and Wildlife subcommittee in the House Natural Resources Committee, where he is a strong champion for our public lands and water. He also serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Donald McEachin from Virginia. He serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee, where he has led the charge on securing environmental justice. He also serves on the Natural Resources Committee.

Mike Levin from California. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee, where he works to advance safeguards against droughts, heat waves, and rising sea levels. He's also a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Sean Casten from Illinois. He serves on the Financial Services Committee, where he is working to reduce climate risk in the financial sector. He also serves on the Science and Technology Committee.

Joe Neguse from Colorado. He is the Chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands in the Natural Resources Committee, where he can advance protections for his communities from climate-fueled wildfires. He also serves on the Judiciary Committee.

And our newest member, **Veronica Escobar** from Texas. She is a member of the Armed Services Committee, where she is working to ensure our military stands ready to face the climate crisis, and she has long championed the economic opportunities in clean energy. She also serves on the Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Escobar, as the newest Democratic member of the Select Committee, let me give you a minute to introduce yourself.

[Rep. Escobar speaks]

Now I'd like to give Ranking Member Graves the opportunity to provide some opening remarks and introduce the rest of our members.