

Statement of Congresswoman Doris Matsui on Climate Change: The Costs of Inaction

M. Chairman, I am very pleased to be here today. Thank you for calling a hearing on such an important issue.

I would also like to thank today's panelists for sharing their expertise, and adding to our understanding of the risks and potential costs of climate change.

I know that this committee will thoughtfully work through the many hurdles, proposals and solutions to craft responsible and necessary climate change legislation for the future.

All of us here today represent different areas of the country with different climates. We have each seen the varying impacts climate change is having on our diverse landscape and the threat of new challenges and dangers if this issue is left unaddressed.

My district of Sacramento, California, exhibits many of the risks we face. We are surrounded by ecosystems that are already beginning to see significant changes.

Sitting at the confluence of two great rivers, Sacramento is considered to have the highest flood risk of any major metropolitan city in the United States.

Nearly half a million people, 110,000 structures, the Capitol of the State of California, and up to \$58 billion are at risk. Rising temperatures could mean earlier and more rapid Sierra snow melt, yielding disastrous consequences.

Earlier snowmelt and varying rainfall patterns may also lead to serious drought and water shortages -- already a constant worry in my state. Currently California is rationing water and farmers are losing their crops. We simply can't afford to see the Western United States with even less water.

Wildfires, heat waves, the spread of tropical disease and rising sea levels will also affect the future of my constituents and their children.

We must take into account the costs of any legislation that will touch so many aspects of our country and our economy. But we can't get stuck on the challenges. We must find ways to build consensus and overcome.

We heard last week about some of the possible costs of potential legislation. But it is clear that if we fail to act, the costs to our country, economy and environment will reach far beyond just the monetary.

The fact is that inaction is not an option. Investing our time and resources now will mean saving our children and grandchildren much greater costs in the future.

M. Chairman, I thank you for your leadership and your commitment to these issues. I yield back the balance of my time.

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