



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology

Joint Research & Technology and Environment Subcommittee Hearing:
Assessing Federal Programs for Measuring Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks

June 23, 2022

Good morning and welcome to today's joint hearing to examine federal programs for measuring greenhouse gas sources and sinks. I thank our distinguished panel of witnesses – it is great to be with so many of you in person today.

The vast majority of U.S. adults – 78 percent – say they have been personally affected by extreme weather events in the past five years. This is according to a nationwide survey released this week by the Harvard School of Public Health, NPR, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Americans report these events caused serious health problems, severe financial woes, and property damage. No state in our nation is untouched by the damaging physical and emotional impacts of climate change.

As the hottest part of the year now gets underway, families across the country are bracing themselves for another season of devastating hurricanes, storms, floods, fires, and heat waves. So, it is timely, that on the brink of this summer season, we are holding this hearing to examine the tools the government has to properly track our greenhouse gas emissions and where our data is falling short.

Greenhouse gases act like a blanket – the gases trap heat in the atmosphere. These gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and other fluorinated gases, and they are a driving force of climate change. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, human activities have vastly increased the volume of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential to mitigating the effects of climate change. I hope that is no longer a controversial statement in Congress, or one that requires further explanation. Yet we still seem to be arguing about whether to do anything about it.

I can only hope that this nation's leaders are able to come together soon to enact real policy to reduce emissions and address to the threats that are already at our door.

Because it isn't too late for us to respond.

When we do enact real policy, we will need the tools to track progress and guide evidence-based decision-making. We will want the most accurate tools to ensure we are reaching our goals, but

also importantly, ensure we are able to hold other nations to accountable measurements. To be global leaders, we need accurate and consistent greenhouse gas data.

And that is where our Federal science agencies come in. Many of our agencies, including those represented by the experts before us today, are engaged in tremendous research and development work to improve our measurements of greenhouse gas emissions. This work spans the whole range of greenhouse gas measurement activities from fundamental measurement science and technology development, to operation of space-based, airborne, and ground-based sensors and observation platforms, to maintaining greenhouse gas emissions inventories.

These agencies do not do this work in a vacuum. Each of the agencies represented here today cooperate on vital interagency work to improve greenhouse gas measurement, both on individual projects and as part of an interagency working group. This cooperation is essential to the success of our greenhouse gas measurements. So much can be accomplished when our federal science agencies leverage their respective expertise in support of a common goal.

I'm looking forward to hearing more about this work from our witnesses today and to discussing what we here in Congress can do to support and improve these programs. I'd like to again thank our witnesses for joining us today.