



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

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## Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Subcommittee on Environment Hearing:

*From Gray to Green: Advancing the Science of Nature-Based Infrastructure*

March 2, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Sherrill, for holding this important hearing today.

Monday's IPCC report on climate impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability underscored the worsening climate crisis and need for immediate action.

Many of the climate impacts described in the report cannot be avoided regardless of our mitigation efforts.

That is why it is essential that we ramp up climate adaptation in parallel with mitigation efforts.

Nature-based infrastructure is a crucial component of these climate adaptation efforts.

Federal agencies play an important role in conducting the research and development necessary for effective implementation of nature-based infrastructure. They evaluate ecosystem services of living shorelines.

They assess the benefits of increased urban greenery to stormwater management and to public health. And they study the ability of vegetation to reduce pollutants from wildfire smoke or to sequester carbon.

However, there remains a need to further coordinate and collaborate these federal efforts with a diverse set of stakeholders. Opportunities to implement nature-based infrastructure must be inclusive and accessible to all communities. This means improving federal communication and engagement with underserved and front-line communities.

For communities to comprehensively consider opportunities for nature-based solutions, we must better quantify their benefits and co-benefits. We must also develop more consistent valuation methods that can be used across communities in different regions of the country.

Potential negative impacts of traditional "gray" infrastructure can also be compounded in frontline and underserved communities. It is time that the combined co-benefits of "green" infrastructure are realized in those same communities.

The federal government has a crucial role to play in making natural infrastructure solutions accessible for all communities.

Agencies like NOAA, USDA, and the Army Corps of Engineers, conduct and support nature-based infrastructure research. These also play a critical role in providing communities and decision makers the support and technical assistance needed to implement these projects.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how Congress can enhance their agencies' research and development activities for nature-based infrastructure. With that, I yield back.