

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

House Committee on Science, Space, & Technology
Subcommittee on Environment
Subcommittee on Oversight
“At What Cost? Examining the Social Cost of Carbon”
February 28, 2017

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

In 2014 alone, the U.S. released nearly 7 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The Social Cost of Carbon is an estimate of the economic damages caused from the release of a single metric ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Put simply, the Social Cost of Carbon attempts to quantify the economic consequences of our fossil fuel related actions. And let me be clear, our actions do have consequences. Just as our health is impacted by what we put into our bodies, the planet is affected by the chemicals we release into the environment. Denying this reality does not erase the fact that this is true. These acts come with financial costs and social consequences to our environment, to public health and to our economy.

Unfortunately, the Majority too often denies these truths and continues to say, no, to basic facts.

They say, no, human-influenced climate change is not occurring; despite the enormity of the scientific evidence.

They appear to have no concerns about the impact on public health of the release of toxic chemicals into the environment by oil, gas and mining industries.

And some of them believe the federal government should have virtually no role in helping to inform the public of these dangers, or, to help protect them by holding industry accountable for their actions.

Americans understand, that “no” is not the answer. **No** does not erase the mountains of scientific evidence that point to climate change. **No** does not diminish the ethical and legal responsibility of private industry to not poison the public by producing and releasing toxic chemicals into our neighborhoods, communities or the atmosphere, or, simply denying the reality of their actions and the resulting impact on our climate.

We have an obligation to be honest and open about what the scientific evidence says about the reality and real dangers of climate change.

Yes, the climate is changing.

Yes, humans are contributing to this change.

Yes, we want a strong Environmental Protection Agency that protects human health and the environment.

Yes, we want to work together to find solutions to the global threat of climate change.

Yes, we want an Administration that listens to the scientific evidence, and does not hide the truth about the consequences of pollution or climate change from its citizens.

No is not the answer. Denial and misdirection will not lead to solutions. We should work together to address and mitigate the economic consequences and social costs of our new climate reality.

Thank you. I yield back.