

Opening Statement – Ranking Member Bonamici
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
“The Administration’s Empty Promises for the International Climate Treaty”

November 18, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I am especially pleased to welcome Ms. Katie Dykes, the Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. It will be beneficial to learn more about the success of the State of Connecticut and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, RGGI, which is reducing carbon emissions while simultaneously growing the region’s economy. The success of RGGI highlights how we can have strong environmental regulations and a strong economy; they are not mutually exclusive. This is not just true in the United States, it is a growing reality now accepted by many other nations.

And I am looking forward to discussing the Clean Power Plan, which builds on the history and accomplishments of the Clean Air Act and the mission of EPA to protect public health and the environment.

Our commitment to a cleaner future is what allows the United States to lead by example, and galvanize the international community to take meaningful steps to address the issue of carbon emissions and climate change. The Clean Power Plan and the upcoming negotiations in Paris are necessary if we stand any chance, not just as a country, but as a world, of lessening the effects of climate change on our states, country, and planet.

Some here today might question climate scientists and their research. Yet, the overwhelming body of scientific research shows that we must take action to avoid the most severe effects of climate change.

Thankfully, over the last few years there have been numerous studies that clearly show that the costs and risks associated with not acting to address climate change are very large. For example, a recent study by the World Bank found that - without the right policies, rising seas and severe weather events could force more than 100 million people into extreme poverty. This is just one of the stark statistics reflecting the potential impacts of climate change.

I'd also like to point out that the scientific community is not alone in its call for action on climate change. The business community has called for action as well.

In my home state of Oregon, many companies have stepped up and demonstrated their support to address climate change. Nike, Intel, Iberdrola USA, International Paper, Lam Research, and Portland General Electric have joined more than 80 countries nationwide in signing the American Business Act on Climate Pledge. These companies have made business-specific commitments to take significant actions to address climate change and expressed their support for a strong Paris agreement.

The Clean Power Plan is a critical element of our domestic efforts and it represents an opportunity for American ingenuity. Environmental regulations often act as a catalyst to create new jobs and new markets, as well as the "savings" that come with a healthier, more productive workforce and population.

In 2012, the Department of Commerce estimated that the American environmental technologies industry generated approximately \$312 billion in revenues, with a global market of more than \$800 billion, employing nearly 1.7 million Americans and supporting 60,000 small businesses.

The United States should remain a global leader in clean energy technologies and benefit from the much needed transition to a low carbon economy.

When you have the scientific and business communities agreeing that action to address climate change is necessary and that the benefits outweigh the risks, then it is clearly time for Congress to listen. I am hopeful that with the United States' leadership and commitment, the UN climate negotiations will result in meaningful actions to address our biggest environmental challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again thank you to our witnesses for being here this morning.

I yield back the balance of my time.