

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1317

August 6, 2019

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Chairwoman
House Select Committee on the
Climate Crisis
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-359 Ford Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Garret Graves
Ranking Member
House Select Committee on the
Climate Crisis
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-361 Ford Building
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairwoman Castor and Ranking Member Graves:

I am pleased to deliver to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis a framework of principles and policies—called the Rural Green Partnership—that outline an achievable strategy to both spur economic growth while immediately lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in every economic sector of rural America.

Congressional Districts like mine, driven by natural resource-based economies (agriculture, forestry, fishing, outdoor recreation, etc.), depend on a stable climate and consistent weather. Put simply, climate change is an existential threat to my constituents, and the severe flooding across the Midwest this spring only underscores this threat. I will not stand by and watch the crisis grow.

I am committed to doing my part, and rural America is armed with some of the best tools to turn back the course of climate change: vast land resources where carbon can be sequestered in soils, vegetation and forests; where bio-based and renewable products—fuels, plastics and other products—can be grown and produced; where captured carbon dioxide can be stored deep underground or utilized in other ways; where wind farms and solar fields can be built at scale; and where a plethora of technical training schools like community colleges, tribal colleges, land-grant universities, union-registered apprenticeship programs and technical training colleges can prepare workforces to help grow rural economies while addressing climate change.

To capitalize on these opportunities, the Rural Green Partnership gives rural Americans a front-and-center seat at the climate change table and calls for a partnership between federal, state and local governments, producers, businesses, unions, NGOs and other stakeholders. It deploys a wide array of tools, like loans, grants, tax incentives, R&D and workforce development, to

expand and improve effective federal programs that currently lower GHGs; invest in rural infrastructure; and incentivize new clean energy development and innovations. Above all, the Rural Green Partnership respects the unique needs and interests of the 19% of the population that call rural America home.

The Select Committee on the Climate Crisis was formed to tackle a national existential threat by developing ambitious policy recommendations to achieve substantial and permanent reductions in pollution and other activities that contribute to the climate crisis. Other Representatives and Senators have proffered different and important proposals or ideas that contribute to reaching that goal. But it is clear that, as you evaluate the best way to tackle the climate crisis, rural America must be a partner if the nation is ever to achieve success. The principles and policies included in the Rural Green Partnership can and should be incorporated into any national plan and timeline to ensure all our communities are bringing their best tools and resources to tackle this challenge.

Significantly lowering future GHG emissions is achievable, and rural America is primed to lead the way. Thank you for your leadership and important work to combat the climate crisis.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress