

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman,

In hearings this Congress, you have indicated a willingness to work to address climate change and support natural climate solutions. Last week, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released an alarming report that underscores the immediate and accelerating threat of the climate crisis. The report cautions that our planet is warming at an unprecedented rate, and we are on track to exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius average warming limit in less than a decade if we don't correct course.

Fortunately, the report also emphasizes that, if done rapidly, there is still time to enact policies and take action to protect our planet and conserve our health, environment, and wildlife. The Natural Resources Committee must act swiftly to address this threat. Therefore, I urge you to hold a hearing to discuss the harmful trends identified in the IPCC report and the actions Congress should take to address them.

In passing the Inflation Reduction Act, the most significant climate law in our nation's history, we have taken an important step to address the climate crisis, but more needs to be done. According to the IPCC report, the world's current policy trajectory will result in more extreme rainfall and drought; longer and more intense storm seasons; excessive heat and wildfires; ice melting and rising sea levels and the changing composition of our ocean. Our constituents and communities across the United States are already living with these consequences and watching them worsen.

The IPCC provides clear recommendations to address the climate crisis. We must cut carbon dioxide emissions in half by 2030, focus on the economic benefits of emissions reductions, and use existing policies and technologies to continue to curb greenhouse gas emissions. There are significant advantages to avoiding the damages of climate change by reducing the frequency and severity of natural disasters and improving other factors such as air quality, wildlife populations, and food sources.

The Natural Resources Committee has a significant role to play in addressing the climate crisis. During this hearing, our committee could discuss ideas to:

- Sequester carbon with investments in natural climate solutions, such as through forest, grassland, and coastal conservation and restoration;
- Capitalize on progress made in the Inflation Reduction Act, which put us on track to cut U.S. emissions by 50-52% below 2005 levels in 2030, and demonstrate our commitments for years to come;
- Prioritize clean energy sources and reduce dirty fuel production and pollution on public lands and waters;
- Establish a multifaceted approach to address climate change across sectors and regions;
- Continue to work with Indigenous leaders and communities to lower deforestation rates and maintain the biodiversity of our planet; and
- Prioritize environmental justice and inclusive and equitable approaches to emission reductions, a just transition, and climate change solutions.

The IPCC report's findings are a harrowing reminder of the present and future threats of the climate crisis. While the effects of climate change are opposite in our home states – with more intense rainfall events in Arkansas and drought intensifying across Arizona – communities in our districts and across the United States will face the catastrophic consequences of climate change.

As the committee with jurisdiction over the nation's natural resources and wildlife and significant jurisdiction over many issues at the center of climate change—including energy policy on federal lands and waters and water supply and drought response—we play a central role in determining if and how the U.S. meets its climate goals. As the Chairman and Ranking member, it is our responsibility to address these impacts head-on and set legislative and oversight priorities which will mitigate harm to our communities and our country. I look forward to working with you to convene a hearing on this important topic in the near future.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member, Natural Resources Committee