

**Floor Statement of Rep. Donna Edwards**  
**Safe Climate Caucus**  
**August 1, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Climate change is not a science debate – it never was. As we know, science is never universally agreed upon, it's a constant reexamining of what is deemed the status quo. Nonetheless, the science surrounding climate change is near universal and it is incontrovertible.

Over several decades of study, an overwhelming majority of scientists, including many at NOAA and NASA – NASA Goddard, in fact, in my district – as well as researchers worldwide have concluded that climate change is real, it is caused by man, and it will have a significant impact on our earth, its process, the safety of our public, and our economy. These findings simply must quell the ideological differences and guide our policy decisions with regard to our environment in all due haste.

As a member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, I remain astounded that so much climate denial exists within these chambers. This doubt has translated into slashing funding for climate research and earth science research, both short-term and long-term. It has resulted in preventing agencies with expertise to maintain and develop earth-observing systems and conduct the analysis necessary to understand our earth – all slashed.

Just two weeks ago, our House Science Committee reported out legislation that would cut NASA's earth science budget by a third, something like over \$600 million. NASA is a major contributor to our U.S. Global Change Research Program and such a cut would not only devastate earth science research, but hamper our ability to understand what is truly a matter of national significance, indeed global significance.

Unfortunately, my home state of Maryland will suffer disproportionately if this chamber refuses to act. Maryland has the fourth longest tidal coastline and is the third most vulnerable to sea level rise, one of the major consequences of climate change. Islands and low-lying communities throughout our state will be impacted by rising seas and severe weather events like Hurricane Sandy.

Just last week, the *Washington Post* reported that Maryland's coastal waters could rise six feet by the end of this century. This increase could cause flooding in major cities like Baltimore and Annapolis. Areas of the lower half of the Delmarva Peninsula could be especially impacted. And while our state has been proactive about preparing for these kind of environmental changes, for thermal expansion of our oceans and our waterways, it will pose significant problems for the state, indeed for our nation. But this is not one state's concern; it's a 50 state concern; it's a global concern.

Goddard Spaceflight Center, just outside my congressional district, is home to a number of climate scientists who are genuinely concerned about observed and predicted trends for the future. This historical trend of warming and sea level rise, in particular, are not fiction or hyperbole. They are, in fact, facts that are indisputable and, in many ways, terrifying.

I want to bring to your attention image one here. In Maryland, the warming trend over 100 years has increased from two degrees Fahrenheit to 6.1 degrees just since 1960. This is significant and concerning warming just in my state.

The U.S. trends are equally staggering, and the global trends are even more overwhelming. But what concerns me even more is the following chart, and it is one that depicts polar sea ice, which is important to control and moderate global climate. As sea ice melts in the summer, it absorbs the sunlight and warms our poles. What's happening is that because, according to the National Snow and Ice Data

Center, even a slight warming of the poles will quicken the pace of global warming and likely lead to more severe climate patterns.

Since 2000, Arctic ice during the summer has been melting at rates that are scaring scientists. In here, what you see is a sharp decline during the summer ice melting, and last year, half of the sea ice actually melted during the summer.

I want to highlight one more thing. Our most conservative models did not predict what we have actually observed in terms of the decline in sea ice thickness. Our climate model simulations have failed to keep up with actual significant loss. This problem is two-fold. First, additional cuts to climate research and gaps in our satellites, and there are gaps because we are not funding them, make these observations even less accurate and weaken our modeling. Second, the poles are actually warming faster than we ever predicted. It is estimated that by 2020, all the sea ice during the summer will be melted.

It is time for us to act. For the sake of the future generations of our economy, our environment, let's restore climate research capacity, let's act for future generations.