

Floor Statement of Rep. Paul Tonko
Safe Climate Caucus
January 13, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all of the recent reporting on snow and rain events, it is hard to imagine that water scarcity is one of the greatest threats from climate change, but it is. Water scarcity already imposes tremendous costs and suffering on some 1.3 billion people around the world.

A study published by the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences combined agricultural and water models to gain a more realistic estimate of the impacts of climate change on food production. The results were not encouraging.

Agriculture is our largest single use of water, primarily for irrigation, and it is irrigation water that the study's authors project will be reduced significantly, converting between 48 and 148 million acres from irrigated to rain-fed land.

There are substitutes for many materials we use, but not for water. We must protect water resources and use them with care, and part of that effort must be to address climate change by limiting the emissions that are threatening our futures and that of our children.

Food supplies, human health, and economic and social progress all require adequate, reliable, clean water supplies. We should act now before any more people are forced to endure water shortages.