

Floor Statement of Rep. Paul Tonko
Safe Climate Caucus
June 12, 2013

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

State governments, institutions, businesses, and private individuals are organizing to meet the challenges and opportunities of climate change.

For example, experts from New York State's land grant college Cornell University have partnered with others at McGill University in Montreal and the private sector to define the needs of the region's agricultural sector in a warmer climate.

Farmers will need new plant varieties. The longer growing season will open possibilities for growing new crops. The timing of planting and fertilizing will change. Pest management will indeed be different.

Climate change can be approached with a positive perspective for agriculture, but only if we plan now to take advantage of new opportunities and prepare for the transition.

So where are we as a body on this issue? We should be talking climate change and taking it into account as we move a new five-year farm bill forward. We should be taking action to adapt our infrastructure and economy to these changes.

But there is no discussion or action on this crucial issue. Change is underway; we have little time to lose.

We can meet this challenge, slow down the rate of change, adapt to the new conditions, and take advantage of new opportunities, but only if we begin today.