

Floor Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Safe Climate Caucus
December 5, 2013

I rise as a member of the Safe Climate Caucus to call attention to a new report from the nation's premier scientific body, the National Academy of Sciences.

We typically associate climate change with gradual, longer term problems. But according to the Academy, climate change could also pose a risk of rapid, hard to predict environmental changes that have the potential to cause widespread damage in the near term.

The report warns that the collapse of polar sea ice could send sea levels soaring.

The destruction of coral reefs could cause a mass extinction of sea life.

The elimination of summer sea ice in the Arctic could alter the world's weather patterns.

These "tipping points" could happen suddenly. It's reckless to do nothing in the face of these threats. If there is a 10% chance that these threats would happen, it is irresponsible for us to ignore it.

Dr. Richard Alley, one of the authors, said, "You can't see it coming, so you can't prepare for it."

Congress is irresponsible if we don't take this issue seriously, to pass on our planet worthy for our children and our grandchildren's future.