

Floor Statement of Rep. Lois Capps
Safe Climate Caucus
March 14, 2013

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the looming crisis of climate change.

The impacts of climate change are diverse, but they are all hurting American lives and livelihoods.

We are witnessing these impacts in real time.

Extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy, severe drought, and major flooding are growing more frequent and intense.

Sandy alone caused at least \$50 billion in damages and took dozens of American lives.

But Sandy was only one of 11 separate billion-dollar extreme weather events last year.

And things are only getting worse.

Extreme weather events are occurring more frequently now than they were a decade ago.

And, of course, the cost of all these events is also escalating.

One of the first acts of this Congress was to enact over \$60 billion in emergency aid for those impacted by the storm.

Who knows how much the next one will cost?

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to sit back and wait for the next Hurricane Sandy to devastate American lives and property.

Especially in our current fiscal circumstances, I think we can all agree that reducing the cost of extreme weather events is a good thing.

One of the most effective ways to reduce these costs is to plan ahead.

Regardless of what you think about its causes, extreme weather is happening.

Imagine the lives, infrastructure, homes, and businesses that would be saved if we better anticipated and prepared for the impacts of these events before they occur.

By planning smarter and building more resilient infrastructure, we can reduce storm damages, lessen economic impacts, and save lives.

But these mitigation and adaptation measures also create good-quality American jobs and help grow our economy for the future.

It's a win-win that should enjoy bipartisan support.

Last month I reintroduced two bills that would help our local communities implement these cost-saving measures:

... the Coastal State Climate Change Planning Act, which would provide matching funding for coastal states wishing to carry out adaptation projects for the impacts of climate change,

... and the Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act, which would provide matching funding to states wishing to update their aging storm, waste, and drinking water systems to adapt for climate change.

These bills will help our local communities plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change and increased extreme weather.

Our communities deserve protection from these potentially devastating events, and we have a responsibility to help.

Mr. Speaker, we have a choice.

We can continue spending tens of billions of dollars annually on emergency aid packages that will only grow in size and quantity;

Or we can spend a fraction of that on planning smarter and building more resilient infrastructure that creates jobs and strengthens our economy for years to come.

I think the choice is clear.

Let's choose to protect our coastlines and fortify our infrastructure.

Let's choose to create good American jobs and strengthen our economy.

Let's choose to plan ahead to protect lives, property, and the federal budget from the impacts of extreme weather.

I urge my colleagues to join me in taking action on this critical issue and help our communities prepare for the impacts of climate change.