



MEMORANDUM

March 29, 2019

To: Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change Members and Staff

Fr: Committee on Energy and Commerce Staff

Re: Hearing on “Lessons from Across the Nation: State and Local Action to Combat Climate Change”

On **Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at 10 a.m. in the John D. Dingell Room, 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building**, the Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change will hold a hearing entitled, “Lessons from Across the Nation: State and Local Action to Combat Climate Change.” The hearing will examine state and local climate action in the United States.

I. BACKGROUND

On June 1, 2017, the Trump Administration announced its intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement.¹ The announcement sparked a surge in climate action from states, cities, businesses, universities, and others across the United States committed to addressing climate change. As of March 2019, more than 3,600 government, business, faith, tribal, and institution leaders across the United States had signed onto the *We Are Still In* pledge to uphold the Paris Agreement goals.² Those signatories together represent 154.3 million Americans and \$9.46 trillion in Gross domestic product. Meanwhile, 23 states have joined the United States Climate Alliance, a bipartisan consortium of governors committed to accelerating climate action in their states. More than 400 mayors have likewise joined the Climate Mayors network to bolster climate leadership at the local level.

II. STATE CLIMATE ACTION

The United States Climate Alliance was established in response to the Trump Administration’s announced intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement. To date, 23 governors have joined the coalition. The Alliance now represents more than half the United States population and almost three-fifths of the domestic economy. Participating states

¹ The White House, Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord (www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord) (Jun. 1, 2017).

² We Are Still In, Home (www.wearestillin.com) (accessed Mar. 25, 2019).

agree to implement policies in support of the Paris Agreement goals (i.e., to reduce climate pollution 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025); to monitor and report progress towards those goals; and to accelerate policies that further reduce emissions at the state and national levels.³

The Alliance supports several collaborative initiatives across participating states. Those efforts include: reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (e.g., methane); supporting sustainable infrastructure investments through the establishment of green banks; reducing regulatory barriers to renewable energy deployment; encouraging adoption of stronger appliance efficiency standards; and expansion of public transit.⁴ As of March 2019, 37 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia have established renewable portfolio standards or goals in support of their climate commitments.⁵ These targets mandate that a certain percentage of utilities' electric sales come from renewable sources. Hawaii, California, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia have each adopted 100 percent clean energy targets. Several others – including Illinois, Florida, Washington, Minnesota, Maine, and New York – are considering legislation to enact equally ambitious goals.

Between 2005 and 2016, Alliance states increased their total economic output faster than non-participating states. Also, these states have attracted more than \$110 billion in clean energy investment, realized \$16.7 billion in public health benefits, and protected natural and working lands that now generate \$6.7 billion annually.⁶ By late 2018, the 17 member states of the Alliance had already reduced climate pollution 14 percent below 2005 levels (compared to 11 percent across their non-Alliance counterparts). Their collective commitments are expected to reduce emissions 18 to 25 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.⁷ The recent addition of another six states to the coalition is anticipated to result in greater pollution reductions.

III. LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

Mayors, city councils, city planners, and other local decisionmakers are on the frontlines of addressing climate change. More than 540 cities, counties, and tribes representing nearly one-third of the United States population have made ambitious climate commitments.⁸ These actions

³ United States Climate Alliance, Alliance Principles (www.usclimatealliance.org/alliance-principles) (accessed Mar. 25, 2019).

⁴ United States Climate Alliance, About the Initiatives (www.usclimatealliance.org/about-initiatives) (accessed Mar. 25, 2019).

⁵ DSIRE, *Renewable Portfolio Standard Policies* (Oct. 2018) (www.ncsolarcen-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Renewable-Portfolio-Standards-2018.pdf).

⁶ United States Climate Alliance, *Fighting for our Future: Growing our economies and protecting our communities through climate leadership* (Sept. 2018).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ America's Pledge, *Fulfilling America's Pledge: How States, Cities and Businesses are Leading the United States to a Low-Carbon Future* (Sept. 28, 2018). Data-Driven Yale, NewClimate Institute, and PBL Environmental Assessment Agency, *Global Climate Action from*

include reducing emissions from municipal facilities, fleets, and operations; amending zoning and building codes to promote sustainability and efficiency; expanding the use of renewable energy; and modernizing local transportation systems. In addition, local governments are making investments to adapt to climate-related hazards to improve the safety and resiliency of their communities.

As of March 2019, mayors from 212 cities had pledged to support clean energy in their respective jurisdictions.⁹ That list includes 113 cities and 11 counties that have formally committed to transition towards 100 percent clean energy.¹⁰ Many of these cities are working with the private sector to implement their shared climate and clean energy commitments, forming public-private partnerships to deploy low-carbon technologies and improve local resiliency.¹¹

Cities, Regions, and Businesses: Individual Actors, Collective Initiatives and Their Impact on Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Aug. 2018).

⁹ Sierra Club, *Mayors for 100% Clean Energy* (www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100/mayors-for-clean-energy) (accessed Mar. 25, 2019).

¹⁰ Sierra Club, *100% Commitments in Cities, Counties, & States* (www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100/commitments) (accessed Mar. 25, 2019).

¹¹ Alliance for a Sustainable Future, *American Mayors and Businesses: Building Partnerships for a Low-Carbon Future Volume II* (Jan. 2019).

IV. WITNESSES

The following witnesses have been invited to testify:

Panel 1

The Honorable Jay Inslee

Governor

State of Washington

Panel 2

The Honorable Steve Benjamin

Mayor

The City of Columbia, South Carolina

The Honorable Jackie Biskupski

Mayor

The City of Salt Lake City, Utah

The Honorable James Brainard

Mayor

The City of Carmel, Indiana

The Honorable Daniel C. Camp III

Chairman

Beaver County Board of Commissioners

Beaver County, Pennsylvania

The Honorable Jerry F. Morales

Mayor

The City of Midland, Texas