

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

July 30, 2019

The Honorable Robert R. Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta GA, 30329-4027

Dear Dr. Redfield:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee is examining the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Climate and Health Program. I am concerned by a report that CDC is reorganizing its environmental health division in ways that could diminish the effectiveness of critical programs, including the Climate and Health Program.¹ The report comes amid numerous attempts by the Trump Administration to suppress climate science and efforts to combat climate change.

As you know, the mission of CDC is to protect our nation from health, safety, and security threats. Since 2009, CDC's Climate and Health Program has worked to prevent and adapt to the possible health effects of climate change.² The program's website highlights how this office is "the national leader" on this issue and that variable weather like heat waves, heavy precipitation events, and air pollution "could negatively affect public health."³

However, a press article reports that CDC "has quietly folded its Climate and Health Program into a branch that studies asthma and expunged the word climate from the

¹ *Climate Team, and Its Boss, Just Got Harder to Find at Top Health Agency*, New York Times (Dec. 20, 2018).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *CDC's Climate and Health Program* (www.cdc.gov/nceh/information/program_factsheets/Climate_and_Health_Program_Overview.pdf) (accessed May 21, 2019).

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Climate and Health* (www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth) (accessed May 21, 2019).

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name of the newly consolidated office,” and reassigned the former long-time head of the Climate and Health Program.⁴

I am concerned that these reported actions could undermine this program’s important mission to counter the public health effects of climate change. Just six months ago, the United States Global Change Research Program released the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA). The assessment was produced by a team of over 300 experts from federal, state, local, tribal, and indigenous backgrounds, with both the public and private sectors, and peer-reviewed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Among the findings, the NCA states that, “[a]daptation and mitigation policies and programs that help individuals, communities, and states prepare for the risks of a changing climate reduce the number of injuries, illnesses, and deaths from climate-related health outcomes.”⁵

Congress provides funding to CDC for its climate and health efforts, which have successfully provided communities, cities, and states with tools to deal with challenges associated with climate change. The continued advancement and support of these programs and their vital missions are a priority of this Committee. Therefore, I request that CDC provide Committee staff with a briefing on these matters by August 12, 2019.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Joe Bañez or Kevin McAloon of the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." in a cursive style.

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ United States Global Change Research Program, *Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II*, (nca2018.globalchange.gov) (accessed May 21, 2019).