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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Democratic Field Forum
“Climate Change at the Water’s Edge.”**

Let me begin by welcoming everyone to this field forum on Climate Change at The Water’s Edge.”

I also want to thank all of our witnesses for their participation—including Mayor Pantelides, Vice Admiral Carter, Mr. Will Baker and Dr. Brenda Ekwurzel.

Yesterday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its report on the “State of the Climate in 2014.” This authoritative report was based on contributions from 413 scientists from 58 countries, using data from around the globe.

The NOAA report confirmed what we already know. Man-made climate change is real, it is happening now and the evidence for it is indisputable.

According to NOAA, “four independent data sets confirmed that 2014 was the warmest year on record” and that “the warmth was widespread across land areas.”

Furthermore, 17 of the 18 warmest years on record have occurred in the last 18 years.

The NOAA report also noted that “sea surface temperatures were a record high” and that “global upper ocean heat content was a record high.”

Global sea level was also at a record high, the “arctic continued to warm” and there was “an above average number tropical cyclones.”

The scientific consensus is clear: record setting climate change continues unabated. Record surface temperatures, record ocean temperatures, record sea level rise—all happened in 2014. This is no coincidence and it is the direct result of our continued emissions of greenhouse gases.

Looking at the United States, the NOAA reported noted that in the United States, almost 40% of the population lives in relatively high population-density coastal areas, where sea level plays a role in flooding, shoreline erosion, and hazards from storms.

In my home state of New Jersey, Hurricane Sandy hit with devastating intensity causing extensive damage and loss of life.

Here in historic Annapolis, tidal flooding is increasing at an exponential rate and Annapolis is preparing for the next extreme storm like Sandy.

And Vice Admiral Carter can tell us about the extensive efforts the United States Naval Academy is undertaking to deal with extreme weather and flooding at its facility.

There are many who argue that the climate change is not happening or that it is not caused by human activity. They argue in the face of scientific fact and they speak only on behalf of those who want to continue to profit from inaction.

But while some may find it economically advantageous to continue to ignore climate change, in fact the costs of inaction fall upon all of us and they are enormous. They range from flooding and sea level rise, to drought and impacts on food production, to increases in disease and increasing security risks.

And equally importantly, when we ignore climate change we miss valuable opportunities to move forward toward a more economically sustainable future, one in which we are more competitive, more energy independent and more energy secure. We risk losing the lead on new technologies and innovative energy solutions. We risk losing jobs.

We need to heed the advice of the scientists, of our best thinkers, of our Mayors and our military advisors and take action now to combat the ongoing threat of climate change.

I want to thank all the members for their participation and I look forward to the testimony of all the witnesses.

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