

The President's Weekly Address

June 29, 2013

Hi everybody. A few days ago, I unveiled a new national plan to confront the growing threat of a changing climate.

Decades of carefully reviewed science tells us our planet is changing in ways that will have profound impacts on the world we leave our children. Already, we know that the 12 warmest years in recorded history have all come in the last 15 and that last year was the warmest in American history. And while we know no single weather event is caused solely by climate change, we also know that in a world that's getting warmer than it used to be, all weather events are affected by it: more extreme droughts, floods, wildfires, and hurricanes.

Those who already feel the effects of a changing climate don't have time to deny it. They're busy dealing with it. The firefighters who brave longer wildfire seasons. The farmers who see crops wilted one year and washed away the next. Western families worried about water that's drying up.

The costs of these events can be measured in lost lives and livelihoods, lost homes and businesses, and hundreds of billions of dollars in emergency services and disaster relief. And Americans across the country are already paying the price of inaction in higher food costs, insurance premiums, and the tab for rebuilding.

So the question's not whether we need to act. The question is whether we will have the courage to act before it's too late.

The national Climate Action Plan I unveiled will cut carbon pollution, protect our country from the impacts of climate change, and lead the world in a coordinated assault on a changing climate.

To reduce carbon pollution, I've directed the Environmental Protection Agency to work with States and businesses to set new standards that put an end to the limitless dumping of carbon pollution from our power plants. We'll use more clean energy and waste less energy throughout our economy.

To prepare Americans for the impact of climate change we can't stop, we'll work with communities to build smarter, more resilient infrastructure to protect our homes and businesses and withstand more powerful storms.

And America will lead global efforts to combat the threat of a changing climate by encouraging developing nations to transition to cleaner sources of energy and by engaging our international partners in this fight. For while we compete for business, we also share a planet, and we must all shoulder the responsibility for its future together.

This is the fight America can and will lead in the 21st century. But it will require all of us, as citizens, to do our part. We will need scientists to design new fuels and farmers to grow them. We'll need engineers to devise new technologies and businesses to make and sell them. We'll need workers to man assembly lines that hum with high-tech, zero-carbon components and builders to hammer into place the foundations for a new clean energy age. We'll need to give special care to people and communities unsettled by this transition. And those of us in

positions of responsibility will need to be less concerned with the judgment of special interests and well-connected donors and more concerned with the judgment of our children.

If you agree with me, I need you to act. Educate your classmates and colleagues, your family and friends. Speak up in your communities. Remind everyone who represents you, at every level of government, that there is no contradiction between a sound environment and a strong economy, and that sheltering future generations against the ravages of climate change is a prerequisite for your vote.

We will be judged—as a people, as a society, and as a country—on where we go from here. The plan I have put forward to reduce carbon pollution and protect our country from the effects of climate change is the path we need to take. And if we remember what's at stake—the world we leave to our children—I'm convinced that this is a challenge that we will meet.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:20 p.m. on June 25 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on June 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 29.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Subjects: Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction; Energy : Greenhouse gas emissions, regulation; Environment : Climate change; Natural disasters : Preparedness efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD201300475.