

**Remarks on Efforts To Combat Climate Change in Palo Alto, California**  
*June 19, 2023*

Well, thank you, Chien, for that introduction.

Governor Newsom, I tell you what, it's nice to be here, as you said, working on something that's a positive thing going forward and not fixing something that happened very—very badly. We've spent a lot of time in helicopters flying over areas that needed help.

Folks, I want to thank—Anna, thank you, kid. *[Laughter]* You've been incredible. You've been a friend for a long, long time in the Congress, when I was in the Senate. And you've done remarkable work. You've partnered on everything from protecting the environment to providing—improving the lives of the people in this district.

And thanks to all the climate leaders that are here today.

You know, we just visited the salt marsh, as you saw. We walked down to the end of the Safety Bay Project—Safer Bay Project, and—a public-private partnership that's harnessing the nature of our ability to do what this young woman, Chien, did.

You know, one of the—I always say—I never—and I mean it sincerely: I've been around a long time in public life. I got elected when I was about your age, when I was 28 years old. And you know what? I've never been more optimistic. I've—you and I were talking about the privately. I swear to God, I've never been more optimistic in my life.

And the reason I'm optimistic is because of this generation. It's the best educated, the most engaged, the most involved, and the most consequential. They're in—they're in. The Governor was telling me about when they announced the program, there was 3,000 slots, and about 10,000 people immediately signed on or tried to sign on.

Well, look, these wetlands act as a critical buffer between the rising tides and the communities at risk, protecting homes, property, and infrastructure against flooding. They also absorb carbon dioxide from the air. And we're right next to Route 101, and—where cars and trucks emit a lot of carbon pollution.

What we're seeing here is an amazing success story of how you can work together to make our communities more climate-resilient. It matters. It matters. Resiliency matters.

You know, I've toured many sites across the country that clearly show climate change is a genuine—is the existential threat to humanity. The existential threat to humanity.

Here in California, the Governor—you and I stood together with first responders near Monterey Bay after touring the damage that was done. The devastating storms caused historic flooding that killed 21 people. That comes on the heels of the worst droughts in California in more than a millennia and the highest sea-level rise in more than a century.

I've seen wildfire devastation across the West, burning more acres to the ground than there are square miles in the State of Maryland. That's how much got burned to the ground and all the—just flying over, just devastating.

There's been historic tornadoes and flooding in the Midwest and the Southeast.

And just last week, across the East Coast and Midwest, we saw what you've already seen here in California: millions of Americans sheltering indoors, the air not safe to breathe, orange haze covering the sky. It's incredible.

By the way, to address those wildfire smoke that's coming from Canada, we're sharing cutting-edge technology that's already used here in California to help detect early fires and help them in sending, in addition to that, firefighters and tankers as well.

Folks, the impacts we're seeing in climate change are only going to get more frequent and more ferocious and more costly. Last year alone—last year alone, natural disasters in America caused \$165 billion in damage, just last year alone—\$165 billion in damage. But the worsening impacts are not inevitable.

Building on our incredible effort locally, my administration is doing all we can to help recover and build so we can be prepared to—and adapt. You know, it's all part of my "Invest in America" agenda the Governor was referencing. It starts with the most significant climate investment law ever anywhere in the history of the world. Over billions and billions—\$368 billion—369, to be precise—in clean energy development, environmental justice, conservation, and so much more.

We will cut 1 billion tons of carbon emission a year, create millions of good-paying jobs. And it's already attracting billions of dollars in the private sector, because businesses are realizing it's overwhelmingly in their interest. As a matter of fact, a couple of businesses are suing banks because they want to consider whether or not they're environmentally—anyway. I won't get into all that. I'll get—[laughter].

But I want to emphasize again: We're taking the most aggressive climate action ever. It's focused on mitigation—which means historic investments in developing clean energy by reducing dependence on fossil fuel—and resilience, which means communities—communities—can better withstand the impacts of climate change and extreme weather.

With a combination of the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act, we've invested more than \$50 billion so far in climate resilience; nearly \$9 billion to make transportation infrastructure more resilient by elevating roads and bridges above projected flood zones; \$13 billion to decrease the wildfire risk and improve forest health and paying for firefighters who risk their lives every day.

Drought mitigation: \$15.4 billion to bolster the West's resilience to drought. These investments are being made in the context of a megadrought affecting the Colorado River Basin.

Forty million—40 million—Americans already drinking water that thousands of farmers rely on for—for integration [irrigation; White House correction]. And 40 million count on that river, and so do the farmers.

Six-point-six billion dollars in coastal resilience restoration of reefs and construction of other infrastructure to mitigate storm damage, plus more than \$17 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law to bolster resilience for coastal water and waterways infrastructure, including funding to address food, floods, storms, hurricane risks, and restore coastal ecosystems.

Climate-smart agriculture: nearly \$20 billion in funding for precision—irrigation and planting cover crops, plus a \$1 billion America the Beautiful Challenge to accelerate locally led conservation efforts.

Folks, flood mitigation: \$3.5 million [billion; White House correction] to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings, plus \$1 billion in funding mitigation measures to increase community resilience, like supporting adaptations of hazard-resistant building codes.

And maybe most important, I've committed that by 2020 [2030; White House correction], we will have conserved 30 percent of all the lands and waters the United States has jurisdiction over and simultaneously reduce emissions to blunt climate impacts.

And we're on our way. Conservation of land and water—we put more in conservation of land and water than any President in the history of the United States since—but John Kennedy.

And we're leading the way in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto and to Belle Haven. For instance, a local nonprofit called Climate Resilient Communities gives communities—[applause]. Thank you. Are you all part of that? Thank you. It gives members a voice in planning and adaptation.

I'm here today to announce that we're putting our critical climate investment to work.

Folks, first, starting tomorrow, the Department of Commerce will launch the first and largest competitive Climate Resilience Regional Challenge to provide \$600 million to coastal and Great Lake communities that are building projects to protect against the impacts of climate change from sea-level rise, flooding, and storm surge.

We're investing in the people and places that have been hit the hardest, but who are also on the frontlines of leading us forward.

Folks, the second thing we're doing: The Department of Energy is going to announce that it's investing more than \$2 billion to modernize our electric grid to be more climate resilient, including more than \$67 million starting off in California.

That funding can help ensure our electric grid is stronger, that the lights and air conditioning and internet stay on during heat waves and storms and other climate events, so the lights can stay on in hospital operating rooms, nursing homes, and so many other critical care facilities.

And third, later this year, we're hosting the first-ever White House summit that convenes local, State, Tribal, and Territorial leaders focused on climate resilience.

It's going to include a roadmap for how these historic climate actions are going to build more climate-resilient communities all across America, saving lives and homes and providing peace of mind.

This is how we're going to meet the moment. This is how we're going to—unfortunately, some of our MAGA Republican friends in Congress are continuing to try to undo all the progress we've already made in the first 2½ years.

They were holding the country hostage over the debt limit unless I would gut the climate provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act. I was determined not to let that happen. With your significant help—and I mean that sincerely—all of you here, particularly Anna in the House and the Congress, we didn't let it happen.

And in the end, we didn't just protect some of the climate money and clean energy provisions. We protected every single, solitary one.

But this ain't your father's Republican Party. [Laughter] They're back at it again with another bill to repeal the same provisions. But with your help, we're going to stop them again.

Let me close with this. Throughout our history, we're the only nation in the world that has come out of every crisis we've entered stronger than we went into it.

We're doing it again here on the climate crisis.

When I think of climate, I think of jobs. When I think of climate, I think of innovation. When I think of jobs—climate, I think of turning peril into progress.

That's why I'm so optimistic about the future. I really am.

We just have to remember who in hell we are. We're the United States of America, for God's sake. There is nothing—nothing, nothing—beyond our capacity if we work together.

And that's what all of you are doing here—have been doing and we're going to continue to do. And God bless you all, and may God protect our troops.

Let's go get 'em. Let's get this done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center. In his remarks, he referred to Chiena Ty, fellow, California Climate Action Corps; and Rep. Anna G. Eshoo.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Climate change, efforts to combat in Palo Alto, CA.

*Locations:* Palo Alto, CA.

*Names:* Eshoo, Anna G.; Newsom, Gavin C.; Ty, Chiena.

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