

Remarks on Efforts To Address Climate Change and an Exchange With Reporters
November 14, 2023

The President. Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

Well, I told Ritika: When she's President, don't forget me. [*Laughter*]

Ritika, thank you for that introduction and your beautiful artwork. You all see the artwork? Can you see it up here? It's on the right side; I don't know whether you can see it.

And thank you to all of you—from the climate scientists and experts who are here today and all across the country who have contributed to this critical endeavor.

I'm—particularly want to thank Allison Crimmins—you know, who put together the team to write this report and—we're releasing today. It was an easy thing to do. Not much to it. [*Laughter*] Only about 700 people you had to get in line. [*Laughter*]

Well, more than 30 years ago, Congress passed a law that called for a detailed scientific report on the impacts of global changes in the environment. Since then, these assessments delivered to the Congress and the President have been the go-to resource in America for information on climate change and for developing climate solutions.

Today I'm proud to announce that my administration just released the Fifth Climate Assessment in our Nation's history. It didn't just come from—out of thin air. Written over 4 years, 750 authors and experts, thousands—thousands—of American contributors from every single State in the Nation as well as several Territories and Tribes.

It's the most comprehensive assessment on state climate change [the state of climate change; White House correction] in the history of America. And it matters. This assessment shows us in clear scientific terms that climate change is impacting all regions, all sectors of the United States; not just some, all. It shows that communities across America are taking more action than ever to reduce climate risks. It warns that more action is still badly needed.

We can't be complacent. Let me say that again: We can't be complacent. We have to keep going. Above all, it shows us that climate action offers an opportunity for the Nation to come together and do some really big things.

You know, I've seen firsthand what the report's made clear: the devastating toll of climate change and its existential threat to all of us. And it is the ultimate threat to humanity: climate change.

I've walked the streets of Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Florida, Puerto Rico, where historic hurricanes and floods wiped out homes, hospitals, houses of worship—just wiped them right off the map.

I've met with families in Texas, Kentucky, Mississippi, where catastrophic winter storms and tornadoes devoured everything in their path: schools, businesses, police stations, a fire house.

I've seen firefighters in Idaho, Maui, and New Mexico, California, Colorado, where wildfires destroyed whole neighborhoods and sacred Tribal sites, spreading smoky haze thousands of miles and forcing millions of Americans to shelter indoors—and unsafe air to breathe.

Look—and by the way—and I've flown over them, all these areas in helicopters. They tell me that more of our forest land has—forest has burned to the ground than make up the entire

State of New Jersey. The entire State. Some say Maryland, New Jersey, but the—[inaudible]—is, it's—that's just gigantic and has incredible impacts.

Record temperatures in Texas, Arizona, and elsewhere are affecting lives and livelihoods of more than 100 million Americans. And this summer and this fall have been the Earth's hottest since the global records began to be kept in the 1800s. Think about that: the hottest we've ever recorded in history. It's an impact—an impact that decades are making because inaction, for this—there was inaction for much too long.

Look—but we're acting now, and we have been acting. We've come to the point where it's foolish for anyone to deny the impacts of climate change anymore.

But it's simply a simple fact that there are a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—MAGA Republican leaders—who still deny climate change, still deny that it's a problem.

My predecessors—much of the MAGA Republican Party, in fact, are—feel very strongly about that. Anyone who willfully denies the impact of climate change is condemning the American people to a very dangerous future. The impacts we're seeing are only going to get worse, more frequent, more ferocious, and more costly.

Last year alone, natural disasters in America caused \$178 billion—\$178 billion—in damages. They hit everyone, no matter where—what their circumstances, but they hit the most vulnerable the hardest: seniors; people with disabilities; people experiencing homelessness who have nowhere to turn; Black, Brown, and Tribal communities; Territories that are most exposed and—have the least resource—fewest resources.

But, folks, none of this is inevitable. None of it's inevitable.

From day one, my administration has taken unprecedented climate action. We're working with everyone from mayors to county officials to entrepreneurs to academics; business leaders, labor leaders, Tribal leaders. We're focused in all parts of America: cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural communities, and Tribal Nations.

And here's how. We're using a law I got passed when I first came to office called the American Rescue Plan to help States and cities become more resilient to climate change, promoting energy efficiency by weatherizing homes, reducing flooding by building infrastructure to handle storm surges, opening cooling centers impacted—and centers where there's particular great heat impact and people need a shelter.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of the bipartisan infrastructure law, which I signed 2 years ago and the most significant investment in our Nation's infrastructure in American history: roads, bridges, ports, airports, high-speed internet. It delivers clean water to your community, lowers your energy bills, upgrades your electric grid so you don't have to power them—so you don't have to lose power, I should say, when storms and heat waves hit.

The CHIPS and Science Act I signed last year——

[*At this point, the President coughed.*]

Excuse me—I signed last year—excuse me——

[*The President coughed.*]

——I signed last year positions us to lead the—in semiconductor manufacturing and innovation, which is critical to clean energy development and deployment.

Semiconductors are those small, little computer chips you all know, the size of the tip of your little finger, that power everything in our lives, from smartphones to appliances. We

invented those chips. We invented them. And we're—other countries started making them, and we weren't. Not anymore. We're making these chips here in America.

And my Inflation Reduction Act is the most significant climate investment ever anywhere in the world. Among many things it does, it offers tax credits to make your home more energy efficient; upgrading windows and doors to keep drafts out and heat in; tax credits to installing electric heat pumps and solar panels on your roof, saving hundreds of dollars in your family bills; tax credits to buy electric vehicles as we build the electric vehicle future here in America.

We're transforming clean energy development that's threatening [creating; White House correction] good-paying jobs, including union jobs, in all of America.

We're already attracted over half a—we've attracted a half a trillion dollars—a half a trillion dollars—in private-sector investment for my "Investing in America" agenda in clean energy and advanced manufacturing. We're just getting—and we're just getting started. I mean, we really are: We're just getting started.

All told, my "Investing in America" agenda and those bold climate laws are the most ambitious in American history.

Today's release, the Fifth National Climate Assessment, is a critical part of that effort. It lays out the threats and dangers, but most experts would acknowledge it also shows solutions are within reach. Solutions are within reach.

It takes time for the investments we're making to be fully materialized. But we just have to keep at it. We need to do more and move faster, and we have the tools to do it.

And, for the first time ever, we're also releasing the report with new on—with a new online tool, that I just was shown a moment ago in the other room, so everyone can explore exactly what's happening in their State, their city, and their county by going online to whitehouse.gov/nca—whitehouse.gov/nca.

That's a—very different from the previous administration that tried to bury this report. They didn't even want to make sure this report even came to light. We're shining it on—we're—and we're sharing this report in detail with the American people so they know exactly what they're facing and what we're going to have to do.

But that's not all. Along with this assessment, I'm announcing \$6 billion in new investments from the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law to make communities across the country more resilient to climate change. This funding will be administered by the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Interior, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

And it's going to be focused on key climate goals, including modernizing our aging electric grid to withstand extreme weather, which is causing fire—the—these forest fires. When those towers come down and the lines snap, they catch fire. The forests catch fire. It costs a lot more money to bury those underground and do other things, but we have to do it. And it's causing significant outages as well.

Reducing flood risks to communities. Improving drought resilience. Supporting conservation for our national parks. I've already been able to conserve 21 million acres of our most precious and sacred lands and waters just thus far, just in the first 2½ years. And advancing environmental justice for disadvantaged communities, because they're the ones always left behind.

Let me close with this. Last week, I stopped by the "White House Demo Day" to meet with the scientists and experts overseeing groundbreaking and cutting-edge science and technology that my administration is funding right now, right here in America. It was truly inspirational

hearing from experts all across the Government, the private sector, and academia touching on so many fields.

I saw a prosthetic arm that can sense touch, and it's controlled by one's thoughts. A prosthetic arm. It's just like your hand. You think you want to move your finger—well, it worked out you think—he wants to move his hand, he can do it. It's an incredible breakthrough.

Electric heat pumps to help old homes transition to clean energy homes of the future. Robots for ocean exploration that survey marine life along unmapped seafloors where barely any light penetrates. And so much more.

It was a reminder, at least for me, of what I've long believed—that America can be defined by a single word. I mean this sincerely. The single that—I was asked by Xi Jinping years ago, when we were in the Tibetan Plateau, could I define America. I said, "Yes, one word: possibilities." Possibilities.

In this administration, America will be the place where great science changes what's possible. That's why I've never been more optimistic about America's future.

We just have to remember who we are. We're the United States of America, and there is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity if we work together.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Q. What are the possibilities in San Francisco, Mr. President?

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Sir—[inaudible]—with your meeting with Xi tomorrow, sir? And do you—what—how would you define success with your meeting with President Xi?

The President. To get back on a normal course of corresponding: being able to pick up the phone and talk to one another if there's a crisis, being able to make sure our militaries still have contact with one another.

We can't take—as I told you, we're not trying to decouple from China, but we're—what we're trying to do is change the relationship for the better. From my perspective, if in fact the Chinese people, who are in trouble right now economically—if the average homeowner or—the "homeowner"—if the average citizen in China was able to have a decent-paying job, that benefits them and it benefits all of us. But I'm not going to continue to sustain the support for positions where if you want to invest in China, we have to turn over all our trade secrets.

Thank you.

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once. The President then addressed participants onstage as follows.]

The President. Ready?

Q. Mr. President, what are the possibilities—[inaudible]?

Hostages Held by Hamas in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, can you address the hostages directly and give them a message of hope and resilience in these troubling times?

The President. Yes, I can. I've been talking with the—people involved every single day. I believe it's going to happen, but I don't want to get into any detail.

Q. What's your message for the families?

The President. Hang in there. We're coming.

Q. Will you sign the CR?

Hostages Held by Hamas in Gaza

Q. Mr. President, there is a report out this morning that Israel and Hamas are close to a deal for the release of 70 of the hostages. Is there anything you can add to that?

The President. No.

Thank you.

Q. Will you sign the CR?

Q. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ritika Shah, ninth grader, Lake Norman Charter High School in Huntersville, NC, in her capacity as the eight-grade winner of the National Climate Assessment Art x Climate "youth call" art competition; and National Climate Assessment Director Allison Crimmins.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Climate change, efforts to address; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Crimmins, Allison; Shah, Ritika.

Subjects: Broadband and wireless technologies; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; China, relations with U.S.; Climate change; Climate resilience, improvement efforts; Energy efficiency and weatherization, homes and buildings; Energy grid infrastructure, improvement efforts; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Infrastructure improvements; National Climate Assessment; Natural disasters, climate change impacts; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Research and development; Semiconductor manufacturing; Wildfires, damage and recovery efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD202301010.