

Ad-Hoc Group of Physician Leaders for
Climate Change Action
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Dear Speaker Pelosi:

With the recent election of a Democratic majority in the House and your resumption of Leadership as the Speaker, it is time to bring the challenges of climate change that are facing our country to the fore of the legislative agenda. We applaud your prior leadership as keynote speaker at the Global Climate and Health Forum at the Climate Summit where the Call to Action* was made public.

We are a group of medical leaders in San Francisco Bay Area. As physicians we are concerned about the urgent and extreme threats to public health posed by climate change. **We are writing to request a meeting with you and a small group of San Francisco physicians/constituents to review the present and future health impacts of climate change and to discuss policies that Congress might develop to address these threats.**

Policies aimed at reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, the primary driver of climate change, are essential and must be instituted without delay. The daily advisories we received in recent weeks concerning dangerous levels of air pollution in Northern California and the Bay Area as a result of the mega-fire in Butte County – a social and environmental catastrophe that was unquestionably fueled by our changing climate - offered a stark warning: the health consequences that had been predicted for the future are already here in our own community and across America.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change adjusted their prior assessment in the face of new data indicating the time frame for action is much shorter than previously anticipated. They sounded the alarm that major changes are needed **within 12 to 20 years** to avert catastrophic and irreversible consequences. The Fourth National Climate Assessment (Nov. 2018) corroborated this urgency for action by predicting that “**decisions made today determine risk exposure** for current and future generations and will either broaden or limit options to reduce the negative consequences of climate change” (emphasis added; <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov>). The Lancet Countdown 2018, which focuses on health impacts in the United States presents the same conclusions: “Taken as a whole, the form and pace of the world’s response to

climate change will shape the health of nations for centuries to come.”

<http://www.lancetcountdown.org/the-report/>

One critical concern is the need to protect and secure our health infrastructure. For example, there are currently over 400 hospitals, as well as thousands of community health centers, nursing homes, outpatient emergency centers, and physicians' offices, situated on flood and fire plains around the country.

The peril we face could not be stated more emphatically than it has by these panels of experts. Unquestionably, the impact of climate change is the most important issue of our time and one that Congress and all of our leaders need to address without further delay. We must reverse the years of silence and inaction at the Congressional level. There is no more time to waste.

Thank you in advance for your attention to our concerns. Please contact Robin Cooper, MD to make arrangements for a meeting with select members of our group.

Call to Action:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad4c58be2ccd1dbbc7a094b/t/5b9826f8575d1f453678a44f/1536698104984/call-to-action.pdf>