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Blumenauer, Ocasio-Cortez, and Sanders Introduce Legislation to Mandate National Climate Emergency Declaration

National Climate Emergency Act directs the president to declare a climate emergency, take active steps to mitigate crisis, report progress to Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced legislation mandating the declaration of a national climate emergency. The National Climate Emergency Act directs the president of the United States to declare a national climate emergency and mobilize every resource at the country's disposal to halt, reverse, mitigate, and prepare for the consequences of this climate crisis.

“Scientists and experts are clear, this is a climate emergency and we need to take action,” **Blumenauer said**. “Last Congress, I worked with Oregon environmental activists to draft a climate emergency resolution that captured the urgency of this moment. President Biden has done an outstanding job of prioritizing climate in the first days of his administration, but after years of practiced ignorance from Trump and Congressional republicans, an even larger mobilization is needed. I am glad to work with Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Sanders again on this effort, which takes our original resolution even further. It’s past time that a climate emergency is declared, and this bill can finally get it done.”

“We’ve made a lot of progress since we introduced this resolution two years ago, but now we have to meet the moment. We are out of time and excuses. Our country is in crisis and, to address it, we will have to mobilize our social and economic resources on a massive scale,” **Ocasio-Cortez said**. “If we want to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past - if we want to ensure that our nation has an equitable economic

recovery and prevent yet another life-altering crisis - then we have to start by calling this moment what it is, a national emergency."

"As we face the global crisis of climate change, in addition to other crises we face, it is imperative that the United States lead the world in transforming our energy system away from fossil fuel to energy efficiency and sustainable energy," **Sanders said**. "What we need now is Congressional leadership to stand up to the fossil fuel industry and tell them that their short-term profits are not more important than the future of the planet. Climate change is a national emergency, and I am proud to be introducing this legislation with my House and Senate colleagues."

Today's announcement marks the next step in Blumenauer, Ocasio-Cortez, and Sanders' multi-year effort to declare a climate emergency in the United States. Last Congress, the lawmakers introduced H. Con. Res. 52, a climate emergency resolution demanding a national mobilization, with support from more than 100 members of the House of Representatives and nine United States Senators.

The National Climate Emergency Act builds on that resolution – which was based on input from Oregon environmental activists – by mandating a presidential declaration of a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act of 1976. The legislation also outlines steps that the president can take to address the climate emergency while centering environmental justice.

To ensure accountability to Congress and the American people, the National Climate Emergency Act requires that the president deliver a report within one year of the bill's enactment (and then every year thereafter until the emergency sunsets) that details the specific actions taken by the executive branch to combat the climate emergency and restore the climate for future generations.

As detailed in the legislation, this should include, but is not limited to, investments in large scale mitigation and resiliency projects, upgrades to public infrastructure, modernization of millions of buildings to cut pollution, investments in public health, protections for public lands, regenerative agriculture investments that support local and regional food systems, and more.

According to the 2018 National Climate Assessment, climate change due to global warming has caused – and is expected to continue to cause – substantial interference with, and growing losses to, human health and safety, infrastructure, property, industry, recreation, natural resources, agricultural systems, and quality of life in the United States. Climate-related natural disasters have increased exponentially over the past decade, costing the United States more than double the long-term average during the period of 2014 through 2018, with total costs of natural disasters during that period of approximately \$100,000,000,000 per year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are also wide-ranging, acute, and fatal public health consequences from climate change that impact

communities across the United States. Notably, the consequences of climate change already disproportionately impact frontline communities and endanger populations made especially vulnerable by existing exposure to extreme weather events, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing disabilities and health conditions.

If the National Climate Emergency Act is signed into law, the United States would join over 1,000 cities and 38 individual countries that have recognized the climate emergency.

Full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

The legislation introduced today by Blumenauer, Ocasio-Cortez, and Sanders is supported by dozens of environmental groups including 350.org, Center for Biological Diversity, The Climate Mobilization, Food & Water Watch, Labor Network for Sustainability, Progressive Democrats of America, Public Citizen, Sunrise Movement, Justice Democrats, Greenpeace, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Align NY, Friends of Earth, and Climate Justice Alliance.

“We are at a life changing, civilization altering moment in our history, as we face a climate crisis that demands a thunderous voice and a full mobilization of every sector to match its scale and its urgency – all while serving as a great opportunity to build a more just and prosperous country,” said Varshini Prakash, Executive Director of the **Sunrise Movement**. “This bill is a good sign that our leaders are finally understanding what young people and climate activists have been shouting from the rooftops for years – that the fires that burned our homes to rubble, the floods that took our family and friends with them, are a climate emergency, and bold action must be done now to save our humanity and our future.”

“This bill heeds the sirens calling for urgent climate action and crystallizes the voices of nearly 750 climate, justice, and faith organizations nationwide that have urged President Biden for a climate emergency declaration,” said Jean Su, Energy Justice Director and attorney at the **Center for Biological Diversity**. “By declaring a climate emergency, President Biden will be able to redirect military funds to build clean energy systems, marshal private industry for clean technology manufacturing, generate millions of high-quality jobs and finally put an end to dangerous crude oil exports. It’s vital for Congress to pass this bill and for President Biden to use the emergency powers vested in him to realize a livable and just planet.”

For additional comments from lawmakers and environmental groups, please click [here](#).