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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the President to declare a national climate emergency under the National Emergencies Act, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BLUMENAUER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the President to declare a national climate emergency under the National Emergencies Act, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Climate
5 Emergency Act of 2021” or the “Climate Emergency Act
6 of 2021”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The years 2010 to 2019 were the hottest
2 decade on record.

3 (2) Global atmospheric concentrations of the
4 primary global warming pollutant, carbon dioxide—

5 (A) have increased by 40 percent since
6 preindustrial times, from 280 parts per million
7 to 415 parts per million, primarily due to
8 human activities, including the burning of fossil
9 fuels and deforestation;

10 (B) are rising at a rate of 2 to 3 parts per
11 million annually; and

12 (C) must be reduced to not more than 350
13 parts per million, and likely lower, “if humanity
14 wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on
15 which civilization developed and to which life on
16 Earth is adapted,” according to former Na-
17 tional Aeronautics and Space Administration
18 climatologist Dr. James Hansen.

19 (3) Global atmospheric concentrations of other
20 global warming pollutants, including methane, ni-
21 trous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons, have also in-
22 creased substantially since preindustrial times, pri-
23 marily due to human activities, including the burn-
24 ing of fossil fuels.

1 (4) Climate science and observations of climate
2 change impacts, including ocean warming, ocean
3 acidification, floods, droughts, wildfires, and extreme
4 weather, demonstrate that a global rise in tempera-
5 ture of 1.5 degree Celsius above preindustrial levels
6 is already having dangerous impacts on human pop-
7 ulations and the environment.

8 (5) According to the 2018 National Climate As-
9 sessment, climate change due to global warming has
10 caused, and is expected to continue to cause, sub-
11 stantial interference with and growing losses to
12 human health and safety, infrastructure, property,
13 industry, recreation, natural resources, agricultural
14 systems, and quality of life in the United States.

15 (6) According to the National Oceanic and At-
16 mospheric Administration, climate change is already
17 increasing the frequency of extreme weather and
18 other climate-related disasters, including drought,
19 wildfire, and storms that include precipitation.

20 (7) Climate-related natural disasters have in-
21 creased exponentially over the past decade, costing
22 the United States more than double the long-term
23 average during the period of 2014 through 2018,
24 with total costs of natural disasters during that pe-
25 riod of approximately \$100,000,000,000 per year.

1 (8) According to the Centers for Disease Con-
2 trol and Prevention, there are wide-ranging, acute,
3 and fatal public health consequences from climate
4 change that impact communities across the United
5 States.

6 (9) According to the National Climate and
7 Health Assessment of the United States Global
8 Change Research Program, climate change is a sig-
9 nificant threat to the health of the people of the
10 United States, leading to increased—

11 (A) temperature-related deaths and ill-
12 nesses;

13 (B) air quality impacts;

14 (C) extreme weather events;

15 (D) numbers of vector-borne diseases;

16 (E) waterborne illnesses;

17 (F) food safety, nutrition, and distribution
18 complications; and

19 (G) mental health and well-being concerns.

20 (10) The consequences of climate change al-
21 ready disproportionately impact frontline commu-
22 nities and endanger populations made especially vul-
23 nerable by existing exposure to extreme weather
24 events, such as children, the elderly, and individuals
25 with pre-existing disabilities and health conditions.

1 (11) Individuals and families on the frontlines
2 of climate change across the United States, includ-
3 ing territories, living with income inequality and pov-
4 erty, institutional racism, inequity on the basis of
5 gender and sexual orientation, poor infrastructure,
6 and lack of access to health care, housing, clean
7 water, and food security are often in close proximity
8 to environmental stressors or sources of pollution,
9 particularly communities of color, indigenous com-
10 munities, and low-income communities, which—

11 (A) are often the first exposed to the im-
12 pacts of climate change;

13 (B) experience outsized risk because of the
14 close proximity of the community to environ-
15 mental hazards and stressors, in addition to
16 collocation with waste and other sources of pol-
17 lution; and

18 (C) have the fewest resources to mitigate
19 those impacts or to relocate, which will exacer-
20 bate preexisting challenges.

21 (12) According to Dr. Beverly Wright and Dr.
22 Robert Bullard, “environmental and public health
23 threats from natural and human-made disasters are
24 not randomly distributed, affecting some commu-
25 nities more than others,” and therefore a response

1 to the climate emergency necessitates the adoption
2 of policies and processes rooted in principles of ra-
3 cial equity, self-determination, and democracy, as
4 well as the fundamental human rights of all people
5 to clean air and water, healthy food, adequate land,
6 education, and shelter, as promulgated in the 1991
7 Principles of Environmental Justice.

8 (13) Climate change holds grave and immediate
9 consequences not just for the population of the
10 United States, including territories, but for commu-
11 nities across the world, particularly those commu-
12 nities in the Global South on the frontlines of the
13 climate crisis that are at risk of forced displacement.

14 (14) Communities in rural, urban, and subur-
15 ban areas are all dramatically affected by climate
16 change, though the specific economic, health, social,
17 and environmental impacts may be different.

18 (15) The Department of State, the Department
19 of Defense, and the intelligence community have
20 identified climate change as a threat to national se-
21 curity, and the Department of Homeland Security
22 views climate change as a top homeland security
23 risk.

24 (16) Climate change is a threat multiplier with
25 the potential—

1 (A) to exacerbate many of the challenges
2 the United States already confronts, including
3 conflicts over scarce resources, conditions con-
4 ducive to violent extremism, and the spread of
5 infectious diseases; and

6 (B) to produce new, unforeseeable chal-
7 lenges in the future.

8 (17) The United Nations Intergovernmental
9 Panel on Climate Change projected in 2018 that the
10 Earth could warm 1.5 degrees Celsius above
11 preindustrial levels as early as 2030.

12 (18) The climatic changes resulting from global
13 warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius above
14 preindustrial levels, including changes resulting from
15 global warming of more than 2 degrees Celsius
16 above preindustrial levels, are projected to result in
17 irreversible, catastrophic changes to public health,
18 livelihoods, quality of life, food security, water sup-
19 plies, human security, and economic growth.

20 (19) The United Nations Intergovernmental
21 Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Eco-
22 system Services found in 2019 that human-induced
23 climate change is pushing the planet toward the
24 sixth mass species extinction, which threatens the

1 food security, water supply, and well-being of billions
2 of people.

3 (20) According to climate scientists, limiting
4 global warming to not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius
5 above preindustrial levels, and likely lower, is most
6 likely to avoid irreversible and catastrophic climate
7 change.

8 (21) Even with global warming up to 1.5 de-
9 grees Celsius above preindustrial levels, the planet is
10 projected to experience—

11 (A) a significant rise in sea levels;

12 (B) extraordinary loss of biodiversity; and

13 (C) intensifying droughts, floods, wildfires,
14 and other extreme weather events.

15 (22) According to climate scientists, addressing
16 the climate emergency will require an economically-
17 just phase-out of the use of oil, gas, and coal in
18 order to keep the carbon that is the primary con-
19 stituent of fossil fuels in the ground and out of the
20 atmosphere.

21 (23) The United Nations Intergovernmental
22 Panel on Climate Change has determined that lim-
23 iting warming through emissions reduction and car-
24 bon sequestration will require rapid and immediate
25 acceleration and proliferation of “far-reaching,

1 multilevel, and cross-sectoral climate mitigation”
2 and “transitions in energy, land, urban and rural in-
3 frastructure (including transport and buildings), and
4 industrial systems”.

5 (24) In the United States, massive, comprehen-
6 sive, and urgent governmental action is required im-
7 mediately to achieve the transitions of those systems
8 in response to the severe existing and projected eco-
9 nomic, social, public health, and national security
10 threats posed by the climate crisis.

11 (25) The massive scope and scale of action nec-
12 essary to stabilize the climate will require unprece-
13 dented levels of public awareness, engagement, and
14 deliberation to develop and implement effective, just,
15 and equitable policies to address the climate crisis.

16 (26) The Constitution of the United States pro-
17 tects the fundamental rights to life, liberty, property,
18 and equal protection of the laws.

19 (27) A climate system capable of sustaining
20 human life is fundamental to a free and ordered so-
21 ciety, and is preservative of fundamental rights, in-
22 cluding the rights to life, liberty, property, personal
23 security, family autonomy, bodily integrity, and the
24 ability to learn, practice, and transmit cultural and
25 religious traditions.

1 (28) The United States has a proud history of
2 collaborative, constructive, massive-scale Federal
3 mobilizations of resources and labor in order to solve
4 great challenges, such as the Interstate Highway
5 System, the Apollo 11 Moon landing, Reconstruc-
6 tion, the New Deal, and World War II.

7 (29) The United States stands uniquely poised
8 to substantially grow the economy and attain social
9 and health benefits from a massive mobilization of
10 resources and labor that far outweigh the costs cli-
11 mate change will inflict as a result of inaction.

12 (30) Millions of middle class jobs can be created
13 by raising labor standards through project labor
14 agreements and protecting and expanding the right
15 of workers to organize so that workers in the United
16 States and the communities of those workers are
17 guaranteed a strong, viable economic future in a
18 zero-emissions economy that guarantees good jobs at
19 fair union wages with quality benefits.

20 (31) Frontline communities, Tribal govern-
21 ments and communities, people of color, and labor
22 unions must be equitably and actively engaged in the
23 climate mobilization, in such a way that aligns with
24 the 1996 Jemez Principles of Democratic Orga-
25 nizing, and prioritized through local climate mitiga-

1 tion and adaptation planning, policy, and program
2 delivery so that workers in the United States, and
3 the communities of those workers, are guaranteed a
4 strong, viable economic future.

5 (32) A number of local jurisdictions and gov-
6 ernments in the United States, including New York
7 City and Los Angeles, and across the world, includ-
8 ing the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland,
9 Portugal, and Canada, have already declared a cli-
10 mate emergency, and a number of State and local
11 governments are considering declaring a climate
12 emergency.

13 (33) State, local, and Tribal governments must
14 be supported in efforts to hold to account those
15 whose activities have deepened and accelerated the
16 climate crisis and who have benefitted from delayed
17 action to address the climate change emergency and
18 to develop a clean energy economy.

19 (34) A collaborative response to the climate cri-
20 sis will require the Federal Government to work with
21 international, State, and local governments, includ-
22 ing with those governments that have declared a cli-
23 mate emergency, to reverse the impacts of the cli-
24 mate crisis.

1 (35) The United States has an obligation, as a
2 primary driver of accelerated climate change, to mo-
3 bilize at emergency speed to restore a safe climate
4 and environment not just for communities of the
5 United States but for communities across the world,
6 particularly those on the frontlines of the climate
7 crisis which have least contributed to the crisis, and
8 to account for global and community impacts of any
9 actions it takes in response to the climate crisis.

10 **SEC. 3. EMERGENCY DECLARATION.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall declare a na-
12 tional emergency under section 201 of the National Emer-
13 gencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1621) with respect to climate
14 change.

15 (b) RESPONSE.—In responding to the national emer-
16 gency declared pursuant to subsection (a), the President
17 shall ensure that the Federal Government—

18 (1) invests in large scale mitigation and resil-
19 iency projects, including projects that—

20 (A) upgrade the public infrastructure to
21 expand access to clean and affordable energy,
22 transportation, high-speed broadband, and
23 water, particularly for public systems;

1 (B) modernize and retrofit millions of
2 homes, schools, offices, and industrial buildings
3 to cut pollution and costs;

4 (C) invest in public health, in preparation
5 for and in response to increasingly extreme cli-
6 matic events;

7 (D) protect and restore wetlands, forests,
8 public lands, and other natural climate solu-
9 tions;

10 (E) create opportunities for farmers and
11 rural communities, including by bolstering re-
12 generative agriculture, and invest in local and
13 regional food systems that support farmers, ag-
14 ricultural workers, healthy soil, and climate re-
15 siliance;

16 (F) develop and transform the industrial
17 base of the United States, while creating high-
18 skill, high-wage manufacturing jobs across the
19 country, including by expanding manufacturing
20 of clean technologies, reducing industrial pollu-
21 tion, and prioritizing clean, domestic manufac-
22 turing for the aforementioned investments; and

23 (G) establish new employment programs,
24 as necessary, to meet the goals described in
25 subparagraphs (A) through (F);

- 1 (2) makes investments that enable—
- 2 (A) a racially and socially just transition to
- 3 a clean energy economy by ensuring that at
- 4 least 40 percent of investments flow to histori-
- 5 cally disadvantaged communities;
- 6 (B) greenhouse gas emission reductions;
- 7 (C) resilience in the face of climate change
- 8 impacts;
- 9 (D) a racially and socially just transition
- 10 to a clean energy economy;
- 11 (E) small business support, especially for
- 12 women and minority-owned businesses; and
- 13 (F) the expansion of public services;
- 14 (3) avoids solutions that—
- 15 (A) increase inequality;
- 16 (B) exacerbate, or fail to reduce, pollution
- 17 at source;
- 18 (C) violate human rights;
- 19 (D) privatize public lands, water, or na-
- 20 ture;
- 21 (E) expedite the destruction of ecosystems;
- 22 or
- 23 (F) decrease union density or membership;
- 24 (4) creates jobs that conform to labor standards
- 25 that—

1 (A) provide family-sustaining wages and
2 benefits;

3 (B) ensure safe workplaces;

4 (C) protect the rights of workers to orga-
5 nize; and

6 (D) prioritize the hiring of local workers to
7 ensure wages stay within communities and
8 stimulate local economic activity;

9 (5) prioritizes local and equitable hiring and
10 contracting that creates opportunities for—

11 (A) communities of color and indigenous
12 communities;

13 (B) women;

14 (C) veterans;

15 (D) LGBTQIA+ individuals;

16 (E) disabled and chronically ill individuals;

17 (F) formerly incarcerated individuals; and

18 (G) otherwise marginalized communities;

19 (6) combats environmental injustice, including
20 by—

21 (A) curtailing air, water, and land pollu-
22 tion from all sources;

23 (B) removing health hazards from commu-
24 nities;

1 (C) remediating the cumulative health and
2 environmental impacts of toxic pollution and cli-
3 mate change;

4 (D) ensuring that affected communities
5 have equitable access to public health resources
6 that have been systemically denied to commu-
7 nities of color and Indigenous communities; and

8 (E) upholding the fundamental rights of
9 all Americans from the perils of climate change;
10 and

11 (7) reinvests in existing public sector institu-
12 tions and creates new public sector institutions, in-
13 spired by and improving upon New Deal-era institu-
14 tions by addressing historic inequities, to strategi-
15 cally and coherently mobilize and channel invest-
16 ments at the scale and pace required by the national
17 emergency declared pursuant to subsection (a).

18 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
19 of enactment of this Act, and every year thereafter, the
20 President shall submit to Congress a report describing ac-
21 tions taken in response to the national emergency declared
22 pursuant to subsection (a).