



May 1, 2019

The Honorable Kathy Castor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Rep. Castor:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our strong support for the Climate Action Now Act (H.R. 9), which directs the United States to uphold its commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We applaud your leadership in introducing this legislation and urge its quick passage in the U.S. House of Representatives today. ACP is deeply concerned about the negative impact that climate change is having on public health and patients, and that these effects will worsen without immediate action. This is an important issue for the medical community and patients, and we all need to be part of finding a solution.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 154,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

Because physicians are on the front lines of patient care, they are witnessing – here and now -- the harmful health effects that climate change can and does have on the human body. These harmful effects include: higher rates of respiratory and heat-related illness, increased prevalence of vector-borne and waterborne diseases, food and water insecurity, and malnutrition, as outlined in ACP's 2016 position paper, "[Climate Change and Health](#)," published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. People who are elderly, sick, or poor are especially vulnerable to these potential consequences. As climate change worsens, an increase in global temperature and frequency of heat waves will raise the risk of heat exhaustion. Asthma and other chronic lung conditions will be exacerbated by increased particulate matter and ground-level ozone in the atmosphere. Exposure to infectious disease from vectors such as ticks and mosquitoes, which carry the harmful Zika virus, has and will continue to escalate.

Physicians, both individually and collectively, are encouraged to advocate for climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and communicate about the health co-benefits of addressing climate change in objective, simple language to their community and policymakers. For its part, the American College of Physicians is committed to working with lawmakers, its international chapters and with other professional membership and public health organizations within the United States and globally to pursue the policies recommended in its position paper. ACP is a founding member of the [Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health](#), which brings together 22 medical associations representing approximately 550,000 clinical practitioners. Just two days ago on Monday of this week, I

joined my colleagues from the Consortium to educate members of Congress about how climate change affects health and the need to take action now. In addition, ACP was pleased to submit its [perspective and recommendations](#) on climate change to the House Resources Committee earlier this year.

Your legislation represents a vital step in the fight against climate change, and in maintaining this nation's role as a leader in combatting the harmful impact of climate change. H.R. 9 prohibits the use of funds to advance the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and requires the President to develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees and make available to the public a plan for the United States to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement.

A global effort is required to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the health impact of climate change. The United States must commit to taking both a leadership and collaborative role in developing, implementing, and ensuring the success of such a global effort and in reducing its own contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. For this reason, ACP remains strongly opposed to the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. Climate change adaptation strategies must be established, and mitigation measures, like switching to clean, renewable energy and promoting active transportation, must be adopted.

ACP looks forward to continuing to work with you in your leadership role on this critical issue. We stand ready to serve as a resource for you and other lawmakers in helping to communicate the harmful impacts of climate change on the public's health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert M. McLean, MD, FACP
President