

state. In addition to directing administrative support, she was responsible for managing an extensive casework portfolio and overseeing Senatorial United States Service Academy nominations.

In 2003, Ms. Smith would transition to the office of United States Congressman Jeb Hensarling (TX–05), where she would assume the role of Senior Constituent Liaison. As part of her duties, Maggie maintained casework operations and fostered strategic relationships on behalf of the Congressman between federal agencies and community leaders. Maggie also managed a wide variety of programs and events while working alongside colleagues in both the Washington, D.C. and district offices.

Following Congressman Hensarling's retirement in 2018, Maggie served the people of Texas' Third Congressional District as a Senior Constituent Services Coordinator, where she would assist with casework and community outreach across Collin County. During her time working for Congress, Maggie has been recognized as a respected professional, esteemed for her past efforts across the state.

Now upon her retirement and as she begins a new season of life, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Ms. Margaret Smith for her longtime service and to wish her well on her future endeavors.

WORLD SCIENTISTS' WARNING OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Mr. DeFAZIO. Madam Speaker, climate change is an existential threat to all of humanity, and it is essential that we start acting—now—to stop and reverse the destructive effects of climate change.

In 2020, my constituent Oregon State University Professor Dr. William Ripple, and colleagues published "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency" which has been endorsed by more than 11,000 scientists from 153 countries. They presented six transformative steps we can take to effectively combat climate change.

I urge my colleagues to read their report and join me in acting before it is too late.

[From Bioscience, Jan. 2020]

WORLD SCIENTISTS' WARNING OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

(By William J. Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M. Newsome, Phoebe Barnard, William R. Moomaw, and 11,092 scientist signatories from 153 countries)

Scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and "tell it like it is." Based on this obligation and the data presented below, we herein proclaim, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, a clear and unequivocal declaration that a climate emergency exists on planet Earth.

Exactly 40 years ago, scientists from 50 nations met at the First World Climate Conference (Geneva, 1979) and agreed that alarming trends for climate change made it "urgently necessary" to act. Since then, similar alarms have been made through the 1992 Rio Summit, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the 2015 Paris Agreement, as well as scores of other global assemblies and scientists' explicit

warnings of insufficient progress. Yet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are still rising, with increasingly damaging effects on the Earth's climate. An immense change of scale in endeavors to conserve our biosphere is needed to avoid untold suffering due to the climate crisis.

Despite 40 years of global climate negotiations, with few exceptions, we have generally conducted business as usual and have largely failed to address this predicament. The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected. It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity. Especially worrisome are potential climate tipping points and nature's reinforcing feedbacks that could lead to a catastrophic "Hothouse Earth" and cause significant disruptions to ecosystems, society, and economies, potentially making large areas of Earth uninhabitable.

To secure a sustainable future, we must change how we live. Economic and population growth are among the most important drivers of increases in CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion; thus, we need bold and drastic transformations regarding economic and population policies. We suggest six critical and interrelated steps that governments, businesses and the rest of humanity can take to lessen the worst effects of climate change. These are important steps, but are not the only actions needed or possible.

1) Energy. The world must quickly implement massive energy efficiency and conservation practices, replace fossil fuels with low carbon renewables and other cleaner sources of energy. We should leave remaining stocks of fossil fuels in the ground, and carefully pursue effective negative emissions using technology such as carbon extraction from the source and capture from the air, and by enhancing natural systems (Step 3). Wealthier countries need to support poorer nations in transitioning away from fossil fuels. We must swiftly eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel corporations and use effective and fair schemes for steadily escalating carbon prices to restrain the use of fossil fuels.

2) Short-lived pollutants. We need to promptly reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants, including methane, black carbon (soot), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Doing this could slow climate feedbacks and potentially reduce the short-term warming trend by >50% over the next few decades while saving millions of lives and increasing crop yields due to reduced air pollution. The 2016 Kigali amendment to phase down HFCs is welcomed.

3) Nature. We must protect and restore Earth's ecosystems. Phytoplankton, coral reefs, forests, savannas, grasslands, wetlands, peatlands, soils, mangroves, and sea grasses contribute greatly to sequestration of atmospheric CO₂. Marine and terrestrial plants, animals, and microorganisms play significant roles in carbon and nutrient cycling and storage. We need to quickly curtail forest and biodiversity loss, protecting the remaining primary and intact forests, while accomplishing reforestation and afforestation where appropriate at enormous scales. Although available land may be limiting in places, up to a third of emissions reductions needed by 2030 for the Paris agreement (<2°C) could be obtained with these natural climate solutions.

4) Food. Eating mostly plant-based foods while reducing the global consumption of animal products, especially ruminant livestock, can improve human health and significantly lower GHG emissions (including methane in step 2). Moreover, this will free up croplands for growing much needed human plant food instead of livestock feed, while releasing some grazing land to support

natural climate solutions (step 3). Cropping practices such as minimum tillage that increase soil carbon are vitally important. We need to drastically reduce the enormous amount of food waste around the world.

5) Economy. Excessive extraction of materials and overexploitation of ecosystems, driven by economic growth, must be quickly curtailed to maintain long-term sustainability of the biosphere. We need a carbon-free economy that explicitly addresses human dependence on the biosphere and policies that guide economic decisions accordingly. Goals need to shift from GDP growth and the pursuit of affluence toward supporting ecosystem and human wellbeing by prioritizing basic needs and reducing inequality.

6) Population. Still increasing by roughly 80 million people per year or >200,000 per day, we must stabilize and ideally gradually reduce the world population within a framework that ensures social integrity. There are proven and effective policies that strengthen human rights, while lowering fertility rates and lessening the impacts of population growth on GHG emissions and biodiversity loss. These policies involve making family planning services available to all people and achieving full gender equity, including primary and secondary education as a global norm for all, especially girls and young women.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change while honoring the diversity of humans entails major transformations in the ways our global society functions and interacts with natural ecosystems. We are encouraged by a recent surge of concern. Governmental bodies are making climate emergency declarations. Schoolchildren are striking. Ecocide lawsuits are proceeding in the courts. Grassroots citizen movements are demanding change, and many countries, states and provinces, cities, and businesses are responding.

As an Alliance of World Scientists, we stand ready to assist decision makers in a just transition to a sustainable and equitable future. The good news is that such transformative change, with social and economic justice for all, promises far greater human wellbeing in the long run than does business as usual. We believe that prospects will be greatest if decision makers and all of humanity promptly respond to this warning and declaration of a climate emergency, and act to sustain life on planet Earth, our only home.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO LOWER THE LEGAL VOTING AGE TO SIXTEEN

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, throughout our nation's history—from the Vietnam war-era movement that sparked the 26th Amendment to the students of Stoneman Douglas High School demanding action against gun violence—the power of youth activism has undeniably and profoundly impacted cultural and political movements throughout our nation's history. The modern fight against climate change continues to be led by young adults who recognize they will face the consequences of decisions that we make today.

Madam Speaker, it is time to give them a voice in our democracy by permitting them to be heard at the ballot box.