

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, 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 “Climate Change Health
5 Protection and Promotion Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CLI-**
2 **MATE CHANGE.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—The U.S. Global Change Research
4 Program Climate and Health Assessment states that—

5 (1) the impacts of human-induced climate
6 change are increasing nationwide;

7 (2) rising greenhouse gas concentrations result
8 in increases in temperature, changes in precipitation,
9 increases in the frequency and intensity of some ex-
10 treme weather events, and rising sea levels;

11 (3) these climate change impacts endanger our
12 health by affecting our food and water sources, the
13 air we breathe, the weather we experience, and our
14 interactions with the built and natural environments;
15 and

16 (4) as the climate continues to change, the risks
17 to human health continue to grow.

18 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
19 gress that—

20 (1) climate change is real;

21 (2) human activity significantly contributes to
22 climate change;

23 (3) climate change negatively impacts health.

24 (4) the Federal Government, in cooperation
25 with international, State, tribal, and local govern-
26 ments, concerned public, private and Native Amer-

1 ican organizations, and citizens, should use all prac-
2 ticable means and measures—

3 (A) to assist the efforts of public health
4 and health care professionals, first responders,
5 States, tribes, municipalities, and Native Amer-
6 ican and local communities to incorporate meas-
7 ures to prepare public health and health care
8 systems to respond to the impacts of climate
9 change;

10 (B) to ensure—

11 (i) that the Nation’s public health and
12 health care professionals have sufficient in-
13 formation to prepare for and respond to
14 the adverse health impacts of climate
15 change;

16 (ii) the utility and value of scientific
17 research in advancing understanding of—

18 (I) the health impacts of climate
19 change; and

20 (II) strategies to prepare for and
21 respond to the health impacts of cli-
22 mate change;

23 (iii) the identification of communities
24 and populations vulnerable to the health
25 impacts of climate change, including in-

1 fants, children, pregnant women, the elder-
2 ly, individuals with disabilities or pre-exist-
3 ing illnesses, and low-income populations,
4 the development of strategic response plans
5 to be carried out by public health and
6 health care professionals for those commu-
7 nities;

8 (iv) the improvement of health status
9 and health equity through efforts to pre-
10 pare for and respond to climate change;
11 and

12 (v) the inclusion of health impacts in
13 the development of climate change re-
14 sponses;

15 (C) to encourage further research, inter-
16 disciplinary partnership, and collaboration
17 among stakeholders in order to—

18 (i) understand and monitor the health
19 impacts of climate change;

20 (ii) improve public health knowledge
21 and response strategies to climate change;
22 and

23 (iii) identify actions and policies that
24 are beneficial to health and contribute to
25 climate solutions;

1 (D) to enhance preparedness activities, and
2 health care and public health infrastructure, re-
3 lating to climate change and health;

4 (E) to encourage each and every American
5 to learn about the impacts of climate change on
6 health; and

7 (F) to assist the efforts of developing Na-
8 tions to incorporate measures to prepare public
9 health and health care systems to respond to
10 the impacts of climate change.

11 **SEC. 3. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.**

12 Nothing in this Act limits the authority provided to
13 or responsibility conferred on any Federal department or
14 agency by any provision of any law (including regulations)
15 or authorizes any violation of any provision of any law (in-
16 cluding regulations), including any health, energy, envi-
17 ronmental, transportation, or any other law or regulation.

18 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND PRO-**
19 **GRAM.**

20 (a) REQUIREMENT.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
22 Human Services (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
23 retary”), on the basis of the best available science,
24 and in consultation pursuant to paragraph (2), shall
25 publish a strategic action plan and establish a pro-

1 gram to ensure the public health and health care
2 systems are prepared for and can respond to the im-
3 pacts of climate change on health in the United
4 States and other Nations.

5 (2) CONSULTATION.—In developing or making
6 any revision to the national strategic action plan and
7 program, the Secretary shall—

8 (A) consult with the Director of the Cen-
9 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, the
10 Administrator of the Environmental Protection
11 Agency, the Director of the National Institutes
12 of Health, the Undersecretary of Commerce for
13 Oceans & Atmosphere, the Administrator of the
14 National Aeronautics and Space Administra-
15 tion, the Director of the Indian Health Service,
16 the Secretary of Energy, other appropriate Fed-
17 eral agencies, Indian tribes, State and local gov-
18 ernments, public health organizations, and sci-
19 entists, and other interested stakeholders; and

20 (B) provide opportunity for public input
21 and consultation with tribes and Native Amer-
22 ican organizations.

23 (b) ACTIVITIES.—

24 (1) NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN.—Not
25 later than 2 years after the date of enactment of

1 this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Director
2 of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
3 and in collaboration with other Federal agencies as
4 appropriate, shall, on the basis of the best available
5 science, and in consultation with the entities de-
6 scribed in subsection (a)(2), publish a national stra-
7 tegic action plan under paragraph (2) to guide the
8 climate and health program and assist public health
9 and health care professionals in preparing for and
10 responding to the impacts of climate change on pub-
11 lic health in the United States and other nations,
12 particularly developing nations.

13 (2) NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN.—The national
14 strategic plan shall include an assessment of the
15 health system capacity of the United States to ad-
16 dress climate change including—

17 (A) the identification and prioritization of
18 communities and populations vulnerable to the
19 health impacts of climate change;

20 (B) providing outreach and communication
21 aimed at public health and health care profes-
22 sionals and the public to promote preparedness
23 and response strategies;

1 (C) providing for programs across Federal
2 agencies to advance research related to the im-
3 pacts of climate change on health;

4 (D) the identification and assessment of
5 existing preparedness and response strategies
6 for the health impacts of climate change;

7 (E) the prioritization of critical public
8 health and health care infrastructure projects;

9 (F) providing modeling and forecasting
10 tools of climate change health impacts;

11 (G) establishing academic and regional
12 centers of excellence;

13 (H) providing technical assistance and sup-
14 port for preparedness and response plans for
15 the health threats of climate change in States
16 and developing nations; and

17 (I) developing, improving, integrating, and
18 maintaining domestic and international disease
19 surveillance systems and monitoring capacity to
20 respond to health-related impacts of climate
21 change, including on topics addressing—

22 (i) water-, food-, and vector-borne in-
23 fectious diseases and climate change;

24 (ii) pulmonary effects, including re-
25 sponses to aeroallergens;

1 (iii) cardiovascular effects, including
2 impacts of temperature extremes;

3 (iv) air pollution health effects, includ-
4 ing heightened sensitivity to air pollution;

5 (v) harmful algal blooms;

6 (vi) mental and behavioral health im-
7 pacts of climate change;

8 (vii) the health of migrants, refugees,
9 displaced persons, and vulnerable commu-
10 nities;

11 (viii) the implications for communities
12 and populations vulnerable to the health
13 effects of climate change, as well as strate-
14 gies for responding to climate change with-
15 in these communities; and

16 (ix) tribal, local and community-based
17 health interventions for climate-related
18 health impacts; and

19 (x) extreme heat and weather events;

20 (3) CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM.—The
21 Secretary, acting through the Director of the Cen-
22 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, and in col-
23 laboration with other Federal agencies, as appro-
24 priate, shall ensure that the climate and health pro-

1 gram established under this section addresses pri-
2 ority health actions including the following:

3 (A) Serve as a credible source of informa-
4 tion on the physical, mental and behavioral
5 health consequences of climate change for the
6 United States population and globally.

7 (B) Track data on environmental condi-
8 tions, disease risks, and disease occurrence re-
9 lated to climate change.

10 (C) Expand capacity for modeling and
11 forecasting health effects that may be climate-
12 related.

13 (D) Enhance the science base to better un-
14 derstand the relationship between climate
15 change and health outcomes.

16 (E) Identify locations and population
17 groups at greatest risk for specific health
18 threats, such as increased heat stress, degraded
19 air and water quality, food or water-related in-
20 fections, vector-borne illnesses, pulmonary and
21 cardiovascular effects, mental and behavioral
22 health effects and food, water and nutrient in-
23 security.

24 (F) Communicate the health-related as-
25 pects of climate change, including risks and

1 ways to reduce them, to the public, decision
2 makers, public health professionals, and health
3 care providers.

4 (G) Develop partnerships with other gov-
5 ernment agencies, the private sector, non-
6 governmental organizations, universities, and
7 international organizations to more effectively
8 address United States and global health aspects
9 of climate change.

10 (H) Provide leadership to State and local
11 governments, community leaders, health care
12 professionals, nongovernmental organizations,
13 the faith-based communities, the private sector
14 and the public, domestically and internationally,
15 regarding health protection from climate change
16 effects.

17 (I) Develop and implement preparedness
18 and response plans for health threats such as
19 heat waves, severe weather events, and infec-
20 tious diseases.

21 (J) Provide technical advice and support to
22 State and local health departments, the private
23 sector, and others in developing and imple-
24 menting national and global preparedness meas-

1 ures related to the health effects of climate
2 change.

3 (K) Promote workforce development by
4 helping to ensure the training of a new genera-
5 tion of competent, experienced public health
6 and health care professionals to respond to the
7 health threats posed by climate change.

8 (c) PERIODIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISION.—Not
9 later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act,
10 and every 4 years thereafter, the Secretary shall periodi-
11 cally assess, and revise as necessary, the national strategic
12 action plan under subsection (b)(1) and the climate and
13 health program under subsection (b)(2), to reflect new in-
14 formation collected pursuant to the implementation of the
15 national strategic action plan and program and otherwise,
16 including information on—

17 (1) the status of critical environmental health
18 parameters and related human health impacts;

19 (2) the impacts of climate change on public
20 health; and

21 (3) advances in the development of strategies
22 for preparing for and responding to the impacts of
23 climate change on public health.

24 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—

1 (1) IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH HHS.—The
2 Secretary shall exercise the Secretary’s authority
3 under this Act and other Federal statutes to achieve
4 the goals and measures of the national strategic ac-
5 tion plan and climate and health program.

6 (2) OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND
7 INITIATIVES.—The Secretary and Federal officials of
8 other relevant Federal agencies shall administer
9 public health programs and initiatives authorized by
10 laws other than this Act, subject to the requirements
11 of such laws, in a manner designed to achieve the
12 goals of the national strategic action plan and cli-
13 mate and health program.

14 **SEC. 5. ADVISORY BOARD.**

15 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall, pursuant
16 to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92–
17 463), establish a permanent science advisory board to be
18 comprised of not less than 10 and not more than 20 mem-
19 bers.

20 (b) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—The Secretary
21 shall appoint the members of the science advisory board
22 (referred to in this subsection as the “Board”) from
23 among individuals who—

1 (1) are recommended by the President of the
2 National Academy of Sciences and the President of
3 the National Academy of Medicine; and

4 (2) have expertise in essential public health and
5 health care services, including those related to vul-
6 nerable populations, climate change, and other rel-
7 evant disciplines.

8 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The science advisory board shall—

9 (1) provide scientific and technical advice and
10 recommendations to the Secretary on the domestic
11 and international impacts of climate change on pub-
12 lic health, populations and regions particularly vul-
13 nerable to the effects of climate change, and strate-
14 gies and mechanisms to prepare for and respond to
15 the impacts of climate change on public health; and

16 (2) advise the Secretary regarding the best
17 science available for purposes of issuing the national
18 strategic action plan and conducting the climate and
19 health program.

20 **SEC. 6. CLIMATE CHANGE HEALTH PROTECTION AND PRO-**
21 **MOTION REPORTS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall offer to enter
23 into an agreement with the National Research Council,
24 under which the National Research Council will prepare
25 periodic reports to aid public health and health care pro-

1 fessionals in preparing for and responding to the adverse
2 health effects of climate change that—

3 (1) review scientific developments on health im-
4 pacts of climate change; and

5 (2) recommend changes to the national stra-
6 tegic action plan and climate and health program.

7 (b) SUBMISSION.—The agreement under subsection
8 (a) shall require a report to be submitted to Congress and
9 the Secretary and made publicly available not later than
10 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and every
11 4 years thereafter.