

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out activities to address the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BENNET introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out activities to address 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 Health Emer-
5 gency Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ISSUANCE OF A CALL TO ACTION.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
8 Human Services (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
9 retary”), acting through the Surgeon General, shall issue
10 a national call to action relating to the health threats and

1 concerns posed by climate change and the health benefits
2 that may be achieved through coordinated action to reduce
3 climate change.

4 (b) RESOURCES FOR HARDEST HIT COMMUNITIES.—

5 In carrying out the activities described in subsection (a),
6 the Secretary, acting through the Surgeon General, shall
7 ensure that information and resources related to the
8 health threats and concerns posed by climate change are
9 reaching the communities most impacted by and most vul-
10 nerable to such health threats and concerns.

11 (c) COORDINATION FOR ACTIVITIES.—To carry out

12 the activities described in subsections (a) and (b), the Sec-
13 retary shall coordinate with—

14 (1) the National Institutes of Health, including
15 the National Institute of Mental Health;

16 (2) the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-
17 tion;

18 (3) the Office of Minority Health;

19 (4) the Substance Abuse and Mental Health
20 Services Administration; and

21 (5) any other agency as determined necessary
22 by the Secretary.

23 (d) GRANT PROGRAM.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
25 grants to State, local, Tribal, and territorial govern-

1 ments and community-based organizations to hire
2 community health leaders to assist in ensuring that
3 resources related to addressing health threats and
4 concerns are reaching the communities described in
5 subsection (b).

6 (2) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a
7 grant under paragraph (1), a State, local, Tribal, or
8 territorial government or nongovernmental commu-
9 nity-based organization shall submit to the Secretary
10 an application at such time, in such manner, and
11 containing such information as the Secretary may
12 require.

13 (3) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under para-
14 graph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize applications
15 from nongovernmental community-based organiza-
16 tions.

17 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
19 【_____ for fiscal years _____】.

20 **SEC. 3. CLIMATE HEALTH RISK MITIGATION.**

21 (a) GRANT PROGRAM.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting
23 through the Director of the Centers for Disease
24 Control and Prevention, shall award grants to State,
25 local, Tribal, and territorial governments and non-

1 governmental community-based organizations for ac-
2 tivities described under paragraph (4) to mitigate
3 health threats and concerns posed by climate
4 change.

5 (2) APPLICATION.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive
7 a grant under paragraph (1), a State, local,
8 Tribal, or territorial government or nongovern-
9 mental community-based organization shall sub-
10 mit to the Secretary an application at such
11 time, in such manner, and containing such in-
12 formation as the Secretary may require includ-
13 ing an assurance that the grant funds would
14 supplement and not supplant existing funding.

15 (B) APPLICATION SUPPORT.—The Sec-
16 retary shall establish a support program for the
17 grant application and award process to broaden
18 the pool of funding applicants and facilitate
19 participation by qualified but less-resourced ap-
20 plicants.

21 (3) GRANT AWARD.—

22 (A) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under
23 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize ap-
24 plications that include plans—

1 (i) for compensated community out-
2 reach and engagement; and

3 (ii) to focus grant activities in com-
4 munities that are disproportionately im-
5 pacted or most vulnerable to climate
6 change.

7 (B) SEPARATE FEDERAL FUNDING.—In
8 awarding grants under paragraph (1), the Sec-
9 retary may not consider whether the applicant
10 receives other Federal funding.

11 (4) GRANT ACTIVITIES.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The activities described
13 under this paragraph are—

14 (i) hiring staff to plan and carry out
15 strategies to reduce public health threats
16 due to climate change;

17 (ii) programs and capital investments
18 to protect public health from climate
19 change; and

20 (iii) education about the health risks
21 posed by climate change.

22 (B) ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING PRO-
23 GRAMS.—Activities carried out using grant
24 funds awarded under this section shall enhance,
25 not duplicate or replace, programs or initiatives

1 existing on that date of submission of an appli-
2 cation including existing climate and public
3 health programs and initiatives within the Cen-
4 ters for Disease Control and Prevention such as
5 the Climate and Health Program.

6 (b) CDC REPORTS.—The Secretary, acting through
7 the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
8 vention, shall—

9 (1) conduct an annual study to identify key
10 knowledge gaps related to climate change and public
11 health; and

12 (2) not later than 1 year after the date of en-
13 actment of this Act and annually thereafter, submit
14 a report to Congress, and make available on a pub-
15 licly accessible website, a report on the results of the
16 study conducted under paragraph (1).

17 (c) TRAINING PROGRAM.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Centers
19 for Disease Control and Prevention, in coordination
20 with the Director of the National Institutes of
21 Health, shall establish a training program for State,
22 local, Tribal, and territorial health professionals in
23 public health and health care related to climate and
24 public health programs and initiatives within the
25 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention such as

1 the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects
2 framework under the Climate-Ready States and Cit-
3 ies Initiative.

4 (2) ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.—

5 The training program established under this sub-
6 section shall enhance, not duplicate or replace, pro-
7 grams existing within the Department of Health and
8 Human Services including the Centers for Disease
9 Control and Prevention on the date of enactment of
10 this Act.

11 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
12 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
13 [_____ for fiscal years _____].

14 **SEC. 4. CLIMATE HEALTH FORECASTING AND MONI-**
15 **TORING.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the
17 Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-
18 tion and in partnership with the Director of the National
19 Institutes of Health, shall develop and implement a plan
20 related to climate change and public health monitoring
21 and forecasting that includes—

22 (1) expanding the staffing of, and efforts by,
23 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention re-
24 lated to tracking and communicating emerging
25 science regarding the health impacts of climate

1 change, including developing or updating national
2 climate health indicators; and

3 (2) incorporating community engagement,
4 broad dissemination of findings related to climate
5 change and public health, and translation of such
6 findings into actionable recommendations.

7 (b) PRIORITY.—In developing and implementing the
8 plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall prioritize
9 climate health indicators related to communities that are
10 disproportionately impacted or most vulnerable to climate
11 change.

12 (c) INTEGRATION PLATFORM FOR CLIMATE HEALTH
13 DATA.—To advance climate change forecasting and moni-
14 toring efforts, the Director of the Centers for Disease Con-
15 trol and Prevention, in partnership with the Director of
16 the National Institutes of Health and in consultation with
17 the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmos-
18 pheric Administration, the Administrator of the National
19 Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Administrator
20 of the Environmental Protection Agency, and any other
21 agency as determined necessary by the Secretary, shall in-
22 tegrate major relevant scientific datasets related to cli-
23 mate change and public health.

24 (d) ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.—Ac-
25 tivities carried out under this section shall enhance, not

1 duplicate or replace, programs existing on the date of en-
2 actment of this Act.

3 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
5 **[_____ for fiscal years _____]**.

6 **SEC. 5. CLIMATE HEALTH RESEARCH.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National In-
8 stitutes of Health shall carry out a research program re-
9 garding climate change and public health, with research
10 area priorities informed by the findings of the reports
11 under section 3(b).

12 (b) RESEARCH PRIORITY.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the research
14 program under subsection (a), the Director of the
15 National Institutes of Health shall, subject to para-
16 graph (2), prioritize proposals from researchers—

17 (A) who are partnering with community
18 organizations;

19 (B) whose proposal incorporates com-
20 pensated citizen science and community-based
21 participatory research; or

22 (C) whose proposed project outcomes will
23 serve tangible community needs.

24 (2) DEGREE OF PRIORITY.—In prioritizing pro-
25 posals from researchers under paragraph (1), the

1 Director of the National Institutes of Health shall
2 give increased priority to such proposals that incor-
3 porate more of the factors described in subpara-
4 graphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1).

5 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
7 **[_____ for fiscal years _____]**.

8 **SEC. 6. ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS DESIGNA-**
9 **TION.**

10 Title III of the Public Health Service Act is amended
11 by inserting after section 319A (42 U.S.C. 247d-1) the
12 following:

13 **“SEC. 319B. PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.**

14 **“(a) CRISIS DECLARATION.—**

15 **“(1) IN GENERAL.—**If the Secretary deter-
16 mines, after consultation with such public health of-
17 ficials as may be necessary or the appropriate com-
18 mittees of Congress, that a long term public health
19 emergency or crisis exists to which the provisions of
20 section 319 may be applicable, the Secretary may
21 declare that a public health crisis exists and take
22 such action as may be appropriate to respond to the
23 public health crisis, including the actions provided
24 for under section 319. Not later than 48 hours after
25 making a declaration under this subsection of a pub-

1 lic health crisis, the Secretary shall submit to the
2 Congress written notification of the declaration.

3 “(2) IMPACT ON SUBGROUPS.—In determining
4 whether a long term public health emergency or cri-
5 sis exists under paragraph (1), the Secretary may
6 consider conditions that, in whole or in part, impact
7 a subgroup of individuals including vulnerable and
8 disproportionally impacted populations.

9 “(b) ACTIVITIES.—

10 “(1) APPOINTMENT OF COORDINATION OFFI-
11 CIAL AND CRISIS MANAGERS.—In implementing ac-
12 tivities under a public health crisis declaration under
13 subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

14 “(A) establish and appoint an official in
15 the office of the Secretary to coordinate and
16 plan the emergency response across the Depart-
17 ment and serve as the primary liaison to other
18 relevant Federal agencies; and

19 “(B) establish a crisis manager within
20 each of the relevant operating divisions of the
21 Department including the—

22 “(i) National Institutes of Health, in-
23 cluding the National Institute of Mental
24 Health;

1 “(ii) Centers for Disease Control and
2 Prevention;

3 “(iii) Office of Minority Health;

4 “(iv) Substance Abuse and Mental
5 Health Services Administration; and

6 “(v) any other agency as determined
7 necessary by the Secretary.

8 “(2) PLAN FOR RESPONSE.—In implementing
9 activities under a public health crisis declaration
10 under subsection (a), the official appointed under
11 paragraph (1)(A), in coordination with the crisis
12 managers established under paragraph (1)(B), shall
13 develop a plan for a response by the Secretary to the
14 public health crisis, including by—

15 “(A) assessing major risks and vulnerable
16 or disproportionately-impacted populations;

17 “(B) identifying existing departmental
18 funding or grant authority available to be uti-
19 lized to address the crisis without compromising
20 efforts to address other public health priorities;

21 “(C) developing a short term strategy to
22 address the crisis including through the use of
23 existing programs; and

24 “(D) developing a long term strategy to
25 address the crisis including an inventory of

1 gaps in Federal, State, local, Tribal, and terri-
2 torial resources and research needed to address
3 the crisis.

4 “(c) TERMINATION.—The public health crisis dec-
5 laration under subsection (a) shall terminate on the earlier
6 of—

7 “(1) the date on which the Secretary deter-
8 mines that the public health crisis no longer exists;
9 or

10 “(2) the date that is **【**_____ **】** after
11 the date on which the declaration is made by the
12 Secretary.”.

13 **SEC. 7. DECLARING CLIMATE CHANGE THE FIRST PUBLIC**
14 **HEALTH CRISIS.**

15 Title III of the Public Health Service Act is amended
16 by inserting after section 319B, as added by section 2,
17 the following:

18 **“SEC. 319B-1. CLIMATE CRISIS.**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, pursuant to
20 section 319B, declare that a public health crisis exists
21 throughout the United States relating to the effects of cli-
22 mate change on the public health.

23 “(b) ACTIVITIES.—In implementing activities under
24 a public health crisis declaration under subsection (a), in

1 addition to the activities provided for in section 319B(b),
2 the Secretary shall—

3 “(1) to the extent such position does not yet
4 exist, establish and appoint under section
5 319B(b)(1)(A) a Director for the Climate Crisis in
6 the office of the Secretary to coordinate the emer-
7 gency response across the Department and serve as
8 the primary liaison to other relevant Federal agen-
9 cies; and

10 “(2) establish under section 319B(b)(1)(A) a
11 climate crisis manager within each of the relevant
12 operating divisions of the Department.

13 “(c) **TERMINATION.**—The public health crisis dec-
14 laration under subsection (a) shall terminate on the earlier
15 of—

16 “(1) the date on which the Secretary deter-
17 mines that the public health crisis no longer exists;
18 or

19 “(2) the date that is **【**_____ **】** after
20 the date on which the declaration is made by the
21 Secretary.”.

22 **SEC. 8. SEVERABILITY.**

23 If any provision of this Act, an amendment made by
24 this Act, or the application of such provision or amend-
25 ment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconsti-

1 tutional, the remainder of this Act and the amendments
2 made by this Act, and the application of the provision or
3 amendment to any other person or circumstance, shall not
4 be affected.