

# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ADAPTATION PROFESSIONALS

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[www.adaptationprofessionals.org](http://www.adaptationprofessionals.org)

Good morning Subcommittee Chairwoman Sherrill, Subcommittee Ranking Member Bice, Ranking Committee Member Lucas, and Members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the state of climate change adaptation, the role of federal agencies, and the opportunities and obligations we have before to use our collective action to create more resilient communities.

My name is Beth Gibbons and I serve as the Executive Director of the American Society of Adaptation Professionals. I live in Southeast Michigan on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg: Three Fires People who are Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatami and Wyandot, today called Ypsilanti, Michigan.

I have spent the last twenty years working on community development and a decade focused specifically on climate change adaptation in the United States. In my career it has been a privilege to serve as a US Peace Corps Volunteer, the program manager for the NOAA Regional Integrated Science and Assessment (RISA) Program for the Great Lakes Region and the Director of University of Michigan's Climate Center. When I left working in the public sector I did so because I saw an acute need for coordination and support to the growing ranks of climate change adaptation professionals across North America. As recently as 10 years ago there was no U.S. organization focusing on accelerating and standardizing the climate change adaptation field. Thankfully, that is no longer the case.

ASAP connects and supports climate change adaptation and resilience professionals to advance innovative and just adaptation practice throughout North America.

Successful adaptation is holistic and requires coordination from the federal to local level and across multiple sectors and disciplines; Gone is the time when we can attempt to deliver single issue solutions to our complex communities' challenges.

The adaptation and resilience field is full of leaders and changemakers with diverse backgrounds and types of expertise. The thread that connects us all is the ASAP definition of adaptation professionals as "professionals who integrate future climate information into their day to day work".

- ASAP Members have Integrated updated rain data into rural and urban runoff models to better understand the impact of climate change on sensitive ecosystems, like the Saginaw Bay.
- Our members Built a regional climate collaborative in Southeast Florida to share future climate information and reach consensus on planning and design standards for an economically and ecologically interconnected region.
- Adaptation Professionals worked with public health officials from Illinois and states across the Midwest to integrate relevant climate information into known public health concerns to develop climate health impact reports to help states and communities prevent the worst impacts from climate being recognized in their communities.
- Finally, ASAP members are working with corporations and pushing international institutions to consider how community resilience and equity can be part of public disclosure recommendations and couple corporate and community resilience solutions.

*Building a Community of Climate Change Leaders*

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In order for climate adaptation and resilience to be successful, we need the federal government to play a critical role in the development and dissemination of locally relevant climate data and information. However, it does not stop there.

Climate change adaptation is a rapidly growing and innovative professional practice. To grow this profession and industry we need to better understand the needs of the existing workforce and provide education and technical support to train more people to do this important work.

The climate adaptation profession is standardizing its values and practices and new adaptation programs, including a federal climate service, should align with these field spanning standards.

There are strong networks in place, across tribes and at national and regional and metropolitan level which are vehicles for disseminating best practices, providing peer learning, and building regional governance strategies to support climate adaptation and mitigation policy and practice. These same network must inform the design of a new climate service and be vehicles for delivering information, service, grants and other program elements.

A robust climate adaptation and resilience marketplace is emerging and there are important roles for federal agencies and programs to play to ensure service providers and services seekers from all economic and racial backgrounds have access to the same high quality, actionable climate data and information.

I am heartened by the renewed energy and enthusiasm of this Committee and the Biden-Harris Administration to address the impact climate change is having on people across the United States.

While I am heartened by this new enthusiasm, I will close to today with a request that the enthusiasm for action be met with an earnest intention and effort to learn what is needed to accelerate action from the adaptation professionals working on this topic every day and from the communities actively employing adaptation and resilience strategies to combat the dire impacts of climate change.

At ASAP it's all about the people. The people in the communities that we serve and the professionals of today and tomorrow who are seeking to make our country more resilient.

We believe that through supporting and connecting adaptation professionals we can accelerate practice and bring forward a more just and equitable future and we're looking forward to working with this Committee, the whole 117th Congress & The Biden-Harris Administration to accelerate this important work, together.

Thank you!

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