

January 8th, 2019

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Cc: Jon Niermann, Chairman, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Dear Governor Abbott,

At a press conference last month to discuss a new report on the impacts of Hurricane Harvey, a reporter asked you whether man-made climate change has played a role in Texas' weather disasters.<sup>1</sup> You replied that it would be impossible for you to say, as you are not a scientist.

We, the undersigned, are climate scientists and experts, and can report to you that climate change is happening, it is primarily caused by humans, and it is having a devastating impact on Texas, including increasing deadly flooding resulting from Hurricane Harvey.

Furthermore, the recently released National Climate Assessment, put together by more than a dozen federal agencies and more than 300 scientists found that, left unchecked, climate change will have dangerous results for the Southern Great Plains, which includes Texas. The report finds:

- Annual average temperatures will increase by 3.6°–5.1°F by the mid-21st century and by 4.4°–8.4°F by the late 21st century
- An additional 30–60 days per year above 100°F than we currently experience
- Higher temperatures could result in an additional 1,300 deaths per year by the end of the century
- Extreme heat will pose health risks to outdoor agricultural workers, with some communities “projected to lose more than 6% in annual labor hours by the end of the century”
- Sea level rise along the western Gulf of Mexico “is likely to be greater than the projected global average of 1–4 feet or more. Such a change, along with the related retreat of the Gulf coastline, will exacerbate risks and impacts from storm surges.”
- Up to \$20.9 billion in coastal property is projected to be flooded at high tide by 2030
- The Edwards Aquifer will suffer from “a decrease of water supply during droughts, a degradation of habitat for species of concern, economic effects, and the interconnectivity of these impacts.”

We can take actions now to help us adapt to the impacts of climate change. And, as one of the biggest wind energy producers in the U.S., we can also play a key role in reducing the emissions that will drive future changes in the climate. The only thing missing is leadership.

We therefore request the opportunity to brief you on the climate science and the need for the State of Texas to take immediate action to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anna Kuchment, Dec. 13th, 2018, “Hurricane Harvey report seeks to ‘future-proof’ Texas from climate change without saying so directly”, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/climate-change-1/2018/12/13/hurricane-harvey-report-seeks-future-proof-texas-climate-change-without-saying-directly>

Sincerely,

Andrew Dessler, Ph.D.  
Professor of Atmospheric Sciences  
Reta A. Haynes Chair in Geosciences  
Texas A&M University

Daniel Cohan, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering  
Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Rice University

Charles Jackson, Ph.D.  
Research Scientist  
Institute for Geophysics  
The University of Texas at Austin

Kerry H. Cook, Ph.D.  
Professor, Jackson School of Geosciences  
Dept. of Geological Sciences  
The University of Texas at Austin

Richard M. Mitterer, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Geosciences  
University of Texas at Dallas

Gerald North, Ph.D.  
Research Professor of Atmospheric Sciences  
University Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
Texas A&M University

Joshua W. Busby, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Public Affairs  
Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs  
The University of Texas at Austin

Sylvia Dee, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences  
Rice University

Dr. John B. Anderson, Ph.D.  
Maurice Ewing Professor of Oceanography Emeritus  
Rice University

Yangyang Xu, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Atmospheric Sciences  
Texas A&M University

Laurence Yeung, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences  
Rice University

Robert A. Dull, Ph.D.  
Senior Research Fellow  
Environmental Science Institute  
The University of Texas at Austin

Rasika M. Harshey, Ph.D.  
Professor of Molecular Biosciences  
The University of Texas at Austin

Hongjie Xie, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Dept. of Geological Sciences  
University of Texas at San Antonio

Gunnar W. Schade, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Atmospheric Sciences  
Texas A&M University

Caroline Masiello, Ph.D.  
Professor, Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences  
Rice University

Francisco L. Pérez, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus and Soils Lab Director Emeritus  
Dept. of Geography and the Environment  
The University of Texas at Austin

Stephen F. Ackley  
Associate Professor of Research  
Dept. of Geological Sciences  
University of Texas at San Antonio

Sylvia G. Dee, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences  
Rice University

Ian Dalziel, Ph.D., D.Sc.  
Professor, Jackson School of Geosciences  
Institute for Geophysics  
The University of Texas at Austin

Yuko M. Okumura, Ph.D.  
Research Scientist, Jackson School of Geosciences  
Institute for Geophysics  
University of Texas at Austin

Courtney Schumacher, Ph.D.  
Professor of Atmospheric Sciences  
E. D. Brockett Professorship in Geosciences  
Texas A&M University

Kara Kockelman, Ph.D.  
Dewitt Greer Centennial Professor of Transportation Engineering  
Dept. of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering  
The University of Texas at Austin

Mark Torres, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Earth, Environmental, & Planetary Sciences  
Rice University

Emily Northrop, Ph.D.  
Professor of Economics  
Dept. of Economics and Business  
Southwestern University

Joshua Long, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Environmental Studies  
Southwestern University

William Quinn, Ph.D.  
Professor, Dept. of Biological Sciences  
St. Edward's University