

## **Climate change is real, and it requires us to act**

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### **Body**

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If you're like us, when the tornado warnings go out across southern Illinois, do you wonder: Is this one more symptom of **climate change**? That's impossible to answer with any precision. We have had tornadoes and stormy weeks before.

It's hard to pinpoint what drives a single weather event. But what is clear is that extreme weather — the record heat waves, wildfires and unprecedented flooding that have ravaged the globe this summer — is a hallmark of this undeniable **change**. **Climate change** is not some distant threat; it is here. And the impact of it is only going to get worse. It's going to get worse even if we do something about it. All we're left with now is to minimize how much worse it gets. If we do nothing or next to nothing, if we continue to kid ourselves that it's just part of the natural ebb and flow of the planet's weather, well, then it will become a catastrophe. If we all have not been alarmed by the extreme weather so far in 2021, we should be by the report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on **Climate Change**. It warns that world leaders must act immediately to reduce human reliance on fossil fuels or risk significant growth of extreme weather events. But this is not just a matter for world leaders and politicians. It is an existential challenge that calls on all of us to do our parts. Some responses will be easy. Some will be hard. All must be done. We must reduce the flow of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and we must make wise choices in how we adapt to the **climate change** that already has been set in motion. The U.N. panel said scientists are observing irrefutable **climate changes** in every region of the planet. "Many of the **changes** observed in the **climate** are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, and some of the **changes** already set in motion, such as continued sea level rise, are irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years," they said. Left unchecked, these **changes** will affect virtually everything about human life as well as the lives of other animals who share the planet with us: our water and food supplies, sea levels, where and how we live, our health, our economies, virtually everything. "We just barely have the time," says Illinois congressman Sean Casten. "Our moment is right now to do what's necessary." We can pretend no longer.

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