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Dear Chair and Members of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis,

We write this letter to encourage this committee to consider community-based solutions to climate change resilience building and adaptation, particularly for communities who need to relocate or expand sites in response to climate-induced risk and wish to do so as a community. As evidenced in a September 9, 2019 letter to the Senate [from the regional Alaska Native non-profit tribal consortium, Kawerak, Inc.](#), front line communities are struggling with appropriate resources, policies and legislation to respond to erosion and flooding in adequate and culturally-appropriate ways. We would like to express our support for the letter from Kawerak, as well as a letter dated September 13, 2019, from the [Rising Voices: Climate Resilience through Indigenous and Earth Sciences program](#), addressed to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the Special Committee on the Climate Crisis, in which recommendations were distilled from nearly a decade of work with indigenous, tribal, and community leaders. In addition to the recommendations made within those letters, we recommend that any policy decisions and proposed legislation keep the following considerations in mind in order to support front line communities.

1. Because benefit-cost analysis and cost-benefit analysis may disadvantage rural and marginalized communities, we recommend revisiting the model for granting disaster and hazard mitigation funding. In addition we recommend identifying alternative economic models for instances in which long histories of damages to housing and infrastructure preclude the possibility of a positive cost-benefit calculation. In cases of tribes and other culturally-significant communities, we also suggest include non-material costs and benefits, including cultural heritage and subsistence rights in the calculation.
2. Because buyouts are a critical part of relocation and resettlement adaptive strategy, it is particularly concerning to us that they have historically been leveraged in comparatively wealthier counties¹. We recommend a review of the buyout program to understand how to better address front line and historically marginalized community-needs, and to identify the ways in which existing policies and programs perpetuate inequitable outcomes.
3. Because all communities are distinct, and because policies which benefit *most* communities often are particularly not-applicable to historically marginalized communities, especially tribes², any solution to repetitive flooding and sea level rise must be flexible enough to meet local needs, and must include safeguards for community participation, leadership, and ownership of the proposed solutions.

Sincerely,

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¹ Mach, K. J., Kraan, C. M., Hino, M., Siders, A. R., Johnston, E. M., & Field, C. B. (2019). Managed retreat through voluntary buyouts of flood-prone properties. *Science Advances*, 5(10), eaax8995.

² Marino, E. (2018). Adaptation privilege and Voluntary Buyouts: Perspectives on ethnocentrism in sea level rise relocation and retreat policies in the US. *Global environmental change*, 49, 10-13.