Climate Change: A Direct Threat to National Security

Recent Congressional Action

The FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed with strong bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and Senate.

NDAA Key Findings on Climate Change

“Climate change is a direct threat to the national security of the United States”

—Sec. 335 (A)

“More than 128 United States military sites are threatened by rising sea levels.”

—Sec. 335 (A)

Climate Change and National Security: Executive Branch

On December 12, 2017, President Trump signed into law the FY 2018 NDAA. His signing was the latest in a decades-long series of actions by the Executive Branch recognizing climate change threats to national security.

1990: Naval War College issues report on climate change impacts for the Navy

2003: Bush Admin. DOD reports potential for conflict, refugee crises and border tensions as a result of “abrupt climate change”

2014: Obama Admin. DOD issues “Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap” for U.S. national defense efforts

2017: Sec. Mattis’ Senate confirmation testimony: “Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today”

Department of Defense Publishes Report On Effects of Climate Change

- The report was officially released in January of 2019 and states: “The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations.”

- More than half of the Department of Defense’s 79 mission assurance priority installations are currently vulnerable to climate-related events such as flooding, drought, and wildfires. An additional 25% could become vulnerable within 20 years.

- Future vulnerability analyses would likely reveal an uptick in vulnerabilities if adaptation strategies are not implemented.

APS Shares Concerns on Climate Change

- Climate change poses a risk of significant environmental, social and economic disruptions around the globe.

- APS supports actions that will reduce the emissions, and ultimately the concentration, of greenhouse gases as well as increase the resilience of society to a changing climate, and to support research that could reduce the impact of climate change.