

CPR Initiative People's Hearing on Climate Action Speech

By Ethan Maday

Prompt: What do you think the US Government should do to address the climate crisis?

Imagine it is a beautiful sunny day and you want to tend to your vegetable garden. So you put on a hazmat suit, grab your poison spray, and head out to the garden.

Crazy, right?

Who would do that?

This is the unfortunate reality of the way most of our food is grown.

Hi everyone, I'm Ethan Maday. I'm thirteen and I've been learning about the environment for my entire life. I'm so glad to have the opportunity to speak here.

Although I support the efforts to remove fossil fuels, the time has long passed for this to be our primary focus. Equally, if not more important for the future health of the environment, is facing the disastrous impacts of industrial "factory" farming.

Research by nonprofits, scientists, and other experts has proven that industrial agricultural methods such as the use of pesticides, tillage, and monoculture crops have a

negative impact on not only our health, but the health of our planet. We've reached the tipping point.

As many of you know, carbon dioxide, or CO₂ is the base of all life on earth. This isn't something we need to get rid of. We just need to get the amounts of CO₂ in our atmosphere right. One way to reach balance is through carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is the process by which carbon is drawn from the atmosphere and stored in the soil through photosynthesis, unlike our methods in industrial agriculture. Our current system is broken. We till, then we spray, then we till some more. This causes carbon to go right back up into the atmosphere along with other toxic chemicals, now leaking into our food and water systems.

We need to change our agricultural system. The issue isn't the farmers who work hard every day to make a living, it's the system and the corporations controlling the system that needs to change.

I encourage the US Government to support, educate, and incentivize the rapid transition from industrial farming to small scale regenerative agriculture through the upcoming farm bill. This would include farm support programs, classes on regenerative agriculture, and most importantly, subsidies to incentivize farms to make the transition.

I recognise that the US Government already does these things, but it needs to be prioritized.

I imagine most people here have heard of regenerative agriculture and know the basics, and many of you know much more than me. But for those who are new to the concept, Regenerative Agriculture is farming in the way Nature intended, incorporating Indigenous knowledge to support the life of every living being from microbes to mammals.

As a regenerative farm, concepts such as no-till farming, biodiversity, crop rotation, managed grazing, cover cropping, and composting are integrated into daily practice. By definition, regenerative agriculture is glyphosate free, organic, and non-GMO. All of these practices enhance the quality of the land, the land's ability to recover from natural disasters, and make the land more fertile.

Southern California's climate, like most of the world, is becoming more extreme by the year, making the 23 million inhabitants more and more vulnerable. Cover crops increase weather resistance, help soak up rainfall, regenerate aquifers, and protect the soil from the sun and wind.

Unlike extractive farming methods, cover cropping attracts pollinators, improves soil biodiversity, and sequesters carbon through photosynthesis.

Tillage in large factory farms releases the carbon from the soil as it tears up the life underneath it, while regenerative agriculture sequesters carbon by capturing it in natural plant growth, storing carbon in the soil.

What I am saying here is that Regenerative agriculture is the solution to the climate crisis.

It's a hard transition to make, and one that I am sure the US Government will prioritize in the coming years.

Let's let the earth do its job, the regenerative way.

Thank you for your time.

Written Testimony

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I encourage the US Government to support, educate, and incentivize the rapid transition from industrial farming to small scale regenerative agriculture through the upcoming farm bill. This would include farm support programs, classes on regenerative agriculture, and most importantly, subsidies to incentivize farms to make the transition.

Regenerative agriculture, implemented nationally, has the potential to reverse the trajectory of climate change. With over 52% of the US land used for the agricultural sector, changing our agricultural system could have a massive impact.

Regenerative agriculture has many different definitions, but my personal definition is “growing food in a biodiverse environment while actively working to improve soil health, sequester carbon, grow healthy, sustainable food, and overall, to consciously enrich the land, produce, and ecosystem, whether that be for ranching, farming, or gardening.”

Growing food in a conscious effort to improve the land, produce, and ecosystem seems like a daunting task, but can be broken up into different practices. Some of these fundamental practices include but are not limited to cover cropping, no till, composting, crop rotation, managed grazing, organic, no-GMO, the building of biodiversity, all of which have the common goal of growing healthy food for us and our soils.

I would like to briefly explain some of the practices.

No till farming is to support the life of cover crops and composting, enriching the quality of the land, microbial biodiversity, and consequently feeding those vital nutrients into the crops. No till farming will support the cover cropping, but also prevent the severe land degradation happening globally. There is a reason all of our ancient civilizations are no longer fertile - tilling has destroyed them.

This will increase the microbial biodiversity and nutrient density. The soil is a beacon for life, hundreds of trillions of microorganisms live in the soil globally. The regenerative practices of cover cropping, composting, and no-till farming attracts that life. Nutrient density contributes to a healthier, hence happier, nation. Nutrient deficiency, especially in the deficiency of vitamin B3 can cause violence, cannibalistic behavior (in hamsters and humans), and when proper vitamin B3 levels were supplemented to rodents ([Source 1](#)) ([Source 2](#))

Biodiversity aside, regenerative agriculture does something much more important. The regenerative practice of cover cropping supports the rapid drawdown and sequestration of CO₂ from our atmosphere.

Yes, you read that right. Regenerative agriculture, implemented nationally, has massive potential as a solution to the climate crisis. It's a hard transition to make, and one fought against desperately by the corporations making billions from the current system.

Our current system of industrial agriculture is not working. The billions of dollars pouring into subsidies for corn, soybeans, rice, wheat, and barely have a much better home. We need to change the subsidies so they go into supporting farmers to make the transition to regenerative agriculture. This shift in the farm bill could very well be crucial to the survival of our planet, the drawdown of CO₂, and the health of our nation.

I trust that our nation's policy makers will work to support the rapid transition to regenerative agriculture.