

**Personal Information:** Matthew Cahillane, Concord NH.

**Proposal Details:** HCR1, A RESOLUTION calling for policymakers locally and nationally to fully consider all relevant information and factors pertaining to climate change

**Position:** Support

**NH House or Senate Committee:** State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs

**Date and Location:** 02/07/2025 01:00 pm LOB Room 206-208

“Chairman Moffett and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Cahillane, and I represent myself today as a concerned citizen. I’m currently self-employed as a health consultant and teach part-time at Antioch University.

I support this proposal, with a few suggestions.

My qualifications include a Master of Public Health from UCLA, three decades working on environmental health issues, collaboration with state and federal agencies, a few research studies and peer-reviewed publications related to climate, and projects to protect local communities from extreme weather and climate impacts.

I am concerned about climate change for several reasons.

First, as an active outdoors person, my concern comes from a personal experience of shorter, less snowy winters and a greater abundance of ticks. Second, as a scientist, I’m concerned about the misperception of a consensus around the causes, impacts, and solutions to climate change.

I believe we have high-quality scientific evidence for the causes of climate change (e.g. warming conditions due to greenhouse gases), some strong evidence for the impact on the earth and humans (e.g. rising average temperatures, more extreme heat events, tick borne disease, etc.), and less evidence on viable solutions to address the issue (e.g. market forces, individual actions, government control, international agreements, etc.).

### **How climate change affects public health**

The evidence points to three main health impacts from climate change for New Hampshire. First, climate change affects vector-borne disease in some straightforward ways in New Hampshire. Warmer, wetter climate conditions have led to an increase in tick populations and tick-borne disease. The level of climate attribution for tick diseases is estimated at 10-30% of the total cases in the Northeast US ([Ogden, 2021](#)).

Second, climate change can have an impact on mental health. Climate-driven disaster events can lead to short-term mental stress and longer term disorders. Longer warm seasons, shorter cold seasons, and extreme weather events can lead to mental stress due to disruption of business for the ski industry, agriculture, forestry and other outdoor occupations. The level of climate attribution to mental illnesses is likely significant yet difficult to estimate for the Northeast US ([Hwong, 2022](#)).

And third, climate change has an impact on traumatic injuries and heat injury. I co-authored a study with peers at Plymouth State University looking at extreme weather and hospital admissions, finding that from 2001-2009 admissions for all-cause injuries rose by a small amount of 1-2% on days with high heat index ([Neugent, 2020](#)). The level of climate attribution to injuries is likely low to moderate - yet difficult to estimate for the Northeast US.

### **How climate alarmism affects public health**

An alarmist approach to climate advocacy can negatively impact mental health and social unity. In a recent survey of youth, almost 70 percent said they were either ‘extremely worried’ or ‘very worried’ about climate change ([Hickman, 2021](#)). Climate researchers and media reports tend to present the worst-case scenarios, some of which are not supported by the IPCC and other experts. Climate advocates also downplay the known improvements in environmental conditions. For example, even as the climate warmed over the past 50 years, the evidence shows a decrease in the risk of heat-related deaths in the US ([Sheridan, 2020](#)). In addition, we have been able to improve air quality and reduce pollution-related deaths by over 100,000 per year ([EPA, 2022](#)). Our young people need to learn this history to improve their mental health, gain hope, and be productive members of society.

### **How this bill could be improved:**

I believe the resolution could be improved by changing the words ‘fraudulent’ and ‘intimidation’ to more neutral terms. Even if those words are accurate in some rare cases, they are likely to cause more division, appear biased, and limit bipartisan support of this proposal.

### **How this bill could encourage more dialogue and less debate**

If this resolution passes both the House and the Senate, I encourage you to engage with your peers in the ‘Granite Bridge Legislative Alliance’ led by Representative Fred Plett from Goffstown, NH. This bipartisan group is dedicated to reaching across the aisle to improve dialogue and reduce polarization. I would be happy to work with this Legislature to support a bipartisan discussion.

In closing, this resolution is focused on the topic of climate change, yet it also brings to light the polarization of our political views. I hope we can use this as an opportunity to engage in a thoughtful dialogue and move away from the reactive debate. We need more honest brokers involved with this climate dialogue, people who view it as work-in-progress, with all the gaps, uncertainty, and healthy skepticism that scientific endeavors deserve.

Thank you for considering my views on climate information. I’m available to address questions or comments.