

*Chicago, IL (Friday, April 22, 2011) - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky released the following statement commemorating Earth Day:*

Today, as we recognize the 41st anniversary of Earth Day, we can't ignore the serious threat that climate change poses to our health, our safety and our planet. Scientists agree not just on the enormity of the threat but on the need to act now. The ten warmest years on record have all been since 1990, with 2010 the hottest ever. In recent years, hurricanes are more severe, water levels are rising, droughts are becoming longer, and mountain glaciers are receding around the world.

Climate change is not just something that is happening in other places, it is happening in our own backyard. The Great Lakes -- a precious natural resource that represents over 80 percent of the surface freshwater resources in North America -- are being affected. According to a report published by the Union of Concerned Scientists, global warming is causing serious changes to the Lakes that are dangerous and may be irreversible, such as lower water levels, higher temperatures and increased pollution. That is why I am so committed to addressing climate change and protecting the Lakes.

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration took an important step forward when it announced that, for the first time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. While this regulation is still being finalized, it will save thousands of lives while also ensuring that our nation's greatest natural treasures like the Great Lakes are preserved. This is one of many initiatives such as the creation of American jobs in green energy production that are being undertaken to improve the environment, public health and the economy.

On this Earth Day, I urge everyone to take a moment to appreciate and recognize the amazing natural world we live in and then commit to join the fight to protect for it generations to come.