Odd-ball Winter Weather Report Press Conference
Augusta State House
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I'm Lisa Pohlmann, deputy director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine. This week we had 50 mph winds, 50 degree temperatures, heavy rains, and now ice jams on the Kennebec. These weather events all seem peculiar for the kind of January I remember when I first came to Maine 30 years ago. But according to a new national report, this kind of unpredictable winter weather will become increasingly common if climate change continues unabated.

National Wildlife Federation scientists released today **Odd-ball Winter Weather: Global Warming's Wake-Up Call for the Northern United States.** As our local speakers will discuss, we have known for a long time that more erratic winter weather will be our future in Maine under climate change. We are likely to experience more ice storms, shorter ski seasons, thinner ice, shorter periods of frozen ground for loggers, more winter flooding, and changes in our ecosystems due to warming temperatures. The impacts include a higher probability of intrusive pests, crop damage, and migration of some species further north; strains on municipal budgets for road clearing and infrastructure repairs; and less revenue and increased costs for the winter recreation industry, including skiing and snowmobiling.

I'm one of thousands of avid cross country skiers in Maine. It is my favorite winter sport and one of the best components of my Maine quality of life. The trail conditions were perfect last Saturday for my first ski on the trails near my home in Jefferson. By Tuesday, 4 feet of snow were gone and we'll see how many more chances I get to ski. I attribute this weird winter weather to climate change.

The most important thing we can do to reduce the impact of climate change is to reduce our global warming pollution as much and as soon as possible. Science has shown that we need to reduce emissions from the burning of coal, oil, and gas by at least 80 percent below today's levels by 2050. We have the technologies currently or under development to achieve this goal. What we need now is the political will in Washington to pass comprehensive climate change legislation that will mandate these reductions in global warming emissions and create investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, and natural resource adaptation projects.