

Obama mocks skeptics of climate change as ‘flat-Earth society’

By Justin Sink - 06/25/13 06:40 PM EDT

President Obama angrily blasted climate change skeptics during his energy policy speech Tuesday at Georgetown University, saying he lacked "patience for anyone who denies that this problem is real."

"We don't have time for a meeting of the flat-Earth society," Obama said. "Sticking your head in the sand might make you feel safer, but it's not going to protect you from the coming storm."

Earlier in his remarks, Obama said the "overwhelming judgement of science, of chemistry, of physics, and millions of measurements" put "to rest" questions about pollution affecting the environment.

"The planet is warming. Human activity is contributing to it," Obama said.

"We know that the costs of these events can be measured in lost lives and lost livelihoods."

The president noted that the 12 warmest years in recorded history have all come within the last 15 years, and said that rising temperatures were increasing the severity and impact of storms.

He noted that rising tide levels in New York increased the impact of Hurricane Sandy, while record temperatures killed crops and increased food prices in the Midwest.

"In a world that's warmer than it used to be, all weather events are affected by the warming planet," Obama said.

"Those who are feeling the effects of climate change don't have time to deny it — they're busy dealing with it."

At the event, the president announced a timeline for setting new environmental regulations that will limit how much carbon pollution can be emitted from both new and existing power plants. The White House is directing the Environmental Protection Agency to write draft rules on carbon emissions from existing power plants within the next year, with the expectation they will be completed by June 2015.

Obama also said the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline should only be approved if the project would not "significantly exacerbate" greenhouse gas pollution.