Climate Adaptation Science and Policy in the Biden-Harris Administration

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Photo credit: Lloyd Whitman
RAPID CHANGES TO EARTH’S CLIMATE

**CO₂ concentration**
- Highest in at least 2 million years

**Sea level rise**
- Fastest rates in at least 3000 years

**Arctic sea ice area**
- Lowest level in at least 1000 years

**Glaciers retreat**
- Unprecedented in at least 2000 years

*IPCC, 2021*
A CHANGING CLIMATE AFFECTS US ALL

• Temperatures are rising across the United States.

• Heat waves have become more frequent, and cold waves have become less frequent.

• Annual average temperatures will continue to rise.
THE CHOICES WE MAKE NOW MATTER

- **Mitigation**: reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (or removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere)

- **Adaptation**: reducing risks from today’s changed climate and preparing for future impacts

- Future impacts and risks from climate change are directly tied to decisions made in the present
FEDERAL ADAPTATION LANDSCAPE

• Integrating resilience into Federal agency efforts
• Providing funding/incentives
• Addressing current and emerging climate-related hazards
• Advancing usable science to inform adaptation decisions
TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

• Executive Order 14008
  • Ambitious actions to reduce emissions and enhance resilience
  • https://www.whitehouse.gov/climate/

Drought conditions Nov. 19, 2021 from U.S. Drought Monitor
ENHANCING ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

• Increasing the resilience of Federal agency facilities, procurement, and acquisitions through climate action plans (under EO 14008); agency plans released in October 2021
  https://www.sustainability.gov/adaptation/

• Major investments in resilience through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

• Integrating resilience as a focus for the WH environmental justice; advancing Justice40
ADDRESSING CURRENT AND EMERGING HAZARDS

National Climate Task Force Working Groups:

• Wildfire Resilience
• Coastal Resilience
• Extreme Heat Resilience
• Drought Resilience
• Flood Resilience
ADVANCING ACTIONABLE CLIMATE INFORMATION

• OSTP, NOAA, and FEMA report on climate information and services

• Federal Geographic Data Committee report on geospatial data and mapping tools
ADVANCING ACTIONABLE CLIMATE INFORMATION

• Founded by law in 1990, USGCRP is a consortium of 13 Federal agencies mandated to advance understanding, assessment, prediction, and response to global change
  • Coordinates research
  • Informs decisions
  • Oversees the National Climate Assessment
• Supports international efforts
  • U.S. participation in international assessments (e.g. IPCC, Arctic Council)
  • International secretariats (Future Earth, START, WCRP)
PRIORITIES FOR FIFTH NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT (NCA5)

• Advance the Conversation
• Make it Accessible to a Broad Audience
• Be Creative in Communication
• Make it About People
• Ensure it is Useful and Usable

Importantly, ensure that the NCA is inclusive and representative in participation and engagement.
NCA5 UPDATE

• Public comment on the Draft Prospectus
• Call for author nominations and technical inputs
• Chapter leadership selection
• Author team selection
• Development of Zero Order Drafts
• Public engagement – just completed 34 workshops; thousands of people participated
• Ongoing call for technical inputs: [https://www.globalchange.gov/nca5](https://www.globalchange.gov/nca5)

For updates, sign up for the USGCRP newsletter and follow us on Twitter @usgcrp
LOOKING TO A RESILIENT FUTURE

- Ensuring that Federal Government programs and investments are resilient to climate change
- Adaptive management of natural resources
- Enhancing the climate resilience of infrastructure
- Ensuring that Americans have access to usable climate science information
- Taking action to reduce emissions, to limit what we need to adapt to
Thank you!

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