The Need for Federal Leadership on Climate Change Adaptation

Aligning and coordinating across scales of government to increase security and prosperity

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Building on Previous Themes

Center the people who are impacted the most.

Reform policy at multiple scales simultaneously and in coordination with one another.

Think in systems to avoid harm and maximize benefits for all.
Fund the actions we know we need

Reform existing policies to avoid maladaptation

Transform: accept emerging realities and envision our future
IRA & IIJA Fund Critical Adaptation Programs.

**Inflation Reduction Act**
- EPA: National greenbank, Environmental and climate justice block grants
- DOT: Neighborhood access and equity grants
- DOE: Incentives to establish building codes
- HUD: resilience upgrades to affordable housing
- NOAA: Funding for coastal resilience, drought, and land conservation
- USDA: Rural electric cooperative loans
- BIA: Tribal and Native Hawaiian adaptation and resilience programs

**Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act**
- EPA: water, stormwater, wastewater, green infrastructure
- DOT: PROTECT program, active transportation, healthy streets, at-risk coastal infrastructure
- DOE: grid resilience, weatherization, codes, renewables co-benefits
- NOAA: coastal flooding, habitat restoration and community resilience, fire, climate data, NIDIS
- Army Corps: coastal storms, inland flood risk, transportation infrastructure flood mitigation, water infrastructure upgrades
- DOI: western water, community relocation, adaptation, resilience, and relocation for tribes
- FEMA: flood insurance, pre-disaster mitigation
Getting federal dollars where they’re needed requires public investment at all scales + private investment.

States’ roles in the flow of federal climate dollars:

- Accepting federal funds.
- Getting grants for which they’re directly eligible.
- Creating an enabling policy environment for federally funded projects.
- Technical assistance to increase local and tribal capacity.
- Equitable distribution of formula and block grant funding.

New Mexico lawmakers approve bill to match federal funds for infrastructure

SANTA FE, N.M. (KRQE) – Federal programs regularly offer millions in funding for projects around the country, but sometimes those offerings require a local match. Now, lawmakers have approved legislation to help New Mexico communities put up those matching funds.
The federal government is making progress on using future climate information & avoiding maladaptation.

Justice40 Initiative creates infrastructure to monitor who benefits from federal programs

IIJA and the Floods Act are enabling precipitation data updates
Policy reforms are needed at multiple scales to make critical infrastructure climate-secure.

Reforms and coordination needed for climate-secure energy systems:

- Policies, priorities, and practices of utility asset owners
- State utility regulations
- Local land use regulations
- State and federal regulations for siting and permitting
- Climate preparedness and disaster recovery funding

A crew works to restore power in Pecan Mott, TX on Feb 17 2021. Photo: Jonathan Cutrer (Flickr).
Progress on transformation?
Moving from awareness to action

Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Program
- Prioritizes most impacted communities
- Funding from IIJA & IRA
- Coordination across BIA, Denali Commission, & FEMA
- Outcome of cross-agency task force on community-based relocation

“Relocation has been in talks as far as I can remember, and it’s happening before our eyes. Climate change has impacted the people of Newtok. It’s a new beginning for our people.”
- Calvin Tom, Mertarvik Tribal Administrator.

Addressing climate change and housing simultaneously requires strong coordination and brings many benefits.

Federal agencies with roles to play in climate-secure housing:

- HUD
- FEMA
- EPA
- DOE
- NOAA
- HHS

Phoenix homeless encampment during a 2023 heat wave. Photo: Mark Henle/The Republic.
A framework is a helpful start but we need a durable plan.

Key Strength: Holistic approach that addresses both acute and chronic impacts and actions needed in all sectors of society

Key Weakness: Does not address root causes of disproportionate impacts and inequitable access to resources
# Governance and Leadership Mechanisms to Activate Alignment & Coordination

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Centering community vision brings security and prosperity.

Healthy Ontario vision board that informed the city’s Transformative Climate Communities work. Photo: City of Ontario, CA.
Three Pillars of Climate Action

Mitigation
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Adaptation
Adapt and build resilience to climate impacts.

Loss & Damage
Compensate people for lost livelihoods, property, and loved ones.
How to Adapt

**Increase Adaptive Capacity**

Make sure people have the knowledge, money, and power they need to adapt.

Workers compile a project map prior to the Southwest Adaptation Forum. Photo: Melanie Lenart

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**Reduce Exposure**

Move people and things out of harms way

Mill Creek Park transformed the floodplain in downtown Stamford, CT to green space and buildings are constructed elsewhere. Photo: Sahar Coston-Hardy OLIN

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**Reduce Sensitivity**

Changes things so impacts are less damaging.

Urban tree canopy in Detroit helps protect residents from extreme heat. Photo: University of Michigan.