

# PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN: ONE YEAR LATER



One year after President Obama announced his Climate Action Plan, the administration has made marked progress in its initial implementation. The plan, announced June 25, 2013, outlines 75 goals in three areas: cutting carbon pollution in the United States, preparing the United States for the impacts of climate change, and leading international efforts to address climate change. The administration has made at least some progress on most of the plan's 75 goals; many of the specific tasks outlined have been completed. In several key areas, the administration has taken important first steps, but it is too early to gauge their success or ultimate impact.

With Congress unlikely to enact major climate legislation, the Climate Action Plan relies almost entirely on executive powers under existing laws—steps the administration can take on its own. The nature, scope and ambition of the plan's many elements vary widely. Some are discrete, relatively simple tasks within existing policies and programs; others require the administration to undertake formal rule-making processes. Achieving some of the plan's goal will require a transformation of the U.S. energy system over a period that will outlast President Obama's time in office.

Notable areas of progress include [steps to limit carbon pollution from power plants](#); improve energy efficiency; reduce methane and hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) emissions; help communities and industry become more resilient to climate change impacts; and end U.S. lending for coal-fired power plants overseas. The Obama Administration estimates steps taken this year, if fully implemented, will reduce carbon emissions by nearly 3 billion tons between 2020 and 2025.

The following sections summarize the status of key goals within the plan's three pillars. The table that follows assesses tracks progress on each of the plan's 75 goals. The summaries and qualitative assessments are based on publicly available information, including from the federal government and the Columbia Center for Climate Change Law's [President's Climate Action Plan Tracker](#).

## CUTTING CARBON POLLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

The first pillar of the plan includes commitments and goals to reduce emissions of major greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, and HFCs. It covers major economic sectors, including power, transportation, and buildings, and is geared toward achieving the administration's previously established goal of reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. (This would require reducing annual emissions by more than 600 million metric tons of carbon dioxide below 2014 levels by 2020.)

The most prominent objective within this pillar is reducing carbon pollution from power plants, which account for a third of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions,<sup>1</sup> making them the largest source. At the time he announced the plan, the president ordered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to propose regulations covering new power plants by September 2013 and existing power plants by June 2014. The agency met both deadlines. The [proposed rule for new power plants](#) would bar new coal-fired plants unless they employ carbon capture-and-storage technology. The Clean Power Plan proposal<sup>2</sup> for existing power plants would [establish different target emission rates](#) (pounds of carbon dioxide

per megawatt-hour) for each state, and allow them considerable flexibility in designing their implementation plans. EPA projects that the proposed state emission rates would yield a 30-percent cut in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 (a projected reduction of 383 million metric tons by 2020<sup>3</sup>). The administration will need to work expeditiously over the next year to meet its goal of finalizing the rule by June 2015. States will then have up to two years to submit their implementation plans to EPA.

The administration already took significant steps in 2010 and 2012 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks by dramatically [increasing their fuel economy](#). The next step outlined in the Climate Action Plan for the transportation sector, which accounted for 28 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in 2012,<sup>4</sup> is to strengthen fuel efficiency standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks. The president instructed the Department of Transportation and EPA to propose post-2018 fuel efficiency standards for these vehicles by March 2015 and to finalize the rules by March 2016. However, the administration has not made additional efforts toward other transportation commitments in plan, like increasing the role of alternative fuels in the U.S. marine vessel flag fleet.

Several steps have been taken to address two highly potent greenhouse gases, [HFCs and methane](#). EPA has submitted two regulatory proposals to the Office of Management and Budget for review related to HFCs. One would expand the number of acceptable alternatives to HFCs under its Significant New Alternatives Policy, and the other would delist specific uses of HFC-134a. The administration is also directing federal agency purchasing toward more climate-friendly alternatives to HFCs. The administration estimates that the HFC measures could reduce emissions by up to 135 million metric tons in 2020.<sup>5</sup>

A methane strategy announced in March 2014 outlines specific measures and timelines to be undertaken by federal agencies to reduce emissions from new and existing landfills, coal mines, agriculture, and the oil and gas industry. For the oil and gas sector, the strategy commits to soliciting input on, and potentially regulating, emissions from specific sources, reducing venting and flaring, and identifying potential downstream emission reductions. The administration estimates that the methane measures could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90 million metric tons in 2020.<sup>6</sup>

The administration's follow-up on other elements of this first pillar has been mixed. It has completed or made significant progress on many steps to strengthen energy efficiency standards, including finalizing a number of appliance standards that had been delayed during the president's first term. The Department of Energy (DOE) launched the first Quadrennial Energy Review in January 2014 and outlined the processes and outreach for its completion. But progress has been slower on steps to improve energy efficiency in federal facilities, including by synchronizing building codes.

## PREPARING THE UNITED STATES FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The second pillar of the plan focuses on strengthening resilience to climate change impacts. The plan commits federal resources and assistance to help make communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems more climate-resilient while improving the scientific basis for future actions.

The administration has made some progress on most goals related to making communities and infrastructure more resilient. A November 2013 executive order<sup>7</sup> directed a number of federal agencies to begin integrating climate resilience in a number of policy areas that, if carried through to completion, will fulfill many of the president's commitments. The Executive Order set up the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience to bring together decision makers across the country to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities. Some other actions, especially those providing resources for climate resilience and those dealing with Hurricane Sandy, have been completed.

Other elements are designed to protect economic sectors and natural resources against the threats of climate change. The administration has begun examining needs in this area, with a major study released by DOE on the vulnerability of critical energy and electricity infrastructure to climate change. The Department of Commerce released a vulnerability assessment on oceans, and additional assessments, including on water resources, are forthcoming from other agencies. Many resource-specific vulnerabilities highlighted in the plan have been addressed, including threats of reduced agricultural sustainability, drought, and wildfires. The administration

has not begun work on commitments to reduce vulnerabilities in the insurance sector and some aspects of the health sector.

The administration also committed to advance the science of climate measurement and adaptation and increase the availability, accessibility, and utility of climate-relevant scientific tools and information. Most significantly, in March 2014, the administration released the comprehensive [National Climate Assessment](#) outlining current and projected climate impacts by region and by sector. In March, the administration also announced its Climate Data Initiative, which makes public climate data easily accessible for users. The administration also has made progress on meeting other science-related commitments.

## LEADING INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

The third pillar of the plan focuses on strengthening international leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience to climate impacts. The administration commits in the plan to working with other countries bilaterally, through international fora and organizations, and through multilateral negotiations, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Bilaterally, the administration has made climate change a top priority in its high-level diplomacy, and launched joint initiatives with China and India. In the U.S.-led Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, the administration won support from other governments to develop a joint initiative to improve building sector energy efficiency. Although it also continues to work with other governments through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, no major advances have been reported over the past year.

The president has again proposed eliminating U.S. fossil fuel subsidies, but there is little support in Congress, and the administration continues to press through the World Trade Organization for negotiations to reduce tariffs on environmental goods. One major accomplishment was a decision to limit U.S. public financing through the Department of Treasury<sup>8</sup> and

Export-Import Bank<sup>9</sup> for new coal-fired power plants overseas, except for the poorest countries. Other countries and international finance institutions including the World Bank,<sup>10</sup> were encouraged to follow suit, and many have. However, the administration has not yet secured congressional support for further increases in support for climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries.

On the multilateral front, the administration is actively engaged in negotiations to achieve a new global climate agreement under the UNFCCC in late 2015, and has pledged to put forward its “intended nationally determined contribution” to the agreement in the first quarter of the year. Although the president and President Xi Jinping agreed to work together to advance efforts under the Montreal Protocol to phase out HFCs, little progress has been made. The United States and other parties to the International Civil Aviation Organization agreed in September 2013 to develop a market-based mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from aviation. However, there has been no visible progress over the past year in reducing emissions from the shipping sector through the International Maritime Organization.

## CONCLUSION

One year after its launch, the administration has made significant progress toward achieving many of the goals of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, but overall, the record has been mixed. The plan demonstrates a commitment toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and is important to meeting the U.S. goal of reducing emissions 17 percent by 2020, especially in the absence of congressional action. If progress in the first year is mirrored in future years, the United States could achieve its emission reduction goal. However, additional actions must be undertaken or completed before success can be assured.

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### Other C2ES Resources:

C2ES Climate Action Plan Resource Webpage  
<http://www.c2es.org/federal/obama-climate-plan-resources>

## STATUS UPDATE: PRESIDENT OBAMA’S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

*President Obama's Climate Action Plan relies almost entirely on executive powers under existing laws—steps the administration can take on its own. The nature, scope and ambition of the plan’s many elements vary widely. Some are discrete, relatively simple tasks within existing policies and programs; others require the administration to undertake formal rule-making processes; and some are continuations of existing government programs and policies. Achieving some of the plan’s goal will require a transformation of the U.S. energy system over a period that will outlast President Obama’s time in office.*

*This chart describes each of the plan’s 75 key goals and the status and description of progress toward reaching that goal. The summaries and qualitative assessments are based on publicly available information, including from the federal government and the Columbia Center for Climate Change Law’s [President’s Climate Action Plan Tracker](#).*

ITEM	PROGRESS
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### PILLAR 1: CUT CARBON POLLUTION IN AMERICA

#### ***I. Deploying Clean Energy***

##### **A. Cutting carbon pollution from power plants**

The president issued a memorandum for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue carbon pollution standards for new and existing power plants.

EPA issued a proposed carbon pollution standard for new power plants in September 2013, and a proposed carbon pollution standard for existing power plants (called the Clean Power Plan) in June 2014. The standard for existing plants would set different target emission rates (pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour) for each state and is projected to achieve a 30 percent cut from 2005 emissions by 2030.

##### **B. Promoting American leadership in renewable energy**

To double renewable generation between the end of Obama's first term and 2020.

According to the Energy Information Agency's most recent “reference case” projections, which do not consider new measures under the president’s Climate Action Plan, renewable generation from solar, wind and geothermal is expected to be 88 percent higher in 2020 than at the end of Obama’s first term. An additional 10 GW of geothermal, wind and solar projects are planned on public lands as part of the president’s plan. Therefore, the target is achievable, assuming these new projects operate at 20 percent or more of their aggregate generating capacity.

##### ***Accelerating clean energy permitting***

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is to permit an additional 10 gigawatts of renewables on public between October 2012 and 2020.

DOI permitted 3.696 gigawatts of capacity on federal lands between October 2012 and May 2014; permits for another 1.489 gigawatts are pending.

Designate Red Rock Hydroelectric Plant in Iowa to participate in the Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard for high-priority projects.

The plant was added to Federal Infrastructure Projects Permitting Dashboard in June 2013.

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<p>The Department of Defense (DOD) is to install 3 gigawatts of renewable energy in military installations by 2025.</p>	<p>This goal was put into place before the announcement of the plan. Since then, several renewable energy installations have been made at military facilities, and DOD has instituted new policies and practices to facilitate renewable energy use.</p>
<p>Federal agencies will survey existing projects of renewable installations on federally subsidized housing stock and achieve 100 megawatts of capacity by 2020.</p>	<p>The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is seeking approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to create a baseline to work towards this goal.</p>
<p><b>Expanding and modernizing the electric grid</b></p>	
<p>The president issued a memorandum directing agencies to streamline the siting, permitting, and review process for transmission projects across federal, state, and tribal governments.</p>	<p>Federal agencies are working through specific steps outlined in the memorandum that must be completed by November 2014. Several significant steps have been completed on time.</p>
<p><b>C. Unlocking long-term investment in clean energy innovation</b></p>	
<p><b>Spurring innovation in advanced fossil energy projects</b></p>	
<p>The Department of Energy (DOE) will issue a final solicitation by fall of 2013 that would make up to \$8 billion in loan guarantee authority available for advanced fossil projects under the Section 1703 program.</p>	<p>The solicitation was issued with applications due in February 2014.</p>
<p><b>Instituting a Quadrennial Federal Energy Review</b></p>	
<p>The administration will conduct a Quadrennial Energy Review (QER), and the first review will focus on infrastructure challenges.</p>	<p>The administration launched the first QER in January 2014 and outlined the processes and outreach for its completion. Numerous public meetings have been held around the country.</p>
<p><b>II. Building a 21st-Century Transportation Sector</b></p>	
<p><b>A. Increasing fuel economy</b></p>	
<p>The president will partner with stakeholders to develop post-2018 fuel economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles.</p>	<p>The president directed EPA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop a proposal for post-2018 standards by March 2015 and to complete the rule by March 2016.</p>
<p><b>B. Developing and deploying advanced transportation technologies</b></p>	
<p>The administration will leverage public and private partnerships to deploy clean batteries and fuel cells in all transportation modes.</p>	<p>Several pre-existing public-private partnerships to advance battery, fuel cell, and hydrogen transportation have continued.</p>
<p>DOT will lead an exploration of strategies for integrating alternative fuel vessels into the U.S. flag fleet.</p>	<p>No additional public action.</p>
<p>The administration will continue work to improve transportation in communities nationwide.</p>	<p>Various ongoing and new programs and grants through DOT serve this goal.</p>

ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>III. Cutting Energy Waste in Homes, Businesses, and Factories</b>	
<b>A. Reducing energy bills for American families and businesses</b>	
<b>Establishing a new goal for energy efficiency standards</b>	
Efficiency standards for appliances and federal buildings set in the first and second terms combined will reduce carbon pollution by at least 3 billion metric tons cumulatively by 2030.	Appliance standards issued by the administration are projected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 1.879 billion metric tons through 2030. Standards for additional appliances may be forthcoming.
<b>Reducing barriers to investment in energy efficiency</b>	
The Rural Utilities Service will finalize an update to its Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program to provide \$250 million for rural utilities to finance private efficiency investments.	The update was finalized in December 2013.
The Rural Energy for America program will be streamlined to provide grants and loan guarantees directly to agricultural producers and small businesses.	In November 2013, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced funding for rural energy efficiency projects.
The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) will convene stakeholders for a roundtable to discuss options for factoring energy efficiency in mortgage and appraisal processes.	A Green Mortgage Roundtable was held in July 2013, and FHA is piloting the use of Energy Efficient Mortgages.
<b>Expanding the president's Better Buildings Challenge</b>	
The Better Buildings Challenge will be expanded to multifamily housing.	Multifamily buildings were included in the Better Buildings Challenge in December 2013.
The administration is launching the Better Buildings Accelerator to support and encourage adoption of state and local policies to increase energy efficiency.	DOE launched three accelerator tracks in December 2013.
<b>IV. Reducing other greenhouse gas emissions</b>	
<b>A. Curbing emissions of hydrofluorocarbons</b>	
EPA will use authority through the Significant New Alternatives Policy Program to encourage private sector investment in low-emissions technology by identifying and approving climate-friendly chemicals while prohibiting certain uses of the most harmful alternatives.	EPA has submitted two regulatory proposals to OMB for review. One would expand the number of acceptable alternatives to hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). The second proposed rule would prohibit specific uses of HFC-134a in applications where more climate-friendly alternatives have become available.
The administration is to purchase cleaner alternatives to HFCs whenever feasible and transition to equipment that uses safer alternatives.	The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive has taken the lead on efforts to direct federal agency purchasing toward more climate-friendly alternatives.

ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>B. Reducing methane emissions</b>	
<b>Developing an interagency methane strategy</b>	
EPA will work with other agencies to develop a comprehensive, interagency methane strategy.	A methane strategy announced in March 2014 sets timelines for federal agencies to propose methane regulations for new landfills and solicit input on potential regulation of existing landfills; gather public input on the development of a program to reduce methane emissions from mines on federal lands; and develop voluntary strategies to reduce methane emissions from the dairy sector. In the oil and gas sector, agencies are to solicit input on, and potentially regulate, emissions from specific sources, propose updated standards to reduce venting and flaring from oil and gas production on public lands, and identify potential downstream emission reductions through the QER.
<b>Pursing a collaborative approach to reducing emissions</b>	
The administration will work with states and private sector to reduce emissions across sectors, as part of the methane strategy.	DOE held four stakeholder roundtables on methane emissions, and EPA solicited input on five technical papers on significant sources of methane emissions in the oil and gas sector.
<b>C. Preserving the role of forests in mitigating climate change</b>	
The administration is working to find new approaches to protect and restore forests and other critical landscapes.	The Forest Service announced 13 pilot projects to make lands on the border of public and private ownership more resilient.
<b><i>V. Leading at the federal level</i></b>	
<b>A. Leading in clean energy</b>	
The federal government will consume 20 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2020.	In December 2013, the president issued a memorandum describing interim goals, priority actions, and methods for calculating federal renewable energy use.
<b><i>B. Federal government leadership in energy efficiency</i></b>	
The administration will initiate a partnership with the private sector to work towards a standard contract for financing federal investments in energy efficiency.	No known actions taken.
Federal agencies will work together to synchronize building codes.	In May 2014, DOE made a preliminary determination that the latest commercial building energy code provides an additional 8.5 percent energy savings over the previous Standard, and up to 30 percent savings compared to predominant state energy codes.
The administration will leverage the Green Button standard, which aggregates building energy data, within federal facilities.	In December 2013, the president issued a memorandum outlining steps for federal agencies to use the Green Button standard in their energy management practices. In May 2014, the General Services Administration announced that it will use Green Button technology across the government to save energy.

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**PILLAR 2: PREPARE THE UNITED STATES FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

***I. Building stronger and safer communities and infrastructure***

**A. Directing agencies to support climate resilient investment**

<p>The president will direct federal agencies to identify and remove barriers to making climate-resilient investments; identify and remove counterproductive policies that increase vulnerabilities; and encourage and support smarter, more resilient investments, including through agency grants, technical assistance, and other programs, in sectors from transportation and water management to conservation and disaster relief.</p>	<p>The president issued an executive order in November 2013 establishing an interagency Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. Agencies are to review and reform policies to encourage climate resilience.</p>
<p>Agencies will also be directed to ensure that climate risk-management considerations are fully integrated into federal infrastructure and natural resource management planning.</p>	<p>Executive Order 13514 in 2009 directed agencies to identify vulnerabilities and develop climate adaptation plans, which many agencies released prior to the Climate Action Plan in 2013. In response to Executive Order 13653 in November 2013, agencies are also integrating climate change considerations into operations, missions, and programs.</p>
<p>EPA will integrate consideration climate change impacts and adaptation into major programs including Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and brownfields cleanups.</p>	<p>In November 2013, EPA released 17 program and regional adaptation plans, including for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and brownfields cleanups.</p>
<p>HUD is already requiring grant recipients in the Hurricane Sandy-affected region to take sea-level rise into account.</p>	<p>HUD issued these requirements in April 2013, prior to the president's announcement.</p>

**B. Establishing a State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness**

<p>The president will establish a short-term task force of state, local, and tribal officials to advise on key actions the federal government can take to better support local preparedness and resilience-building efforts.</p>	<p>The Task Force was created by executive order in November 2013, and held meetings in December 2014 and February 2014.</p>
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**C. Supporting communities as they prepare for climate impacts**

<p>Agencies will provide targeted support and assistance to communities and tribes.</p>	<p>EPA has issued grants to communities for resilience and offered other support for communities.</p>
<p>“Environmental Justice Progress Reports” will be used to identify innovative ways to prepare for and recover from climate impacts.</p>	<p>Annual Environmental Justice Progress Reports covered climate change impacts before the president's announcement.</p>



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**D. Boosting the resilience of buildings and infrastructure**

<p>The National Institutes of Science and Technology (NIST) will convene a panel on disaster-resilience standards for communities.</p>	<p>The first of six planned NIST resilience workshops took place in April 2014.</p>
<p>Increase the resilience of federal facilities and infrastructure.</p>	<p>In November 2013, the president issued an executive order directing federal agencies to develop, implement, and update comprehensive plans that integrate consideration of climate change into agency operations and overall mission objectives, and to submit those plans to the White House Council on Environmental Quality and OMB for review.</p>
<p>FY2014 budget proposes \$200 million for Climate Ready Infrastructure through the Transportation Leadership Awards program.</p>	<p>This item was included in the president's budget proposal.</p>

**E. Rebuilding and learning from Hurricane Sandy**

<p>The Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force will deliver a rebuilding strategy with lessons learned in August 2013.</p>	<p>The Task Force released its Rebuilding Strategy in August 2013.</p>
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**II. Protecting our economy and natural resources**

**A. Identifying vulnerabilities of key sectors to climate change**

<p>DOE will release an assessment of climate change impacts on the energy sector.</p>	<p>In July 2013, DOE released an assessment of the vulnerability of critical energy and electricity infrastructure to climate change.</p>
<p>Agency reports on climate impacts to health, transportation, food supplies, oceans, and coastal communities.</p>	<p>The Department of Commerce released a report on the impacts of climate change on oceans in August 2013, and the White House released a report on the impacts of climate change on health in June 2013. DOI has a report on impacts on natural resources under way. EPA released a draft report on the impacts of climate change on human health in February 2014.</p>

**B. Promoting resilience in the health sector**

<p>The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will create a public-private partnership to identify best practices for the sector to be climate resilient.</p>	<p>No known actions taken.</p>
<p>HHS will share best practices among federal health facilities.</p>	<p>No known actions taken.</p>
<p>HHS will build on pilots in 16 states to train public health professions to prepare for climate change, health risks, and resilience measures.</p>	<p>The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has built on the Climate-Ready States &amp; Cities Initiative pilot by adding two pilot locations. CDC now provides technical assistance to 16 states and 2 cities to assist public health practitioners undertake activities such as vulnerability assessments, mapping, and planning for extreme heat. CDC also hosts climate and health webinars for professionals.</p>

ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>C. Promoting insurance leadership for climate safety</b>	
The administration will convene insurance industry representatives and other stakeholders to explore best practices for insurers.	Several NIST workshops on disaster resilience included insurance industry representatives but focused on best practices for communities (in building design, codes, practices, etc.) and less on best practices for insurers.
<b>D. Conserving land and water resources</b>	
The president will direct federal agencies to identify and evaluate additional approaches to improve our natural defenses against extreme weather, protect biodiversity and conserve natural resources in the face of a changing climate, and manage our public lands and natural systems to store more carbon.	In November 2013, the president issued an executive order directing federal agencies to ensure that their land- and water-related policies, programs, and regulations help make U.S. watersheds, natural resources, and ecosystems, and the communities and economies that depend on them, more resilient in the face of a changing climate.
<b>E. Maintaining agricultural sustainability</b>	
USDA will create seven new Regional Climate Hubs to deliver tailored, science-based knowledge to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners.	The creation of seven regional hubs was announced in February 2014.
DOI's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Bureau of Reclamation will provide grants and technical support to agricultural water users for more water-efficient practices in the face of drought and long-term climate change.	NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical support to agricultural producers. Several projects supported by EQIP employ water-use efficiency strategies to help farmers increase yields with less water. The Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program provides technical and financial support for water projects that conserve and use water more efficiently, facilitate water markets, or carry out other activities to address climate-related impacts on water. The program also identifies adaptive measures to address climate change and its impact on future water demands.
<b>F. Managing drought</b>	
The administration will launch a cross-agency National Drought Resilience Partnership.	The National Drought Resilience Partnership and its first year goals were announced in November 2013.
<b>G. Reducing wildfire risk</b>	
Federal agencies will expand and prioritize forest and rangeland restoration efforts in order to make natural areas and communities less vulnerable to catastrophic fire, including the Western Watershed Enhancement Partnership.	The Western Watershed Enhancement Partnership was announced in July 2013, and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy was released by USDA and DOI in April 2014.

ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>H. Preparing for future floods</b>	
Federal agencies will update their flood-risk reduction standards for federally funded projects to reflect a consistent approach that accounts for sea-level rise and other factors affecting flood risks.	A draft Federal Flood Risk Management Standard was submitted to an interagency working group for approval in March 2014. Following this approval, the draft standard will be presented to the National Security Council for Interagency Policy Committee review in June 2014.
<b>III. Using sound science to manage climate impacts</b>	
<b>A. Developing actionable climate science</b>	
FY2014 Budget provides more than \$2.7 billion, largely through the 13-agency U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), to increase understanding of climate-change impacts, establish a public-private partnership to explore risk and catastrophe modeling, and develop the information and tools needed by decision-makers to respond to both long-term climate change impacts and near-term effects of extreme weather.	The president's FY2015 budget proposes \$2.5 billion for the USGCRP to undertake these efforts.
<b>B. Assessing climate-change impacts in the United States</b>	
The administration will release the National Climate Assessment in 2014.	The National Climate Assessment was released in May 2014.
<b>C. Launching a climate data initiative</b>	
The administration will launch a Climate Data Initiative for the private sector to use public climate data.	The administration announced the Climate Data Initiative in March 2014, including the launch of climate.data.gov offering the general public and communities climate data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Department of Defense. The first data available focuses on coastal flooding and sea level rise.
<b>D. Providing a toolkit for climate resilience</b>	
Federal agencies will create a virtual climate-resilience toolkit that centralizes access to data-driven resilience tools, services, and best practices, including those developed through the Climate Data Initiative.	EPA released a tool to help local governments assess storm-water control measures in January 2014, and the president's FY2015 budget includes funding for other parts of a climate toolkit.

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### PILLAR 3: LEAD INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

#### *I. Working with other countries to take action to address climate change*

##### **A. Enhancing multilateral engagement with major economies**

The administration will use the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF) to launch a major initiative on efficiency gains in the buildings sector.	In September 2013, MEF participants agreed to develop an initiative on building sector energy efficiency.
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##### **B. Expanding bilateral cooperation with major emerging economies.**

The administration will find new areas for cooperation, including using the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs by 2050.	In July 2013, the United States and China agreed to five new action initiatives through the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group, and in February 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry announced that implementation plans for the initiatives were complete. In June, the United States and India announced the creation of a climate change working group, which was formalized in September 2013. In September 2013, the United States and China agreed to support establishment of a contact group to negotiate a phase-out of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol on HFCs. Several other bilateral programs with China and India related to clean energy and energy efficiency have progressed or been expanded.
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##### **C. Combatting short-lived climate pollutants**

The administration will continue existing engagements with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollution; and the Global Methane Initiative.	No significant new actions taken.
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##### **D. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.**

The administration is working with partner countries to put in place the systems and institutions necessary to significantly reduce global land-use-related emissions and will continue existing engagement through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, and Forest Investment Program.	The United States joined partners to launch the Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes to reduce emissions related to land use.
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ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>E. Expanding clean energy use and cut energy waste</b>	
The administration will promote global fuel-switching from coal to gas and adoption of heavy-duty natural gas vehicles.	No significant new actions taken.
The administration will expand efforts to promote nuclear energy generation.	No significant new actions taken.
The administration will promote clean coal technologies through bilateral and multilateral efforts.	No significant new actions taken.
The administration will use Clean Energy Ministerial to expand efforts on improving building efficiency, reducing energy consumption at water and wastewater treatment facilities, and expanding global appliance standards.	The May 2014 Clean Energy Ministerial in Seoul, Korea, discussed key barriers and solutions in energy-efficient cooling and demand response in buildings. A roundtable discussion focused on reducing cooling demand through energy efficiency improvements in cooling technologies and demand response measures that deliver financial benefits through energy savings to households, business, and institutions.
<b>F. Negotiating global free trade in environmental goods and services.</b>	
The United States will work with trading partners to launch negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) towards global free trade in environmental goods, including clean energy technologies such as solar, wind, hydro and geothermal based on tariff reduction reached in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.	The United States Trade Representative announced a proposal in January 2014 with major trade partners to eliminate tariffs on environmental goods through the WTO. The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) held a public hearing in June 2014 to gather comments and input on American negotiating objectives for the proposed WTO Environmental Goods Agreement
<b>G. Phasing out subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption of fossil fuels</b>	
President Obama is calling for the elimination of U.S. fossil fuel tax subsidies in his Fiscal Year 2014 budget and will continue to collaborate with partners around the world toward this goal.	The president's proposal was not approved by Congress, and the president made the proposal in FY2015 as well.
<b>H. Leading global sector public financing towards cleaner energy</b>	
The president calls for an end to U.S. government support for public financing of new coal plants overseas, except for (a) the most efficient coal technology available in the world's poorest countries in cases where no other economically feasible alternative exists, or (b) facilities deploying carbon capture and sequestration technologies.	In October 2013, the Department of the Treasury issued guidelines limiting public financing of coal plants as outlined by President.
As part of this new commitment, the United States will work actively to secure the agreement of other countries and the multilateral development banks to adopt similar policies as soon as possible.	In June 2013, the World Bank announced it would end coal financing "except in rare circumstances." In addition, Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have put in place similar restrictions.

ITEM	PROGRESS
<b>I. Strengthening global resilience to climate change</b>	
The administration will strengthen government and local community planning and response capacities, such as by increasing water storage and water use efficiency to cope with the increased variability in water supply.	No known actions taken.
The administration will develop innovative financial risk management tools such as index insurance to help smallholder farmers and pastoralists manage risk associated with changing rainfall patterns and drought.	The U.S. Agency for International Development is working with the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia and Senegal to help local insurance companies develop weather-based insurance for rural households.
The administration will distribute drought-resistant seeds and promote management practices that increase farmers' ability to cope with climate impacts.	No known actions taken.
<b>J. Mobilizing climate finance</b>	
The administration will contribute funds to promote low-emissions, climate-resilient development.	In accordance with the fast start commitment made in Copenhagen, the United States has provided \$7.5 billion during the three-year fast start finance period. Of this amount, \$2.3 billion was provided in FY2012. The three-year fast start finance total consists of more than \$4.7 billion of Congressionally appropriated assistance and more than \$2.7 billion from U.S. development finance and export credit agencies.
<b>II. Leading efforts to address climate change through international negotiations</b>	
The administration will seek a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate agreement that is ambitious, inclusive, and flexible.	The United States is actively engaged in negotiations toward a new UNFCCC agreement to start in 2020, and has pledged to put forward is "intended nationally determined contribution" in the first quarter of 2015.
The administration will lead efforts through the Montreal Protocol in support of an amendment that would phase down HFCs.	A United States-backed proposal to negotiate an amendment to the Montreal Protocol failed at the 2013 Meeting of the Parties. A growing number of countries support such action, and the United States and its partners re-submitted the proposal for the 2014 meeting.
The administration will implement the first-ever, sector-wide energy efficiency standards through the International Maritime Organization.	No known actions taken.
The administration has ambitious aspirational emissions and energy efficiency targets through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and is working towards agreement to develop a comprehensive global approach.	The 38th ICAO Assembly in September 2013 agreed to develop a global market-based measure to reduce emissions, for agreement at the next ICAO Assembly in 2016 and to enter into force by 2020.

## ENDNOTES

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5 U.S. Department of State, *United States Climate Action Report 2014*, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/rls/rpts/car6/index.htm>.

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The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) is an independent nonprofit organization working to promote practical, effective policies and actions to address the twin challenges of energy and climate change.