

White House: Biden Administration Invests \$1 Billion To Protect Communities, Families, and Businesses Before Disaster Strikes

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FACT SHEET:

Biden Administration Invests \$1 Billion To Protect Communities, Families, and Businesses Before Disaster Strikes

Funding Builds on Efforts to Enhance Climate Change Resilience as President Biden Visits FEMA Ahead of Hurricane Season

Today, President Biden will meet with members of his homeland security and climate teams at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Response Coordination Center in Washington, D.C. to receive an update on preparations for the 2021 hurricane season. In advance of the President's visit, the Administration is announcing it will direct \$1 billion for communities, states, and Tribal governments into pre-disaster mitigation resources to prepare for extreme weather events and other disasters, and the Administration is announcing the development of next generation climate data systems at NASA to help understand and track how climate change is impacting communities.

In 2020, the United States experienced a record year for extreme weather, including an unprecedented 30 named storms in the Atlantic Basin. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is anticipating another above-normal hurricane season this year.

The costs of extreme weather events, in lives and economic damage, have been staggering. Last year alone, communities across the United States suffered through 22 separate weather and climate-related disasters with losses exceeding \$1 billion

each, shattering previous records, at a cumulative price tag of nearly \$100 billion. This year has already wrought devastation, as unusual winter storms crossed Texas and the south.

On May 20th, NOAA released its [2021 Atlantic hurricane season outlook](#). Forecasters predict a 60% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season, and a 10% chance of a below-normal season. Additionally, forecasters expect a likely range of 13 to 20 named storms, of which six to 10 could become hurricanes.

As climate change threatens to bring more extreme events like increased floods, sea level rise, and intensifying droughts and wildfires, it is our responsibility to better prepare and support communities, families, and businesses before disaster – not just after. This includes investing in climate research to improve our understanding of these extreme weather events and our decision making on climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. It also means ensuring that communities have the resources they need to build resilience prior to these crises.

President Biden has elevated the importance of climate resilience on the global stage and prioritized resilience in his investment agenda, including in the American Jobs Plan and the FY22 discretionary request.

NEW STEPS TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Today, President Biden continued to act through a whole-of-government approach in support of climate resilience goals. The Administration is directing \$1 billion in pre-disaster mitigation resources to communities, and it is announcing next generation climate data systems that will help us understand and track how climate change impacts communities.

Today, the Administration is announcing it will:

- **Provide \$1 billion for communities through FEMA's Pre-Disaster Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program.** FEMA will provide \$1 billion in 2021 for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, a portion of which will be targeted to disadvantaged communities. BRIC supports states, local communities, tribes, and territories in undertaking pre-disaster hazard mitigation projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards. This level of funding

level is double the amount provided last year. The program seeks to categorically shift the federal focus from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience so that when the next hurricane, flood, or wildfire comes, communities are better prepared.

- **Develop and launch a new NASA mission concept for an Earth System Observatory.** As the number of extreme weather events increases due to climate change, the ability to forecast and monitor natural disasters is integral for the nation's preparation, mitigation, and resilience. NASA's Earth System Observatory will be a new architecture of advanced spaceborne Earth observation systems, providing the world with an unprecedented understanding of the critical interactions between Earth's atmosphere, land, ocean, and ice processes. These processes determine how the changing climate will play out at regional and local levels, on near and long-term time scales.

CONTINUE A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Today's action builds on the whole-of-government approach President Biden is taking to climate resilience. Resilience is a key focus area of the National Climate Task Force as they drive a number of actions to strengthen the resilience of our infrastructure, forests, coastal areas, oceans, range lands, and farm lands to drought, wildfire, heatwaves, and other climate impacts.

Examples of actions to date across the federal government include:

- **Issuing an Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk.** Last week, President Biden issued an [Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk](#) that will help the American people better understand how climate change can impact their financial security. It will strengthen the U.S. financial system and it will inform concrete decisions that the federal government can take to mitigate the risks of climate change. With so much at stake, this Executive Order ensures that the right rules are in place to properly analyze and mitigate these risks. That includes disclosing these risks to the public, and empowering the American people to make informed financial decisions.
- **Developing agency climate adaptation and resilience plans.** The Administration has taken significant steps to revitalize Federal climate adaptation and resilience by initiating the development of Agency Climate Action Plans as required by [Executive Order 14008](#). The Plans, which are being

developed by 36 agencies, broadened the scope of relevant climate adaptation and resilience experts to include acquisitions and finance professionals and focus on integrating climate information in the management of procurement, real property, public lands and water, and financial programs for climate informed decisions.

- **Setting a responsible flood risk standard for the federal government.** Through his Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk, President Biden reinstated the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard to improve the resilience of American communities and federal assets against the impacts of flood damage, which is predicted to increase over time due to the effects of climate change. The Standard requires federal agencies to consider current and future flood risk when taxpayer dollars are used to build or rebuild in floodplains. Implementing guidelines offer a toolkit of flexible and practical options to implement these protections.
- **Investing in resilience through the American Jobs Plan and the FY22 budget.** Resilience and adaptation are critical priorities for President Biden and his administration. Americans around the country have been feeling the effect of climate change and underinvestment in resilience. Investments to make our infrastructure more resilient are a key piece of the [American Jobs Plan](#) and the President's FY 2022 Discretionary Request. In addition to supporting the goal that every dollar spent on rebuilding our infrastructure during the Biden administration will be used to prevent, reduce and withstand the impacts of the climate crisis – the American Jobs Plan calls for \$50 billion in dedicated resilience investments. The [President's FY22 Discretionary Request](#) also includes significant budget increases to enable incorporation of climate impacts into disaster planning and projects to ensure that the Nation is rebuilding smarter and safer for the future.
- **Integrating resilience into the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.** The [White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) (WHEJAC) was established by President Biden's Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad to fulfill his and Vice President Harris's commitment to confronting longstanding environmental injustices and ensure that historically marginalized and polluted, overburdened communities have greater input on federal policies and decisions. The WHEJAC members are to provide advice and recommendations to the Environmental Justice Interagency Council and the Chair of CEQ on a whole-of-government approach to environmental justice, including, but not limited to, climate change mitigation, resilience, and disaster management.

- **Establishing an Interagency Working Group to better prepare and respond to drought.** The National Climate Task Force, as part of its whole-of-government consideration of climate issues, [established an Interagency Working Group to address worsening drought conditions](#) in the West and to support farmers, ranchers, Tribes, and communities impacted by ongoing water shortages. The Working Group is co-chaired by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture and will build upon existing resources to help coordinate across the federal government, working in partnership with state, local, and Tribal governments to address the needs of communities suffering from drought-related impacts. DOI and USDA have already announced more than \$25 million to assist farmers, ranchers and communities in the Klamath Basin to help them in the face of a severe drought.
- **Increasing investments in forest restoration to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire.** Climate change is increasing the severity and frequency of wildfire seasons, which are transforming our Nation's forests at an unprecedented rate, and destroying homes and businesses. The Biden-Harris Administration's discretionary budget request provides nearly \$1.7 billion for high-priority hazardous fuels and forest resilience projects at a scope and scale to meet the challenge we face, an increase of \$476 million over the 2021 enacted level. This funding supports the Administration's science-based approach to vegetation management at the Forest Service and DOI to protect watersheds, wildlife habitat, and the wildland-urban interface.
- **Launching a resilience focused task force at the Department of the Interior.** Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Deb Haaland announced a [new Climate Task Force](#) at DOI that will develop a strategy to reduce climate pollution; improve and increase adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change; address current and historic environmental injustice; protect public health; and conserve DOI managed lands. Its mission will include supporting the development and use of the best available science to evaluate the greenhouse gas emissions and associated climate change impacts of Federal land uses as well as opportunities to increase carbon sequestration; to predict the effects of climate change on public lands and land uses; and to assess and adopt measures to increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of public lands.
- **Launching a new approach to climate change adaptation and resilience at the Department of Homeland Security.** Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas announced the launch of the [DHS Climate Change Action Group](#), a coordinating body comprised of the Department's

senior leadership that will drive urgent action to address the climate crisis and will report directly to the Secretary. DHS also recently published a public Request for Information on how FEMA can ensure its programs advance equity and increase resilience for all – especially among those who are disproportionately at risk from the impacts of climate change.

- **Utilizing a Climate Assessment Tool to Analyze Climate Vulnerabilities at the Department of Defense.** Climate change has been identified by the Department of Defense (DoD) as a critical national security threat and threat multiplier. As a result, DoD has undertaken assessments of the impacts that the climate crisis has on American military installations. The DoD [announced a plan](#) to complete climate exposure assessments on all major U.S. installations within 12 months and all major installations outside the continental U.S. within 24 months using the Defense Climate Assessment Tool (DCAT). The DCAT helps identify the climate hazards to which DoD installations are most exposed, which is the first step in addressing the potential physical harm, security impacts, and degradation in readiness resulting from global climate change.
- **Tracking the indicators of climate change at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.** For the first time in four years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has updated and [relaunched its Climate Change Indicators](#). This comprehensive resource presents compelling and clear evidence of changes to our climate reflected in rising temperatures, increased ocean acidity, sea level rise, and changing river flooding, droughts, heat waves, and wildfires, among other indicators. The long-overdue update to this crucial scientific resource shows that climate change has become even more evident, stronger, and extreme, and underscores the urgency for action on the climate crisis.
- **Releasing new U.S. Climate Normals at the NOAA.** NOAA recently released the [U.S. Climate Normals](#), a large suite of data products that provide information about typical climate conditions for thousands of locations across the United States. Normals act both as a ruler to compare today's weather and tomorrow's forecast, and as a predictor of conditions in the near future. These data products assist agencies and State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, communities, and businesses in preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- **Investing in grid and community resilience at the Department of Energy.** The Department of Energy is investing in grid resilience and energy resilience, including microgrid strategies, through research under the [Grid](#)

[Modernization Initiative](#). In partnership with the National Laboratories, the Department is developing a set of comprehensive energy resilience metrics and modeling capabilities to mitigate climate impacts to our energy infrastructure. The Department is also investing in projects that improve community resilience by deploying energy storage and microgrid technologies. In addition, for communities across the West, the Department is working with the Western Area Power Administration and Bonneville Power Administration to aggressively forecast, model and mitigate the potential impacts of severe climate-change-related droughts and fires on electricity systems.

- **Building climate and resilience considerations into transportation discretionary grants at the U.S. Department of Transportation.** The U.S. Department of Transportation is incorporating climate and resilience criteria into over \$2 billion in discretionary grant programs, including the [RAISE](#), INFRA, and Port Infrastructure Development grant programs. This will promote transportation investments that are future-proofed against extreme weather events. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has also issued new guidance for planning and design for highways in coastal areas.

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