



OVERVIEW: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO CONGRESS BY THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

On June 30, 2020, the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, chaired by Representative Kathy Castor (D-FL-14), issued its long-awaited Majority staff report titled *"Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America."* The Climate Crisis Action Plan includes a set of policy recommendations intended to serve as a roadmap for Congress to facilitate a clean energy transition in a manner that creates jobs, protects workers, advances environmental justice, safeguards natural systems, and bolsters our nation's climate resilience.

The primary emissions objectives of this plan are to reach 100% clean, net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide in the U.S. by no later than 2050 and to achieve net-negative emissions during the second half of the century. In the interim, it calls for the establishment of ambitious 2030 and 2040 targets to assess national progress on decarbonization, with a particular focus on distributional impacts, i.e., environmental justice. The Climate Crisis Action Plan by no means limits its focus to emissions. Totalling almost 550 pages, the plan details hundreds of policy recommendations to Congress, covering an array of environmental, energy, economic, and public health issues, which it divides into twelve key pillars.

The plan can largely be viewed as a policy index for the left-leaning approach to climate change, though it does not go as far as the Green New Deal in some respects, such as calling for universal healthcare or the nationalization of the electricity sector. It does, however, recommend the same bold standards on electricity, buildings, and transportation that form the core of WA Governor Jay Inslee's climate plan. Moreover, like former Vice President Joe Biden's climate platform, the Climate Crisis Action Plan calls for major investments in domestic industries, climate resilience, and a wide array of infrastructures. In alignment with progressive climate priorities, the plan also places great significance on justice — both for historically-disadvantaged communities and for fossil fuel workers displaced by a clean energy transition. Finally, the Climate Crisis Action Plan tackles other broad issues, such as public health, national security, ocean conservation, election law, broadband, and many more, all through a climate policy lens.

The twelve pillars and their accompanying policy recommendations to Congress are outlined below—

PILLAR ONE: INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE TO BUILD A JUST, EQUITABLE, & RESILIENT CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

(i) Build a Cleaner, More Resilient Electricity Sector.

- Enact a Clean Energy Standard to achieve net-zero emissions in the electricity sector by 2040.
- Adopt an Energy Efficiency Resource Standard to satisfy demand and save consumers money.
- Enhance clean energy tax incentives and grant programs.
- Invest in research and development across technologies, especially in energy storage.

- Ensure that historically-disadvantaged communities have equitable access to clean energy.

(ii) Build a Cleaner, More Resilient Transportation Sector.

- Expedite deployment of zero-emission transportation technologies.
- Set strong GHG emissions standards for cars, heavy-duty trucks, and aviation.
- Enact a national sales standard to achieve 100% sales of zero-emission cars by 2035 and heavy-duty trucks by 2040.
- Provide incentives to build out zero-emission fueling infrastructure across the country.
- Establish a Low Carbon Fuel Standard to reduce emissions from remaining gasoline-powered vehicles and transportation modes.
- Invest in aggressive research to develop new zero-emission technologies and fuels.
- Work with local communities to make housing, businesses, and critical services more accessible.
- Double federal spending on public transit and other zero-carbon modes to enhance affordable, lower-carbon options.

(iii) Build and Upgrade Homes and Businesses to Maximize Energy Efficiency.

- Incentivize states and cities to adopt updated model building codes that account for emissions.
- Establish tax incentives for the construction of net-zero buildings, with the goal of making all new residential and commercial buildings net-zero emissions by 2030.
- Require new federal buildings to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.
- Set benchmarking requirements for commercial buildings and encourage cities and states to adopt performance-based standards for buildings.
- Provide incentives for energy efficiency improvements, onsite renewable energy generation, and electrification of end uses in buildings, such as space and water heating.
- Invest in large-scale weatherization and efficiency in low-income and frontline communities.
- Require federal buildings to undergo deep energy retrofits, perform energy and emissions benchmarking, and meet ambitious energy use intensity targets.
- Incentivize building reuse and require federal building to use lower-emission building materials.

(iv) Invest in Water Systems to Provide Clean Water and Prevent Flooding.

- Establish new standards for water infrastructure resilience that account for climate impacts, including more frequent and damaging floods, droughts, and erosion.
- Ensure robust public engagement in water infrastructure projects, particularly for environmental justice communities whose input should inform decisions about how to reduce climate impacts.
- Integrate nature-based strategies and apply innovative finance approaches to ensure safe and clean water supplies and efficient wastewater treatment.

(v) Prepare the Nation's Telecommunications Networks for Climate Impacts.

- Invest in Next Generation 9-1-1 and direct the Federal Communications Commission to ensure the reliability of wireless communications networks during disasters.
- Expand broadband networks with the goal of achieving reliable and universal access and providing continuity of internet services for other essential needs during disasters.

(vi) Cut Pollution from the Oil & Gas Sector.

- Set a national methane pollution reduction goal for the oil and gas sector of 65% to 70% by 2025 and 90% by 2030, relative to 2012 levels, and phase out routine flaring of methane.
- Direct regulators to set new standards for pipeline operators to detect and repair methane leaks.

- Provide financial support for cities and states to eliminate methane leaks from natural gas distribution lines within 10 years.
- Update the Federal Power Act to ensure FERC considers climate science and public input when siting new natural gas infrastructure.

PILLAR TWO: DRIVE INNOVATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF CLEAN ENERGY AND DEEP DECARBONIZATION TECHNOLOGIES

- Support all stages of climate-related innovation by recommitting to Mission Innovation—a global initiative working to accelerate global clean energy innovation.
- Boost funding for federal clean energy research, development, and demonstration.
- Prioritize climate in the Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) mission, operations, and structure.
- Facilitate technology transfer and commercialization through initiatives like regional energy innovation partnerships.
- Create a national climate bank and expand the DOE loan guarantee program to leverage private investment for deployment of decarbonization technologies and climate- resilient infrastructure.
- Start a DOE Energy Justice and Democracy program to ensure environmental justice communities have access to energy innovations and to reduce energy poverty.
- Require corporate disclosure and federal analysis of climate-related financial risks.

PILLAR THREE: TRANSFORM U.S. INDUSTRY AND EXPAND DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING OF CLEAN ENERGY AND ZERO-EMISSION TECHNOLOGIES

(i) Rebuild U.S. Industry for Global Climate Leadership.

- Establish performance standards to guarantee emissions reductions from industrial facilities and pair them with border adjustment mechanisms to level the playing field with foreign goods made with higher-polluting processes.
- Support research, development, and demonstration of breakthrough and platform technologies for industrial decarbonization, including carbon capture, utilization, and storage.
- Provide firms in the industrial sector with access to revolving loan funds, grants, and tax incentives for efficiency upgrades, process changes, and retooling.
- Develop infrastructure for key decarbonization technologies, including low-carbon hydrogen.
- Create markets for low-emission goods through a federal Buy Clean program.
- Facilitate the transition to a circular economy, i.e., materials efficiency, substitution, and recycling, that eliminates waste and pollution.

(ii) Invest in Domestic Manufacturing of Clean Energy, Clean Vehicle, and Zero-Emissions Technologies.

- Create a tax credit to retool, expand, or establish domestic clean energy and grid technology manufacturing facilities.
- Establish a production tax credit for clean energy, energy efficiency, and decarbonization technologies and products.
- Expand DOE grant programs and loan guarantees to construct new or retool existing U.S. facilities to manufacture zero-emission vehicles.
- Develop strategies for clean technology manufacturing and critical mineral supply chains.
- Tie federal funding for innovation to domestic manufacturing of resulting technologies.
- Leverage federal procurement policies to build demand for domestic clean energy and zero-emission technologies and products.

(iii) Develop, Manufacture, and Deploy Cutting-Edge Carbon Removal Technologies.

- Dramatically increase federal investment in carbon removal research and development in order to jumpstart a direct air capture industry in the United States.
- Improve financial incentives for direct air capture technology and expand demonstration projects to safely store carbon below ground.
- Create markets for fuels made from carbon captured from the atmosphere.

PILLAR FOUR: BREAK DOWN BARRIERS FOR CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

- Repeal tax breaks for large oil and gas companies as a first step toward building a fairer tax code that supports reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
- Put a price on carbon to correct market failures to account for the costs of unmitigated pollution.
- Pair a price with policies to achieve measurable pollution reductions from facilities located in environmental justice communities and policies to ensure energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries do not face unfair competition from foreign competitors using dirty technologies.

PILLAR FIVE: INVEST IN AMERICA'S WORKERS AND BUILD A FAIRER ECONOMY

- Secure workers' right to organize a union and negotiate for higher wages, safer working conditions, and better benefits.
- Establish a National Economic Transition Office to coordinate, scale up, and target federal economic and workforce development assistance to coal communities and workers.

PILLAR SIX: INVEST IN DISPROPORTIONATELY EXPOSED COMMUNITIES TO CUT POLLUTION AND ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Direct the Environmental Protection Agency to consider the cumulative pollution impacts of the facilities it permits.
- Support federal and academic research of the cumulative and distributional impacts of federal climate, health, and environmental policy on environmental justice communities. Prioritize these communities for new federal spending and projects to deploy clean energy and replace aging infrastructure.
- Collaborate with USDA, tribes, environmental justice communities, and NGOs to address food insecurity.
- Ensure meaningful federal engagement and consultation with environmental justice communities in policymaking processes.

PILLAR SEVEN: IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MANAGE CLIMATE RISKS TO HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

- Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a national strategic action plan to assist communities and health departments in preparing for and responding to climate-related health risks.
- Increase U.S. support for global surveillance and response to potential health threats and strengthen supply chains for health commodities.

- Expand the capacity of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments in their climate-related work.

PILLAR EIGHT: INVEST IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

- Dramatically increase investments to support the efforts of America’s farmers and ranchers to employ climate stewardship practices.
- Include more funding for Farm Bill conservation programs and expanded financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers, with a focus on climate mitigation and resilience.
- Set climate stewardship practice goals across all U.S. farmland and expand Department of Agriculture resources, research, and partnerships to increase federal capacity to encourage widespread adoption of climate stewardship practices.
- Embed climate mitigation and adaptation into programs for new, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and increase investments in these programs.
- Incentivize farmers and ranchers to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy on-farm and protect their farmland from development and other non-agricultural uses.
- Support local and regional food systems and develop initiatives to combat food waste.

PILLAR NINE: MAKE U.S. COMMUNITIES MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

(i) Support Community Leadership in Climate Resilience and Equity.

- Establish a National Climate Adaptation Program to deliver technical assistance to states, local governments, tribes, and territories (SLTT), support SLTT planning, and invest in community adaptation and resilience projects with meaningful public participation, especially for environmental justice communities.
- Establish a Tribal Government Task Force to coordinate across the federal government to overcome barriers to assistance, build or augment tribal technical capability, and ensure equitable baseline funding.

(ii) Build—and Rebuild—Based on Actionable Science, Codes, and Standards.

- Establish a Climate Risk Information Service to develop localized climate risk information and embed climate risk projections in development of resilience codes, specifications, and standards.
- Establish federal flood and wildfire resilience standards for federally supported activities, including investments in climate resilience and disaster recovery.
- Revise the federal tax code to incentivize state, local, and private investments in resilience.

(iii) Reduce Climate Disaster Risks and Accelerate Disaster Recovery.

- Dramatically increase and provide stable federal investment in pre-disaster mitigation and resilient disaster recovery to strengthen infrastructure, support affordable and resilient housing.
- Reform federal flood mapping and insurance programs to deliver forward-looking projections, help low-income households afford flood insurance, and expand coverage to reduce uninsured flood losses.
- Call for a national wildfire mitigation strategy and increase federal investment in wildfire resilience to reduce the risk of loss of life, property, and natural resources to wildfires.
- Prioritize investments to assure no one repeatedly suffers the impacts of climate change, including frontline communities, rural communities, and small businesses.

(iv) Make Climate Resilience Planning an Essential Element of Federal Agency Operations.

- Require climate adaptation planning and coordination to address the ways that the climate crisis can disrupt federal agencies and their missions and operations.
- Ensure that agency adaptation plans identify opportunities to address climate impacts on environmental justice communities and vulnerable populations.
- Require major government suppliers to disclose greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks to their supply chains and operations as a consideration for the award of federal contracts.

PILLAR TEN: PROTECT AND RESTORE AMERICA'S LANDS, WATERS, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE

(i) Capture the Full Potential of Natural Climate Solutions.

- Establish a national goal of protecting at least 30% of all U.S. lands and ocean areas by 2030, prioritizing federal and nonfederal lands and waters with high ecological, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration value.
- Conserve and restore landscapes, natural spaces, and America's treasured public lands through high-value protection designation and direct federal land management agencies to work collaboratively with tribes, state governments, private landowners, and local communities.
- Develop and fund initiatives to ensure equitable access to natural spaces for individuals in environmental justice communities.
- Protect mature and old growth forests; invest in forest restoration, reforestation, and afforestation on public and private lands, including urban areas to improve urban tree canopy; manage wildfire for community safety and ecological health; ensure forest management activities focus on climate and biodiversity benefits; and protect and restore native grasslands.
- Reestablish the Civilian Conservation Corps to complete this natural resources restoration work.
- Protect, conserve, and restore "blue carbon systems" to capture carbon and protect shorelines from flooding and storms; scale up responsibly-sited ocean-based renewable energy; address ocean acidification and biodiversity decline; incorporate climate adaptation into fisheries management; and prioritize natural infrastructure for coastal resilience.
- Create wildlife corridors to facilitate migration, range expansion, and mating; direct federal natural resources agencies to develop a coordinated landscape-scale conservation strategy to help species adapt to a changing climate; support efforts by private landowners to protect wildlife habitat on their land; and improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act in the context of climate change.

(ii) Make Public Lands and Waters a Part of the Climate Solution.

- Direct federal land management agencies to develop a comprehensive public lands climate plan to achieve net-zero emissions on public lands and waters by 2040 at the latest.
- Impose a moratorium on all new fossil fuel leases on public lands while ensuring robust economic development and transition assistance for communities dependent on fossil fuel extraction.
- Prohibit new offshore oil and gas leasing in all areas of the Outer Continental Shelf; reduce methane pollution from oil and gas extraction; and increase renewable energy production.
- Protect wild and special places and make them off-limits to drilling and mining activities, including America's last remaining wild landscapes, irreplaceable cultural sites, national parks and monuments, and important wildlife habitat and corridors.
- Eliminate unfair and expensive government subsidies for oil and gas drilling on public lands.
- Establish and maintain robust environmental review of and bonding requirements for all proposed projects on public lands.
- Reclaim orphaned wells that pose a safety and environmental threat.

PILLAR ELEVEN: CONFRONT CLIMATE RISKS TO AMERICA'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND RESTORE AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

- Require consideration of climate risks in defense procurement, logistics, and supply chains and ensure collaboration in climate adaptation and resilience planning among military installations.
- Direct agencies with national defense, homeland security, and science missions to identify and confront climate security threats to the homeland to safeguard critical infrastructure, protect public health, and prepare for climate-driven internal and cross-border migration.
- Deliver on U.S. financial commitments to the Green Climate Fund and advance clean energy and climate resilience in international missions and aid.
- Expand support for stopping deforestation and reducing black carbon pollution.
- Improve Arctic engagement and diplomacy given the rapid environmental changes in the region.

PILLAR TWELVE: STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S CORE INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE CLIMATE ACTION

(i) Strengthen Climate Science.

- Strengthen and sustain federal support for climate science, including national and international climate assessments, foundational Earth system science research, and studies of climate impacts on human and natural systems.
- Strengthen federal scientific integrity policies and ensure that federal agencies act on the best available science.
- Expand and sustain federal support for climate literacy and STEM education, with an emphasis on removing barriers and broadening participation for underrepresented groups.
- Revive the Office of Technology Assessment to provide Members of Congress with nonpartisan scientific and technology expertise.

(ii) Assess the True Value of Federal Climate Action.

- Expand CBO's capacity to analyze the fiscal and economic impacts of proposed legislation related to climate risk.
- Establish an interagency working group to update the "Social Cost of Carbon" to reflect the best available climate science and direct OMB to work with the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine to improve agencies' ability to assess the costs and benefits of projects to improve community climate resilience.

(iii) Strengthen the Country's Democratic Institutions.

- Pass in the Senate the "For the People Act" (see [H.R. 1](#)) which tackles campaign finance reform, voting rights, and federal ethics, to build a healthier, more responsive democracy; pass in the Senate the "Voting Rights Advancement Act" (see [H.R. 4](#)), which restores the full protections of the bipartisan Voting Rights Act to block state and local voter discrimination policies.

