

Info Alert

National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

June 26, 2013

President Barack Obama Releases Climate Action Plan

On June 25, 2013, the president unveiled his [plan](#) to mitigate the effects of climate change. The detailed strategy includes a number of executive actions that increase partnerships with state, local and tribal governments and focus on cutting carbon emissions, without necessarily requiring congressional action.

The president's [Climate Action Plan](#) breaks down his climate change priorities into three sub-categories:

Cut Carbon Pollution in America

One of the president's headline efforts in the plan is his goal to limit carbon dioxide pollution from power plants. A subsequent White House [memorandum](#) sent on June 25 to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) directed the agency to issue a final rule on carbon pollution standards for both future and existing power plants, in a timely manner. The president proposed increasing fuel standards, developing advanced transportation technologies, as well as expanding, to the federal level, state and local government successes in curbing other harmful gaseous emissions such as hydrofluorocarbons and methane. The president also launched the new Better Buildings Accelerators, a program to support and encourage adoption of state and local policies that will cut energy waste in both private and public buildings and homes.

Prepare the United State for the Impacts of Climate Change

While the majority of the plan focuses on cutting pollutants to stave off any future effects of climate change, the administration also acknowledges the need to build resiliency into our infrastructure systems. The plan institutes a short-term State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness that will provide recommendations to the federal government on modernizing grant and loan programs, removing impediments to resilient investments and developing tools to better serve state and local communities as they deal with climate change impacts. The president also called for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to develop disaster-resilience standards that will work to improve buildings and U.S. infrastructure to protect against disasters.

Efforts to Address Global Climate Change

The president's plan also called for enhancing multilateral engagements with the major economic powers of the world, expanding cooperation with emerging economies, and working to negotiate global free trade for environmental services and goods. Additionally, the president called for an

end to U.S. government support of financing the building of coal power plants overseas unless a plant uses efficient clean coal technology.

Some additional initiatives outlined in the president's plan include:

- Encouraging a global market for natural gas by launching the Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement Program that will share best practices on dealing with water management, methane emissions and air quality
- Promoting solar and wind energy on federal lands and subsidized housing
- Tightening vehicle emissions standards
- Offering incentives for renewable energy
- Pushing for international climate talks
- Calling for the elimination of U.S. fossil fuel tax subsidies
- Promoting safe and secure nuclear power throughout the world
- Upgrading the electrical grid to be more energy efficient and reliable

Following the president's speech on June 25, the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, Nancy Sutely, met with state and local stakeholders to gauge states' reactions and answer questions on the initiatives outlined in the plan.

If you have any questions on the president's [Climate Action Plan](#) or any other subject please contact NCSL Staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Melanie Condon](#) (202-624-3597).