

Info Alert

National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

November 19, 2014

The Administration Acts on Climate Efforts

November has been an active month for climate initiatives from the administration.

On Nov. 17, the State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience presented its final [recommendations](#) that include steps the federal government can take to support climate-ready communities. The task force was established in Nov. 2013 as a part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan and has spent the past year researching and developing its recommendations.

Central to the task force's report is a recommendation that the administration finalize guidance from 2010 that would require federal agencies to consider climate impact when reviewing projects under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The task force contends that without taking into account the impact to the climate, projects, such as transportation infrastructure improvements, could be approved without proper consideration of climate threats, creating "unacceptable public health, safety and financial risks for communities." Opponents of finalizing the guidance feel that these new requirements would create major delays in project approvals.

Along with the release of the task force's proposal, the administration [unveiled](#) a "Climate Resilience Toolkit" aimed at helping states and local communities enhance their climate resiliency. The toolkit includes:

- A visualization tool that shows maps of climate stressors and impacts;
- A five-step process that users can follow to help make their communities and infrastructure more resilient;
- A collection of case studies describing climate-related risks and opportunities communities and businesses face; and
- A centralized database of federal sites for climate projection and data analysis.

On Nov. 15, the President [formally announced](#) a pledge of \$3 billion to the international Green Climate Fund, intended to help developing nation's prepare for climate risks. The contributions would still need to be approved by Congress before being allocated to the fund.

Additionally, on Nov. 11, the administration [announced](#) a joint agreement with China to cooperate on climate change and clean energy initiatives. The joint agreement included a pledge from the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 26-28 percent by 2025 while China pledged it would stop emissions from growing by 2030 and increase non-fossil fuel usage to 20 percent by 2030. The joint announcement is the first time that China has agreed to cap its carbon dioxide emissions.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding these announcements please do not hesitate to contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Melanie Condon](#) (202-624-3597).