



# Department of Justice Climate Change Adaptation Planning



## Overview

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. Global Change Research Program, studies have documented a gradual increase in the average global temperature. Increased temperature, caused in part by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is resulting in changes to precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events. While the scope, severity and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that potential changes could have important impacts on DOJ's ability to fulfill its mission.

## Preparing for the Impacts of Climate Change

The United States is taking action to better understand and address the challenges of global climate change. Executive Order (EO) 13514, "*Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*," requires that Federal agencies evaluate climate change risks and vulnerabilities to manage the effects of climate change on their operations and mission. Specifically, EO 13514 requires each agency to conduct an agency vulnerability analysis, develop a climate change adaptation policy, and develop a climate change adaptation plan. EO 13653, "*Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change*," requires each Federal agency to continue to develop, implement, and update a comprehensive plan that integrates consideration of climate change into agency operations and overall mission objectives. EO 13653 also requires each agency to revise its policy statement to reaffirm agency commitment to adaptation planning.

## DOJ Progress on Climate Change Preparedness

Lee Lofthus, Assistant Attorney General for Administration and the Senior Sustainability Officer, is the senior agency official responsible for climate change preparedness planning. The Justice Management Division of DOJ has taken the lead in coordinating climate change preparedness planning for the agency, working closely with stakeholders from DOJ Headquarters, representatives from the Environmental and Natural Resources Division, continuity program managers, and other stakeholders from the bureaus. DOJ has identified vulnerabilities of DOJ mission activities resulting from potential climate change impacts on critical assets and infrastructure and developed climate change adaptation strategies to minimize the risks associated with these vulnerabilities. DOJ also actively participates in Federal initiatives to mitigate the underlying causes of climate change, including programs to reduce GHG emissions and increase renewable energy use.

DOJ climate change vulnerabilities fall into four broad categories:

- **Physical damage to buildings, equipment, and utilities infrastructure** caused by severe weather and flooding could directly reduce the utility of assets, result in financial outlays, and cause general disruption of operational services.
- **Health impacts to personnel** resulting from drought, heat, severe weather, and flooding could reduce productivity.
- **Disruption of operations** resulting from potential unrest (and increased violence) among populations affected by severe weather, extreme heat, and drought.
- **Increased need for fiscal resources** to address climate change impacts throughout DOJ could affect budget allowances.

## DOJ Future Actions for Climate Change Preparedness

The 2014 DOJ Climate Change Adaptation Plan identifies climate change risks, climate change opportunities, and strategies for adaptation. DOJ will begin addressing these actions in FY 2014.

### Identifying Climate Change Risks and Opportunities

1. Identify with a greater level of detail buildings, utilities infrastructure, and assets that are deemed to be at the highest risk.
2. Identify current climate resiliency best practices and lessons learned, both within DOJ and throughout the Federal government, for addressing localized impacts.
3. Identify with a greater level of detail situations where health impacts to personnel currently are occurring or will likely occur based upon future climate projections.
4. Identify with a greater level of detail situations where unrest related to climate change impacts currently is occurring or will likely occur based upon future climate projections.
5. Assess budgetary implications of climate related impacts and evaluate whether DOJ funding, investment, or purchasing programs increase its vulnerability to climate change or fail to promote climate-resilient investments by States, local communities, or Indian tribes.

### Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

1. Develop strategies to minimize physical damage to buildings, utilities infrastructure, assets, and regional infrastructure caused by climate impacts.
2. Enhance existing systems, plans, and programs, including telework plans and health-monitoring programs, to improve the adaptive capacity of personnel.
3. Anticipate and avoid disruption to operations resulting from population unrest and potential violence.
4. Research options to anticipate, mitigate, and avoid diversion of fiscal resources for emergency management activities.
5. As needed, integrate climate change preparedness into DOJ funding, investment, and purchasing programs.

## Climate Change Resources

- DOJ Climate Change Adaptation Plan: <http://www.justice.gov/jmd/services-initiatives.html>
- US Global Change Research Program: <http://www.globalchange.gov/>
- Weather Ready Nation: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/>
- FedCenter: <https://www.fedcenter.gov/programs/climate/>

For additional information, contact [environmental.program@usdoj.gov](mailto:environmental.program@usdoj.gov).

