

WASHINGTON APA'S GAME CHANGING INITIATIVE
ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Learn More: Address Climate Change



Address Climate Change Group
Climate Change Challenges

Global Climate Change is the overriding issue of our time. If we are not successful in mitigating its potential effects and preparing our communities to adapt to the effects that are unavoidable, nothing else will matter. In the September 2013 *Summary for Policymakers* released by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Panel provides definitive statements on climate change:

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia.

The atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have increased to levels unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Carbon dioxide concentrations have increased by 40% since pre-industrial times, primarily from fossil fuel emissions and secondarily from net land use change emissions. (web access at: http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/uploads/WGI_AR5_SPM_brochure.pdf)

Actions by state agencies and local governments can make a substantial difference to community resilience in the face of a changing climate. The sooner we address these issues, the more likely we are to achieve the goal. In addition, since delay will only add to the cost of mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, early action will reduce the amount of disruption and the cost. The upcoming mandate to update the GMA plans in Washington argues for identifying practical, short-term actions as well as longer-term action ideas.

What is Washington Doing about it?

Washington State is looking at climate change from two perspectives, both how to address mitigation efforts and how to adapt in the face of changes arising out of the impacts from a changing climate. For mitigation, planners must play a key role in promoting energy efficiency in the existing built environment and changing development patterns, transportation systems, and regulations in ways that reduce GHG emissions. For adaptation, planners must enhance the resilience of communities to unavoidable climate impacts through adaptive responses such as stormwater management, improved hazards planning, and efficient use of climate sensitive resources like water.

Washington State is a leader in developing ways to reduce (or mitigate) the impacts from climate change. Governor Jay Inslee announced a package of proposals to reduce carbon pollution and transition to clean energy on Dec. 17, 2014. The proposals included actions to:

- Transition Washington to increased energy independence through use of clean energy.
- Reduce carbon pollution in Washington State.
- Meet the statutory greenhouse gas limits adopted by the state Legislature in 2008.

[State law](#) mandates a return to 1990 greenhouse gas emission (GHG) levels by 2020, reduction to 25% below 1990 GHG emission levels by 2035, and reduction to 50% below 1990 levels by 2050. At the same time the state has also proposed a path forward to respond to impacts created by changes in the climate. Washington is experiencing changing climate conditions that bring significant risks to human health and to our forests, agriculture, freshwater supplies, coastlines and other resources that are vital to our economy, environment and quality of life.

Washington is also leading the way on development of adaptation measures. In 2012 Washington's Governor Christine Gregoire directed state agencies to develop an integrated climate change response strategy to help state, tribal and local governments, public and private organizations, businesses and individuals prepare. This strategy creates an adaptation framework that decision-makers can use to help protect Washington's communities, natural resources and economy from the impacts of climate change.

Actions to Address Climate Change

APA Washington continues to be a leader in the community developing mitigation and adaptation strategies for local governments to address climate change.

In 2009 Washington APA released "**Sustainable Washington: Planning for Climate Change**" as a resource for Washington planners working towards creating sustainable communities, while attempting to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of climate change.

Now in 2015 Washington APA is revising Sustainable Washington to create **Resilient Washington**. This will be an on-line resource of best practices for local governments on mitigation and adaptation. Drawn from the research and recommendations made at the state level for both mitigation and adaptation measures, this new resource will help guide local planners through the next decade and beyond.

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Resilient Washington will provide a comprehensive list of best practices, case studies and resources for the following areas:

- Climate Hazards
- Ecosystems and Water
- Energy
- Waste Management
- Land Use
- Mobility
- Food Security and Agriculture
- Construction and Green Building Practices
- Social Equity
- Public Health
- Economy

The products will be made available to local governments through this website and via presentation at workshops and conferences, newsletter postings and webinars.

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