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Office of the Press Secretary



For Immediate Release

November 01, 2013

FACT SHEET: Executive Order on Climate Preparedness

President Obama Establishes a Task Force on Climate

"We're going to need to get prepared. And that's why this plan will also protect critical sectors of our economy and prepare the United States for the impacts of climate change that we cannot avoid. States and cities across the country are already taking it upon themselves to get ready... And we'll partner with communities seeking help to prepare for droughts and floods, reduce the risk of wildfires, protect the dunes and wetlands that pull double duty as green space and as natural storm barriers." – President Barack Obama, June 25, 2013

Today, President Obama established a Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience to advise the Administration on how the Federal Government can respond to the needs of communities nationwide that are dealing with the impacts of climate change. The Task Force members include state, local and tribal leaders from across the country who will use their first-hand experiences in building climate preparedness and resilience in their communities to inform their recommendations to the Administration.

The President signed an Executive Order that directs Federal agencies to take a series of steps to make it easier for American communities to strengthen their resilience to extreme weather and prepare for other impacts of climate change.

President Obama has said that we have a moral obligation to our children and future generations to leave them a planet that is not polluted or damaged. That is why in June, the President launched a Climate Action Plan to cut carbon pollution, prepare communities for the impacts of climate change, and lead international efforts to address this global challenge. The Climate Action Plan recognizes that even as we act to curb the carbon pollution that is driving climate change, we must also improve our ability to prepare for the climate impacts we are already seeing across the country. Across America, states, cities, and communities are taking steps to protect themselves from extreme weather and other climate impacts by updating building codes, adjusting the way they manage natural resources, investing in more resilient infrastructure, and planning for rapid recovery from damages that nonetheless occur.

The Federal Government has an important role to play in supporting community-based preparedness and resilience efforts by establishing policies and prioritizing investments that promote preparedness, protecting critical infrastructure and public resources, supporting science and research needed to prepare for climate impacts, and ensuring that Federal operations and facilities continue to protect and serve citizens in a changing climate.

State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience

State, local and tribal leaders across the country are already contending with more frequent or severe heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms and floods, and other impacts of climate change. The Task Force will provide recommendations to the President on removing barriers to resilient investments, modernizing Federal grant and loan programs to better support local efforts, and developing the information and tools they need to prepare.

Task Force members comprise governors, mayors, county officials and tribal leaders, representing a diverse range of communities. The members of the Task Force include:

State Officials:

Governor Neil Abercrombie (HI)

Governor Jerry Brown (CA)

Governor Eddie Calvo (GU)

Governor Jay Inslee (WA)

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Supervisor Salud Carbajal (Santa Barbara County, CA)

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Mayor Dawn Zimmer (Hoboken, NJ)

Tribal Officials:

Karen Diver, Chairwoman, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (MN)

Reggie Joule, Mayor, Northwest Arctic Borough (AK)

An Executive Order to Protect Our Communities

The Obama Administration has taken significant steps to strengthen the climate resilience of America's communities and economy. More than 30 Federal agencies developed their first-ever Climate Change Adaptation Plans, outlining strategies to protect their operations, programs, and investments to better serve communities and safeguard our public resources in the face of climate change. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the Administration has provided resources to rebuild the affected area to be more resilient than before, including support for more climate-resilient roads and infrastructure, and projects that protect drinking water and buffer communities from flooding. In addition, Federal agencies have partnered with states, cities, tribes, and the private sector to develop strategies to address the impacts of climate change on our freshwater resources, oceans and coasts, and wildlife. Agencies have also built new, data-driven tools to help decision makers and resource managers map and plan for future sea level rise. From Florida to Minnesota, and from Alaska to New York, Federal agencies have partnered with communities to provide funding and technical assistance to address local climate impacts such as sea level rise, flooding, and water scarcity.

To build on this progress, the Executive Order (E.O.) "Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change," signed today directs Federal agencies to:

- **Modernize Federal programs to support climate-resilient investments:** Agencies will examine their policies and programs and find ways to make it easier for cities and towns to build smarter and

stronger. Agencies will identify and remove any barriers to resilience-focused actions and investments— for example, policies that encourage communities to rebuild to past standards after disasters instead of to stronger standards – including through agency grants, technical assistance, and other programs in sectors from transportation and water management to conservation and disaster relief.

- **Manage lands and waters for climate preparedness and resilience:** America's natural resources are critical to our Nation's economy, health and quality of life. The E.O. directs agencies to identify changes that must be made to land- and water-related policies, programs, and regulations to strengthen the climate resilience of our watersheds, natural resources, and ecosystems, and the communities and economies that depend on them. Federal agencies will also evaluate how to better promote natural storm barriers such as dunes and wetlands, as well as how to protect the carbon sequestration benefits of forests and lands to help reduce the carbon pollution that causes climate change.
- **Provide information, data and tools for climate change preparedness and resilience:** Scientific data and insights are essential to help communities and businesses better understand and manage the risks associated with extreme weather and other impacts of climate change. The E.O. instructs Federal agencies to work together and with information users to develop new climate preparedness tools and information that state, local, and private-sector leaders need to make smart decisions. In keeping with the President's Open Data initiative, agencies will also make extensive Federal climate data accessible to the public through an easy-to-use online portal.
- **Plan for climate change related risk:** Recognizing the threat that climate change poses to Federal facilities, operations and programs, the E.O. builds on the first-ever set of Federal agency adaptation plans released earlier this year and directs Federal agencies to develop and implement strategies to evaluate and address their most significant climate change related risks.

To implement these actions, the E.O. establishes an interagency Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, chaired by the White House and composed of more than 25 agencies. To assist in achieving the goals of the E.O., these agencies are directed to consider the recommendations of the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.

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