

# CLIMATE 21 PROJECT

November 2020

**Summary Report**

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## **Transition Recommendations For Climate Governance and Action**



## Summary Report | Transition Recommendations For Climate Governance and Action

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The **Climate 21 Project** taps the expertise of more than 150 experts with high-level government experience, including nine former cabinet appointees, to deliver actionable advice for a rapid-start, whole-of-government climate response coordinated by the White House and accountable to the President. The full set of Climate 21 Project memos is available at [climate21.org](https://climate21.org).

In January 2021, the President will begin his four-year term facing four simultaneous crises: tens of millions of Americans without a paycheck, racial injustice, the punishing toll of climate change, and the devastating impact of the COVID pandemic. It is essential to address all four immediately; none can be put aside.

The key to unlocking this puzzle is for the President to hit the ground running in 2021 with actionable steps to build the capacity of his administration to tackle the climate crisis quickly with the existing tools at hand. The transition period and first 100 days will be critical for laying the foundation for an effective administration-wide approach on climate change.

From using executive powers to working with Congress, states and nations around the world, the White House must act decisively to create an administration-wide infrastructure needed to achieve results.

The *Climate 21 Project* has assembled recommendations in anticipation of this critical moment to jumpstart ambitious U.S. leadership to confront the climate crisis. We have tapped the expertise of more than 150 experts with high-level government experience who volunteered their time to imagine what it would take for the White House and federal agencies to mobilize effectively as part of a whole-of-government climate response at the dawn of the next administration.

We are pleased to present the results in a series of papers covering the White House and essential federal agencies.

Importantly, the *Climate 21 Project* is not offering a policy agenda. Rather, we are delivering actionable advice for a rapid-start, administration-wide response coordinated by the White House and accountable to the President in order to achieve his climate policy agenda.

To fully mobilize on climate change and the interlocking crises we face, Congress must also do its part and provide new authorities that allow for structural and systemic changes. Until those battles have been won, the new administration must organize to exercise the great power it already has to make progress.

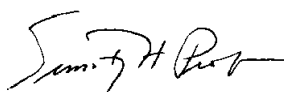
In assembling this guidance document, certain themes emerged as critical for success across the board. Communities need to be engaged in developing solutions. High-level climate teams with the ear of the cabinet secretary will be needed in each department or agency. Career government employees should be respected and engaged early. And budgets should reflect the urgency of addressing the most critical problems facing the nation.

We are grateful for the time and contributions of the *Climate 21 Project* Steering Committee, the authors, and the experts they interviewed.

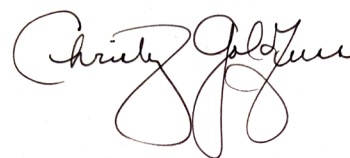
There is no time to waste, which is what the *Climate 21 Project* aims to address. Two years ago, the United States government's top scientific agencies along with more than 300 experts released an extensively peer-reviewed national climate assessment. They issued a stark warning:

"Future risks from climate change depend primarily on decisions made today."

After witnessing the wildfires, floods, droughts and storms of 2020, the decisions being made today are more essential than ever. We hope these memos make it possible for the new administration to make them swiftly and well.



Tim Profeta



Christy Goldfuss

The *Climate 21 Project's* recommendations were produced by a Steering Committee of experienced government climate experts. The contents have been informed by interviews tapping the additional expertise of more than 150 experts with high-level government experience on climate and energy, including nine cabinet appointees.

Each *Climate 21 Project* memo identifies its lead authors, including Steering Committee members and additional expert consultants. Other Steering Committee members do not necessarily endorse every individual recommendation. Steering Committee members participated as individuals lending their personal expertise. Their professional affiliations do not imply organizational endorsement of these recommendations.

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## GUIDE TO THE CLIMATE 21 PROJECT REPORT

In order to achieve ambitious U.S. leadership on climate change, the next administration must be ready to hit the ground running and effectively prioritize its climate response from Day One. The *Climate 21 Project* taps the expertise of more than 150 experts with high-level government experience, including nine former cabinet appointees, to deliver actionable advice for a rapid-start, whole-of-government climate response coordinated by the White House and accountable to the President.

The *Climate 21 Project*'s recommendations are organized across the following 11 White House offices, federal departments, and federal agencies:

- Executive Office of the President/  
Council on Environmental Quality
- Office of Management and Budget
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Energy
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Transportation
- Department of State
- Department of Justice
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration
- Department of the Treasury

The remainder of this summary report provides high-level recommendations for each department and agency, as well as for cross-cutting hiring tools and priorities. The complete *Climate 21 Project* memo for each department and agency addresses the following topics in more depth:

- Budget, management, and structure
- Key program opportunities
- Interagency priorities and relationships
- Critical staff appointments and hiring tools

As the next Administration seeks to tackle the wide-ranging and growing challenges associated with climate change, the need for an effective and efficient federal government workforce has never been clearer. Achieving ambitious climate goals will require rebuilding capacity across federal departments and agencies.

In addition to the agency memos, the *Climate 21 Project* has provided a cross-cutting paper on personnel and hiring that examines what it will take to mobilize existing federal employees and forge working relationships with key career employees who will help facilitate hiring and recruitment efforts. The *Climate 21 Project*'s recommendations are focused in scope on areas where our contributors have the most expertise, and where parallel efforts are not underway. In particular:

- The *Climate 21 Project* focuses on Executive Branch governance. The *Climate 21 Project* addresses budget considerations and some policy proposals that require congressional cooperation, but does not include comprehensive recommendations on legislation or legislative strategy. To fully mobilize the federal government on climate change, Congress must also do its part.
- An all-of-government mobilization on climate change will require important work by agencies that were not included in the *Climate 21 Project*, such as the Departments of Labor, Defense, Homeland Security, Commerce, and Housing and Urban Development, as well as independent agencies such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Federal Reserve Board, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, among others.
- The *Climate 21 Project* includes recommendations for the State and Treasury Departments, as well as for the National Security Council, but does not comprehensively address the full suite of potential recommendations on integrating climate change into national security and trade.

## TOP CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

### **MOBILIZE A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT CLIMATE RESPONSE COORDINATED BY THE WHITE HOUSE AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT.**

Climate change is already affecting, or will soon affect, every sector of America's economy, every community, and every nation. Reducing emissions, preparing for climate impacts, and raising global ambition to confront climate change requires domestic investment, rulemakings, and policy changes, as well as robust international diplomacy.

- Every agency in the federal government—and every policy council in the White House—has some degree of opportunity and responsibility for addressing climate change.
- The next administration will need to act quickly to confront four crises simultaneously: The COVID-19 pandemic, economic devastation, racial injustice, and the accelerating threats of climate change. Climate should be fully integrated into economic, racial justice, and foreign policy, national security, trade and other areas of the president's agenda.

**BUILD EARLY STRUCTURES FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS.** The transition period and first 100 days are critical for prioritizing the most impactful steps and laying the foundation for long-term ambition and an effective administration-wide approach on climate change. Key steps include:

- Issue an Executive Order (EO) to create the White House National Climate Council (NCC) that is co-equal to the Domestic Policy Council and the National Economic Council.
- Launch a 90-day Cabinet-level task force to write and publish a new, four-year Climate Ambition Agenda, containing specific, agency-by-agency actions on greenhouse gas mitigation and the clean energy transition, climate change adaptation and resilience, and international climate diplomacy and development. The Agenda should articulate clear policy goals and distribute roles and responsibilities across the administration to put the United States on an accelerated timeline for transitioning to a 100% clean energy economy, create millions of good jobs, and secure environmental justice and equitable economic opportunities.
- Stand up a high-level, internal climate team within each department or agency with significant climate responsibilities. The climate team should be: accountable to the Secretary or Administrator, connected to the NCC and the White House, and empowered to mobilize the full assets of the department or agency.

## PRIORITIZE STAFFING AND BUDGET

- Work with Congress to increase budget for core climate and energy programs across the administration, focusing early on key early budget milestones (FY2021 endgame negotiations and larger reallocations and investments in the FY2022 budget or COVID recovery bills).
- Move quickly to nominate and elevate key positions, and look for climate leadership qualifications when filling key posts across the wide range of government positions required to support an effective, whole-of-government climate mobilization.
- Encourage departments and agencies to make up for lost time and hollowed out resources by quickly reallocating and redeploying budget and staff resources (including through interagency details), reversing the past administration's damages, and putting new structures in place to improve the effectiveness and raise the level of ambition for climate actions.
- Prioritize rebuilding morale and motivating career staff and recruiting the skilled workforce needed to drive climate action successfully across the administration by using the full suite of surge and long-term hiring options available across the federal government.

Climate change is unique among the issues facing the President, because both the effects and the policy solutions to the challenge defy neat categorization. Climate change is already or will soon affect every sector of the economy, every community in the nation, and every nation in the world. Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change and helping communities adapt to the unavoidable climate impacts already baked into the system requires domestic investment, rulemakings, and policy changes, as well as robust international diplomacy. That means that every agency has some degree of responsibility for addressing climate change—and so does every policy council in the White House.

This diffusion of responsibility for addressing climate change and furthering climate policy can all too easily lead to confusion and inaction. When everyone is partially responsible, no one is ultimately in charge. That is why the single most important thing a new White House committed to climate action must do is commission as Assistant to the President (AP) an experienced, respected Counselor or Senior Advisor who is 1) a credible leader on climate policy, 2) who sits in the West Wing and 3) who has direct access to and is trusted by the President of the United States, to lead the Administration's domestic and international efforts on climate change.

Beyond appointing and empowering an AP for climate, there are other important White House organizational changes needed to create an integrated domestic and international vision for climate policy executed across the EOP and the federal government. The White House must have the staff capacity and credibility to manage a whole-of-government effort; policy councils must be brought into the structure of the White House climate effort and actively collaborate on climate policy where needed; and non-policy offices must have dedicated support for the climate effort. Senior White House staff should also regularly engage with senior agency leadership to develop an ambitious climate agenda, monitor implementation, and identify opportunities to increase ambition.

To meet these criteria, the President should:

**Issue an Executive Order to create a National Climate Council that is co-equal to the Domestic Policy Council and the National Economic Council to organize and drive White House and Administration actions. (Day 1)**

For too long, climate policy has been sidelined as solely an environmental issue. Creating a National Climate Council by Executive Order would elevate climate change as an issue worthy of sustained, national policymaking and communications and create a consistent organizational mechanism for climate change policy in the White House from year to year. The NCC should be headed by the AP for Climate, with a Deputy Assistant to the President for Climate Change and Energy Policy; at least three SAPs, with one dual-hatted to the NEC, one dual-hatted to the NSC, and one dual-hatted to CEQ; and at least eight to ten further FTE staff to begin. Additional FTE positions can be filled using flexible hiring authorities available to CEQ and OSTP.

**Launch a 90-day, Cabinet-level effort to craft a Climate Ambition Agenda, to hold the Administration accountable to meeting the President's stated goals—and go further. (Day 1)**

The next administration will need to set ambitious goals and design and implement policies that will put the United States on a path to achieving net-zero emissions no later than mid-century, and restore the U.S. to a position of global climate leadership that incentivizes increasingly strong climate commitments from other major emitters.

To translate those goals and other important policy priorities into a governing plan that will hold the Cabinet accountable for delivering—and delivering on time—the next administration should revive the successful Climate Action Plan approach from the second term of the Obama-Biden Administration. Specifically, at the same time the NCC is created, the President should launch a 90-day Cabinet-level task force to write and publish a new, four-year Climate Ambition Agenda, containing specific, agency-by-agency actions on greenhouse gas mitigation and the clean energy transition, climate change adaptation and resilience, and international climate diplomacy and development.



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**Embed key aspects of the climate change agenda in other White House policy councils and functions, including CEQ, NSC, OSTP, OMB, and USTR, and cross-functional offices like Communications, Cabinet Affairs, Legislative Affairs, OPE, WHCO, and PPO.**

Even with the creation of a National Climate Council, other policymaking councils and cross-functional offices have critical roles to play in furthering an ambitious climate agenda and responsible staff from those councils and offices should be consistently included in NCC meetings and policy planning. As detailed in the full memo:

- The Council on Environmental Quality is best suited to elevate environmental justice to the White House and to lead the agenda on climate change resilience, in addition to its statutory responsibilities for NEPA and historic responsibilities for managing conservation and species issues.
- The International Economics directorate should be re-established within the NSC, with a team of 3-4 staff (one SAP dual-hatted to the NCC, and two to three director-level positions), to work with the State Department on international negotiations and coordinate climate inputs into the President's bilateral and multilateral engagements.
- The Office of Science and Technology Policy urgently needs to be re-empowered to support federal climate science and clean energy innovation in the U.S. and internationally.
- The Office of Management and Budget can and should be a stronger partner to federal agencies on climate policy. Senior political staff at OMB and its sub-agencies and offices, notably OIRA, should clearly understand that supporting the President's climate agenda is a central part of their mandate.
- Cross-functional offices, including the White House Counsel's Office, the communications shop, and the Presidential Personnel Office, should have staff who are dedicated to working on the climate portfolio and empowered to support ambitious activities.

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### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: PRE-INAUGURATION

- Select an Assistant to the President for Climate who will serve as the first Director of a newly created White House National Climate Council (NCC) to organize and drive White House and administration-wide domestic and international climate strategy and actions
- Hold a public event to showcase the president-elect's commitment to climate action and preview the Day 1 climate plan, including the president-elect's whole-of-government approach, the NCC, the NCC Director, other climate appointments, and the Climate Ambition Plan process
- Draft Day 1 climate Executive Orders and lay the foundation for a Day 1 launch of a cabinet-level task force to develop a Climate Ambition Plan
- Evaluate readiness to lead on climate change as an essential consideration when selecting nominees across the government to support an administration-wide climate mobilization
- Engage with Congressional leaders to identify the most promising strategies to achieve budgetary and legislative climate priorities

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: DAY 1

- Issue an Executive Order (EO) to create the National Climate Council (NCC) that is co-equal to the Domestic Policy Council and the National Economic Council
- Launch a 90-day, cabinet-level Climate Ambition Plan Task Force that holds the entire administration accountable to meeting the president's stated goals—and goes further
- Update EO 12898 on environmental justice to formalize the Council on Environmental Quality's role in convening EJ leaders and advancing EJ across the federal government
- Mitigate damaging previous climate and environmental decisions, including by re-joining the Paris Agreement.
- Embed aspects of the climate change agenda in other White House policy councils and functions, including CEQ, NSC, OSTP, OMB, and USTR, and cross-functional offices like Communications, Cabinet Affairs, Legislative Affairs, OPE, WHCO, and PPO

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: FIRST 100 DAYS

- Convene cabinet-level and staff-level Climate Task Force meetings and produce the administration's Climate Ambition Plan (*90 Days*)
- Issue additional EOs, as identified in the Climate Ambition Plan, to reverse damage done during the prior administration and take additional steps forward
- Convene world leaders to lay the groundwork to secure more ambitious global climate pledges

The Office of Management and Budget is positioned at the center of a vast and wide portfolio, coordinating policy, budgets, regulations, executive orders, and operations across the Executive Branch. As such, each of OMB's initial decisions—from budgeting to organizational staffing—will be essential to the administration's success on climate. Flexibility, responsiveness to a changing environment, and adherence to a clear set of priorities will be critical to OMB helping to foster success across the administration—because, importantly, critical budget, regulatory and management decisions come quickly in the first 100 days, including the following:

- Executive Orders (days 1-100)
- FY2021 omnibus deal (as early as February)
- Potential economic stimulus (as early as February)
- State of the Union (late February)
- FY2022 President's budget request (mid-late March)
- Potential world leaders climate summit (before May 1)
- Regulation repeal through the Congressional Review Act (first 60 legislative days for rules finalized in last 90 legislative days)
- President's Management Agenda (as early as April 1)

Decisions made in the first 100 days will directly impact progress on climate action in the first two years of the first term. Moreover, they will be critical early signals of climate's importance to domestic and international constituencies.

To ensure success in the administration's climate agenda, the incoming OMB team must act quickly and effectively in a fast-paced and challenging environment. During transition and in these first crucial days, White House and agencies will be short-staffed, focused on bringing on personnel, day-to-day issues. The pandemic will add complexity to addressing climate priorities in the midst of another urgent and ongoing crisis. And budgets across the government will be constrained due to the economic crisis.

As such, four critical OMB components will make the difference in navigating these obstacles and achieving success on climate priorities:

- Organizing for high impact.
- Preparing for FY2021 and FY2022 climate budget decisions.
- Developing an OIRA plan for major climate regulatory decisions, including regulatory guidance to reinstate the social cost of carbon and account for social justice metrics.
- Injecting climate in the President's Management Agenda and providing early OMB guidance to agencies to begin to account for climate in their procurement decisions, strategic planning and performance management, etc.

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**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE**

- Designate day-to-day OMB leadership for the climate portfolio. Vest day-to-day cross-OMB leadership in the right person (e.g., Budget Deputy Director, Counselor, Executive Associate Director (EAD) or a revamped climate Program Associate Director (PAD))
- Institute OMB-wide, team-based approach. Include OIRA administrator and Deputy Director for Management as senior team to drive progress across OMB (e.g., an OMB climate plan with monthly OMB senior leadership climate meetings for accountability)
- Staff OIRA with executive-branch-experienced regulatory leadership to avoid time lost from on-the-job-training. Foster strong relationships between OIRA administrator and agency heads.
- Approach FY2021 appropriations as an opportunity to kick-start climate action by negotiating targeted programmatic increases and legislative fixes in omnibus negotiations
- Advance climate action through FY2021 budget execution through reprogramming and other adjustments
- Produce an FY2022 budget request that begins to deliver on the administration's ambitious plans across major components
- Prepare a meaningful package of budget deliverables for key events: a world leaders climate summit, State of the Union, and other senior-level bilateral and multilateral international engagements
- Implement technical approaches early such as tracking funding directed to disadvantaged communities, issuing early guidance to staff and agencies, improving scoring rules to foster climate investments, and re-starting a climate cross-cut during transition

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**

- Pause Trump Administration rules that are harmful to the climate, repeal recent rules through CRA, and address key climate rules through accelerated process
- Use Statement of Regulatory Principles to achieve climate plan outcomes. Issue early guidance to reinstate social cost of carbon analysis and incorporate social justice metrics in rulemaking
- Leverage the procurement power of the federal government. Work with agencies to incorporate Buy America, Buy Clean, Project Labor Agreements, and other climate and environmental / social justice criteria in procurement mechanisms
- Enhance cross-government sustainability. With the Federal Environmental Executive, direct agencies to devise agency sustainability plans, including metrics and plans for key climate outcomes such as enhanced energy efficiency
- Establish a federal energy efficiency fund. Set aside a fund (perhaps modeled on IT Modernization Fund) to support agency investments that enhance energy efficiency, potentially administered via GSA with DOE in a technical advisory capacity



The Environmental Protection Agency has a wealth of expertise, statutory authorities, and other tools to catalyze action to stem the climate crisis. EPA will need to quickly and deftly promulgate high-leverage climate rules, refocus agency programs and priorities, create new management and organizational processes, and harness partnerships to accelerate climate progress.

Because of the substantial range and volume of opportunities EPA has to address climate change, setting priorities and targeting resources will be one of an incoming Administrator's most urgent immediate tasks. It will be especially urgent because EPA has experienced a prolonged, systematic assault to disable effective capacities, demoralize its highly expert and dedicated staff, undercut its own legal authorities, and betray the EPA's core mission to protect human health and the environment. The Administrator will need to both communicate a compelling long-term vision on climate and quickly engage and build trust with the dedicated career leadership and expert staff to supply analyses, ideas, and approaches to achieve that vision. This will play a critical role in reinvigorating and rebuilding the Agency, as well as focusing its resources on addressing a monumental challenge to humanity.

Using its enforcement, regulatory, international, programmatic, and leadership tools, EPA can have major impact on all three pillars of the climate challenge: emissions reduction, climate diplomacy, and adaptation / resilience. Specifically, the agency can contribute major greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the transportation, energy, and industrial sectors as well as support international engagement. On adaptation, the Agency's water program and regulatory authority can deliver hundreds of billions of dollars for projects that increase resiliency and improve public health. Finally, EPA can leverage the programs associated with contaminated land and emergency response for both emissions reduction and adaptation by working with developers on renewable energy siting and with state and local entities to address the impacts of climate change on contaminated properties.

The Administrator will need to set the balance among the competing interests that define a regulatory schedule: the desire to move quickly so that litigation can be finished in the first term, the importance of robust public engagement with diverse stakeholders, and the fundamental need to build strong technical support and well thought-out legal arguments in order to allow a successful defense and a durable legacy. While the climate crisis demands an aggressive approach, the constraints and risks of exercising regulatory authority—particularly with a more conservative Supreme Court—warrant a thoughtful assessment to define where to regulate and where to apply other leverage. In addition to traditional regulatory authorities, EPA's toolbox includes non-regulatory approaches built around engaging, convening, partnering with, providing technical assistance to, and educating the public and private sector. The value of robust internal and public processes, both to establish durable policy and to enhance public trust in the agency, cannot be overstated. In some cases, vigorous public engagement—especially when complementing, aligning with, reinforcing, or anticipating regulatory authority—can accelerate progress.

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### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE

- Administrator address to all staff announcing EPA's return to its core mission of protecting human health and the environment, featuring a restoration of its scientific foundation, renewed attention to compliance and enforcement, and a concerted effort to work with states, communities, and industry to address the climate crisis (*Day 1*)
- Create a structured process to mobilize EPA's offices to prioritize climate activities and pursue the best opportunities to drive down emissions and increase resilience (*100 Days*)
- Create an Environmental Justice Council, including a senior EJ official and each Assistant Administrator, to pursue concrete actions to benefit communities that have suffered environmental injustice (*100 Days*)
- Build the case for an EPA restoration budget with significant increases in funding for core science and environmental program work; staffing for the air office, the general counsel, enforcement, environmental justice; rebuilding regional offices; and state and tribal assistance grants targeted for climate (*100 Days*)
- Appoint critical leadership and energize staff (*100 Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- Initiate high-leverage climate rulemakings
  - Direct the Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) to create Clean Air Act rulemaking teams for vehicles, the power sector, and the oil and gas sector (*Day 1*)
  - Direct OAR and the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP) to develop a coordinated regulatory plan for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and engage with the White House and State Department on ratification of the Kigali Amendment and an alternative legislative strategy (*100 Days*)
  - Direct OAR to develop a strategy to address the remaining emitting sources (*100 Days*)
  - Direct a team from the Office of General Counsel to coordinate with the Department of Justice to file the motions necessary to reconsider Trump era rules in pending litigation (*100 Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Meet with the head of OMB to develop a plan to expedite high priority regulations (*100 Days*)
- Prepare analyses and marshal expertise to support a strengthened U.S. commitment under the Paris Agreement, as well as ongoing diplomatic efforts and implementation (*100 Days*)
- Seek interagency partnerships and cross-agency initiatives, such as a task force on agricultural emissions and options to pursue meaningful GHG reductions in the industrial sector, including advancing energy efficiency and partial electrification (*100 Days*)

The Department of Interior's vast land and mineral management responsibilities, multi-faceted mission, and numerous sub-agencies provide substantial climate mitigation opportunities as well as significant management and policy challenges. DOI manages a huge swath of America's lands, waters, subsurface resources, and cultural heritage for the benefit of the American people; it implements the nation's trust responsibilities to Tribes, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities; and it provides scientific support for natural resource-related activities.

DOI's greatest climate mitigation opportunities lie in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from fossil resources owned by the public and Tribes, boosting renewable energy production on public lands and waters, enhancing carbon sequestration on public lands, and indirectly, by educating the public and DOI's own staff about the science and impacts of climate change. Four bureaus hold most of these mitigation opportunities: Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM); Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE); and US Geological Survey (USGS). These and other DOI bureaus also have extensive climate adaptation and resilience opportunities, but this set of recommendations focuses only on mitigation, and it also does not attempt to address the immense needs of Indian Country.

Realizing the full potential of these mitigation opportunities will not be easy. DOI is traditionally focused on other matters, highly resistant to change, and heavily influenced by certain stakeholders (e.g., the oil and gas industry, some local and state governments). DOI's array of disparate bureaus are unwieldy and sometimes work at cross-purposes. The Secretary and bureau heads are frequently distracted by high profile crises and intractable problems. Like other agencies, DOI has lost many experienced and dedicated staff, and it has a workforce ill-matched to its current needs.

Making climate mitigation happen will require strong leadership and sustained focus from the Secretary and leaders of key bureaus, as well as effective support from the Office of the Solicitor. Restoring staff morale will be critical, and for many DOI staff, climate mitigation also requires a shift in their understanding of their jobs and mission. DOI will need clear direction, ongoing reinforcement, a cross-DOI climate oversight body, action on multiple fronts, and implementation follow-through. Finally, given DOI's current limitations, near-term progress will require a substantial number of relatively senior political appointees to help get the job done.

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## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND ORGANIZATION

- Secretarial Order and address to set priorities, boost morale (*Day 1*)
- Create DOI Climate Council (*Day 1*)
- Bring BLM national leadership back to Washington, DC (*Day 1*)
- Request to reprogram FY2021 funds to climate mitigation in BLM/BOEM/BSEE (*Day 1*)
- Appoint increased number of senior political staff to fill climate capacity gaps (*100 Days*)
- Increase budget requests for BOEM wind permitting; BLM GHG emission regulation, land use planning, orphan well plugging, land restoration, and wildfire management; BOEM/BSEE GHG emission regulation; and political and career staffing (*100 Days*)
- Conduct BLM listening tour to hear staff and communicate climate focus (*100 Days*)

## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- Issue Day 1 Secretarial Order prioritizing climate mitigation across DOI (*Day 1*):
  - Set goals for DOI net GHG emissions; onshore and offshore renewable energy
  - Require numeric and monetized lifecycle GHG emissions estimates under NEPA
  - Temporarily require headquarters review of all actions that would increase emissions
  - Direct USGS to track DOI GHG emissions and sinks; educate public and DOI staff on climate
- Reduce emissions from federal fossil fuels:
  - Adopt policies to slow/halt onshore leasing (Secretary/BLM) (*Day 1*)
  - Defend and begin rulemakings on methane emissions, venting and flaring (BLM; BOEM; BSEE) (*Day 1*)
  - Cut venting and flaring on a case-by-case basis through permits and approvals (BSEE) (*Day 1*)
  - Put the Outer Continental Shelf entirely or mostly off-limits to new leasing (BOEM) (*100 Days*)
  - Reinstate compensatory mitigation; apply it to climate (Solicitor; Secretary) (*100 Days*)
  - Strengthen bonding and clean up orphan wells (BLM; BOEM; BSEE) (*100 Days*)
- Boost renewable energy production and transmission on public and Tribal lands and waters:
  - Instruct state and regional offices to prioritize approvals (BLM; BOEM) (*Day 1*)
  - Approve pending offshore wind projects (BOEM) (*100 Days*)
  - Boost staff and resources for permitting and outreach (BLM; BOEM) (*100 Days*)
  - Work with EOP Permitting Council to speed projects (Secretary's Office) (*100 Days*)
  - Provide technical support for projects on Tribal lands (BLM; BIA) (*100 Days*)
- Enhance carbon sequestration on public lands:
  - Quantify biological carbon losses and gains in NEPA reviews (DOI-wide) (*Day 1*)
  - Manage for carbon sequestration through restoration and wildfire focus (BLM) (*100 Days*)
  - Boost research on biological carbon sinks and quantification (USGS) (*100 Days*)

The Department of Energy's core climate capabilities lie in its preeminent energy research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D) programs and capabilities. These capabilities are distributed across several DOE programs, including the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), the Office of Science, the Office of Nuclear Energy, the Office of Electricity, and several others. To accelerate action on climate change as part of an administration-wide effort, DOE leadership will need to set a clear road map to prioritize early climate action, revitalize the research conducted by these RDD&D programs, and focus them on climate change and clean energy solutions.

Historically, the first few days of a Secretary of Energy's tenure are largely focused on detailed briefings related to nuclear security, physical security, agency threats and national security, grid infrastructure, and disaster preparedness. These recommendations outline a comprehensive strategy an incoming administration can execute to focus the agency on climate from Day One, while still meeting its responsibilities in these other important areas.

In particular, one of a new administration's key first tasks will likely be to effectively shift DOE's RDD&D focus to climate change and clean energy. To manage this shift, the incoming Secretary should immediately form a Climate Policy and RDD&D Task Force. This task force would formally bring together the Assistant Secretaries, Under Secretaries, key headquarters staff (CFO, Energy Information Administration (EIA), procurement, operations), and National Lab directors on a new venture to determine how to design and implement a broader climate strategy across all aspects and operations of the department. Bringing together the broader leadership of the department—both career and political—around a deep decarbonization strategy should permeate through all decision-making processes and strategy.

The Department of Energy also has a key role to play in addressing the global nature of the climate crisis and other energy security concerns. As a statutory member of the National Security Council, DOE has a central role to play in elevating the role of climate and energy in foreign policy issues such as security of supply, nonproliferation, energy access, trade, technology, and more.

In addition, one of a new administration's first key tasks will likely be managing a major federal economic stimulus program, aimed at COVID-19 and economic recovery. To manage this influx of funds and ensure DOE programs effectively focus the new money on climate-related activities, the recommendations include standing up a short-term Climate Strike Team consisting of acting officials from key program offices and agency wide departments.

This Strike Team would quickly identify any hot-button issues in the department, potentially block anti-climate actions taken by the previous administration, and quickly refocus or pause funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) that are not aligned with new administration policy. The Strike Team as envisioned would be a short-term solution, filling key management gaps while senior political appointees await Senate confirmation and more political leadership is brought into the Department.

Recommendations also address a wide range of other DOE priorities, including restarting the DOE Appliance Standard Program, re-orienting DOE's fossil energy research program on low-carbon RDD&D, revitalizing the agency's hiring, and restoring its fundamental commitment to scientific integrity.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE**

- Stand up a DOE Climate and research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D) Task Force that includes Senior headquarters staff and National Laboratory Directors (*Day 1*)
- Create a Climate Strike Team to push climate action while key leadership positions are awaiting Senate confirmation (*Day 1*)
- Identify high profile and sensitive DOE projects and programs which will require early attention, such as environmental management and cleanup, disaster response plans, and grid security (*Day 1*)
- Prepare DOE to administer increased grant, loan, loan guarantee, and other programmatic expenditures potential economy recovery legislation (*100 Days*)
- Shape early budget requests and align budget with new climate policies, including targeting a 30% increase in FY2022 (*100 Days*)
- Organize front office, management, congressional strategy, public engagement, and other department-wide initiatives (*100 Days*)
- Refocus Department's commitment to scientific integrity by updating Department's mission statement and engaging directly with staff about the importance of scientific integrity (*Day 1*)
- Fix a broken hiring process by directing Management and Operations Departments to streamline hiring by identifying improvements and proposing an implementation plan (*100 Days*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**

- Reshape DOE's formal mission to focus more on climate change and solutions (*Day 1*)
- Reconstitute and rebuild the Appliance Standards Program (*100 Days*)
- Create cross-cutting efforts to focus RDD&D programs on lowering the cost of clean energy technologies (*Day 1*)
- Utilize DOE's unique analytical tools to support an administration-wide regulatory agenda (*100 Days*)
- Stand up a task force on international engagement to prioritize and coordinate energy and climate change diplomacy led by the Deputy Secretary (*Day 1*)
- Reshape the Fossil Energy portfolio to fit into a broader climate program (*100 Days*)



The US Department of Agriculture has enormous capacity to contribute meaningfully to an ambitious administration climate agency. Agriculture accounts for 9% of US emissions, and US forests sequester 11-15% of annual US fossil fuel emissions. Through actions in both sectors, agriculture and forestry can provide 10-20% of the additional sequestration and emissions reductions needed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. USDA is also an important climate science agency and is at the forefront of critical climate adaptation efforts, including reducing catastrophic wildfires, enhancing food security, and bolstering crop resilience among other issues.

The incoming Secretary of Agriculture can get USDA off to a strong start by taking immediate policy actions with near-term impact and setting a solid organizational foundation for long-term impact. USDA has enormous and underappreciated discretionary financial resources and agency expertise that enable the agency to: (1) partner with farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to reduce atmospheric GHGs through carbon sequestration and emissions reductions; (2) reduce GHG emissions from rural energy cooperatives; (3) bolster the resilience of private working lands and public forests and grasslands; (4) promote sustainable bioenergy, wood products, and other bio-based materials (5) contribute to the scientific understanding of climate change; and (6) invest in climate economic development in rural communities.

Importantly, given current economic conditions, investments in climate change at USDA can support and create rural jobs in agriculture, forestry, conservation and related businesses, thereby contributing to the economic recovery of rural America. Given climate skepticism by many in rural America, it is critical that agriculture, forestry, and other rural stakeholders view themselves as USDA's partners to achieve climate goals. USDA initiatives should emphasize collaboration, incentives, the historic resiliency and innovation of agriculture and forestry, and the critical role that rural America can play in helping address climate change while creating jobs and economic opportunity.

Issues of diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice are important in all of USDA's work, including climate change. Given USDA's history of past discrimination against minorities, tribes and women in the implementation of farm and other programs, it is vital that USDA's efforts around climate change seek input from diverse stakeholders and that policies are administered such that outreach and delivery to these communities are prioritized.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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*\* Professional affiliations do not imply organizational endorsement of these recommendations*

## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE

- **Rebuild and restore staff capacity and morale** by re-investing in science capacity, especially in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Economic Research Service, and addressing workforce and performance protocols that reward staff for climate change innovation. *(Day 1)*
- **Reset the narrative of agriculture and forestry as climate change solutions with rural stakeholders** by emphasizing producers' and landowners' historic commitment to stewardship, and economic opportunities presented by investments in climate mitigation and resilience. *(Day 1)*

## • TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- **Issue a Secretarial Order on Climate Change and Rural Investment** to signal climate change as a top priority of the department, frame USDA's interest in investing in agriculture, forestry, technology, innovation, and rural economies, and to set agendas for policy and programmatic actions needed to act on climate. *(Day 1)*
- **Invest in natural climate solutions** by establishing a Carbon Bank using the Commodity Credit Corporation to finance large-scale investments in climate smart land management practices; prioritizing climate smart practices in implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs; and identifying opportunities to invest in natural infrastructure. *(100 Days)*
- **Incentivize climate smart agriculture and rural investment** through financial tools including crop insurance, rural development grants and loans, and USDA procurement. *(100 Days)*
- **Decarbonize rural energy and promote green energy and smart grids** through the vast reach of Rural Development grants and loans to rural utilities and by dramatically increasing use of methane digesters, biofuels and wood energy and wood product innovation. *(100 Days)*
- **Prioritize federal investment to address wildfire** by establishing a Wildfire Commission, co-chaired by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior and a Democratic and Republican governor, to offer recommendations to increase the pace and scale of ecologically-sound forest restoration on federal, state, tribal and private forest lands, modernize firefighting response in the U.S., address development in the wildland-urban interface, and increase the use of prescribed fire. *(100 Days)*

The transportation sector has become the largest contributor to GHG emissions in the United States. Transportation infrastructure and systems are also increasingly threatened by the impacts of climate change, and will require changes in how we plan, design, and maintain these systems. The public health and economic crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic introduce additional challenges and competing priorities. Incoming officials at the Department of Transportation will likely be asked to both address the adverse impacts of the pandemic on public transit ridership and identify the best approaches for new infrastructure investments to stimulate the economy and create jobs. This will create a complicated set of tradeoffs and opportunities. DOT leadership will need to consider how best to allocate management attention and political capital in addressing short-term economic damage from the pandemic and the longer-term, climate-informed changes to how DOT shapes our transportation system.

The Secretary (or senior designee from the Office of the Secretary) should chair an intra-departmental Climate Council that includes senior modal leadership and other key personnel. The Council should drive climate priorities, including incorporating climate considerations into stimulus programs, identifying top priority projects of national significance to elevate for congressional and public attention, and developing guidance encouraging states and localities to innovate on climate-smart, multimodal surface transportation projects. Climate change should be integrated into the organization of each modal administration at a high level, including a climate-focused team within the administrator's office in each modal administration.

DOT's authorities and programs provide significant opportunities to reduce emissions and increase resilience to climate impacts, including through vehicle efficiency standards, investments in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, support for transit systems and other low-carbon transportation options, and a "climate in all policies" approach to require consideration of climate impacts of transportation projects. DOT leadership will need to work closely with the White House and EPA to decide how to prioritize and sequence new standards for light-duty passenger vehicles and for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. DOT can play a lead role in building and installing the charging infrastructure needed to support the electrification of vehicles, including passenger vehicles, local freight delivery vehicles, buses, port equipment, and more. Electrification presents a major opportunity for emissions reduction and could be a cornerstone of efforts to reinvigorate the U.S. economy. DOT should initiate a task force with senior-level engagement to focus on electrification policy, including investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure along the interstate highway system.

DOT should work to expand partnerships and relationships with state and local government to foster innovation and gather feedback on opportunities for the federal government to support and facilitate subnational leadership. Additionally, DOT should increase staffing within its Office of Public Engagement to bring in climate and environmental justice expertise to help shape and communicate DOT's priorities.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE

- **Establish a DOT Climate Council** to signal climate change as a top priority of the department, to coordinate across modal administrations, and to set agendas for climate policy and programmatic actions, including economic stimulus programs (*Day 1*)
- **Embed climate change personnel in modal administrations** by establishing new resilience and sustainability teams and leadership participation to communicate climate priorities (*100 Days*)
- **Announce a human capital restoration plan** to rebuild career staff capacity and expertise lost in recent years and identify needs for budget requests (*100 Days*)
- **Include staffing and programmatic needs** for expanded work on climate change in early budget recommendations and requests (*100 Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- **Announce intent to initiate rulemakings** to undo rollbacks and accelerate decarbonization of surface transportation systems (*Day 1*)
- **Initiate new transportation electrification task force** to focus on electrification policy and job creation and propose new budget and legislative initiatives (*100 Days*)
- **Initiate efforts to develop climate change criteria** for resilience and emission reductions, as well as related economic analysis, to incorporate in BUILD grant criteria and to update NEPA guidance (*100 Days*)
- **Develop proposal for a new ARPA-T** program to advance transportation innovation (*100+ Days*)
- **Ensure DOT leadership in the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization** to advance efforts to reduce global aviation and maritime emissions (*100+ Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

- **Announce intent to establish a Visiting Mayors' Office** to improve and expand direct federal-local engagement and encourage local transportation innovation (*Day 1*)
- **Identify opportunities to engage with states and regions** through existing meetings of governmental associations (*100 Days*)



U.S. engagement on climate change is more necessary and urgent than ever—and the State Department will need to make best use of its tools to drive the international effort starting on day one.

- There is little time left to avoid a dangerous, potentially catastrophic climate situation.
- Only the United States is in a position to deliver the scale and speed of necessary global action to avoid such an outcome. The absence of U.S. leadership on the world stage has been palpable.
- Climate change is a key economic, national security, and diplomatic issue for other countries.

The walk-back on the Paris Agreement and domestic climate action will create diplomatic challenges for the United States, and COVID-19 has refocused countries' efforts and priorities toward short-term economic recovery. But the world is nevertheless hungry for leadership in the global response to climate change and will be seeking strong U.S. re-engagement, action, and funding.

The nature of the U.S. climate mission in the early 2020s will be broader than it was in the mid-2010s, which will have implications for the State Department's priorities and organization. Having successfully driven completion of the Paris Agreement, including through robust cooperation with China, the United States now needs to focus on achievement of the three Paris objectives—a safe global temperature; increased climate resilience; and aligning financial flows with the Paris goals. There will continue to be negotiations and other forms of diplomatic engagement across multiple international fora; in addition, robust implementation will now also be a top priority.

On Day 1, the incoming Secretary of State should:

- **Support the White House in rejoining the Paris Agreement.** A presidential announcement on Day 1 will require advance preparation of the legal instrument during the transition.
- **Appoint a Special Envoy for Climate Change.** This will enable immediate, high-level re-engagement and to signal to the international community, as well as the department itself, that climate change is again a top-tier US priority.
- **Issue a Day 1 message to the international community.** This would clarify that the incoming administration, including the Secretary, understands the importance of vigorously addressing the climate crisis—and will play a leadership role. (This would be released in conjunction with the Paris announcement.)

The State Department will also need to quickly formulate a reengagement strategy to advance U.S. climate objectives through negotiations and other forms of diplomacy, both bilaterally and in relevant multilateral forums.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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*\* Professional affiliations do not imply organizational endorsement of these recommendations*

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE**

- Appoint a Special Envoy for Climate Change, a “ministerial”-level representative devoting full-time attention to climate issues who will report directly to the Secretary, lead international climate negotiations and diplomacy, and help manage a whole-of-government effort to deliver on increased global climate ambition (*Day 1*)
- A Day 1 message from the Secretary to the entire State Department on rejoining the Paris Agreement, the U.S. leadership role on climate, and internal expectations for integrating climate fully into the work of the department and USAID (*Day 1*)
- Establish a standing senior climate committee, chaired or co-chaired by the Special Envoy, to drive climate ambition, coordinate policies, and pursue multiple strategies for integrating climate into the work of the department and USAID, including regional and functional bureaus. Establish similar committees in key U.S. Embassies and Missions (*Day 1*)
- Reprogram FY2020 earmarked climate funding for State and USAID, allocate FY2021 earmarked climate funding, and prepare the FY2022 budget request (*100 Days*)
- Reinstitute the Global Climate Change Initiative, or its equivalent, to ensure that development assistance efforts help contribute to climate diplomacy (*100 Days*)
- Develop a human capital restoration plan to rebuild staff and expertise (*100 Days*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**

- During the transition, ready the instrument to rejoin the Paris Agreement and support a presidential Day 1 announcement (*Day 1*)
- Develop an early strategy for re-engaging in climate diplomacy, including bilateral, multilateral, and global negotiations and other processes, in order to reassert US leadership, promote climate ambition, and otherwise advance substantive US objectives (*100 Days*)
- Work with the White House and other agencies to set up the domestic process to develop the next Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (*100 Days*)
- Assess U.S. commitments and pending actions that will be due or are late because the Trump Administration failed to submit them (*100 Days*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- Build (or rebuild) strong working relationships with counterparts at the White House and other agencies to ensure maximum effectiveness of U.S. climate diplomacy (*100 Days*)
- Work to ensure that State outreach/coordination efforts extend to U.S. states, cities, the private sector, and other non-governmental actors, and help facilitate their attendance and participation in UNFCCC/Paris Agreement meetings and processes, as appropriate (*100 Days*)

In many ways, the Department of Justice is the “tip of the spear” for the incoming administration’s climate strategy. While DOJ might not lead on the President’s climate agenda, many of its client agencies will. On Day 1, DOJ attorneys will already be engaged in litigation that holds deep implications for federal climate policy. Going forward, they will defend marquee climate initiatives. DOJ could also amplify the administration’s climate agenda by prioritizing cases with a climate nexus and negotiating supplemental climate projects in settlements.

To engage DOJ in this important work, the incoming administration should appoint an environmental transition team that is familiar with DOJ and its role with client agencies; encourage a cooperative relationship between the political teams at ENRD and client agencies; invite DOJ leadership to any inter-agency climate task force that is formed; and enable DOJ involvement in key rulemaking and client enforcement strategies at the earliest possible stages. Within DOJ, top leadership should signal that climate protection is a priority and encourage communication between DOJ components to enhance climate capacity.

DOJ employees pride themselves on loyalty to the mission and respect for the rule of law. Stories of career attorneys stepping off of cases or resigning since 2017 reflect unusually public displays of concern for current administration policies. Environmental enforcement is down and morale is low. Given this, a successful climate strategy should be one that also reinvigorates enforcement, restores integrity to the department, and empowers career attorneys to help drive the climate mission forward.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE

- **Appoint an Associate Attorney General ready to champion climate work in the Department**, and staff that office with personnel who can participate in any White House interagency climate change initiative or task force (*Day 1*)
- **Exercise funding discretion within DOJ Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) to support climate litigation** (*Day 1*)
- **Support modest expansion of the ENRD budget** and explore use of self-perpetuating funds such as the Three Percent Fund and the Superfund (*100 Days*)
- **Leverage non-ENRD resources at DOJ to support the climate agenda of diverse client agencies.** The Civil Rights Division might work with ENRD, EPA, and the White House to craft an updated version of President Clinton's Environmental Justice Executive Order; the Tax Division might oversee enforcement of a carbon tax (*100 Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- **Identify and reverse DOJ policies (and client agency policies related to DOJ litigation)** that could hamper the robust defense of new climate policies or climate-related enforcement actions (*100 Days*)
- **Reinvigorate environmental enforcement more generally**, in partnership with enforcement offices in client agencies (e.g., EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance, DOI's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement) (*100 Days*)
- **Coordinate with EPA and other client agencies** on actions to take with pending cases related to the incoming administration's climate policy (*100 Days*)
- **Embed a DOJ detailee** in client agency office to assist with 1-3 marquis climate rulemakings (where the client agency welcomes this input) (*100 Days*)

### TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

- **Hire DOJ personnel with sensitivity to and relationships with client agencies** (*100 Days*)
- **Revive the climate working group in ENRD and across DOJ divisions** to discuss case strategy, consistent with the "unitary executive" principle. (*100 Days*)
- **Work closely with U.S. Attorneys and State Attorneys General** wherever possible and appropriate. (*100 Days and ongoing*)



NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, the ocean, and coasts; share that knowledge and information with federal agencies, states, and the public; and conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. As a source of timely and authoritative scientific data and information about climate, and with its ancillary website, Climate.gov, NOAA promotes the public understanding of climate science and climate-related events and is the lead agency for the National Climate Assessment.

Because of its roles as a collector and provider of scientific information and data and as a resource manager and regulator, NOAA plays a critical part in furthering climate mitigation as well as climate adaptation and resilience efforts in the United States. Housed within the Department of Commerce, NOAA had a \$5.3 billion discretionary budget and 11,000 FTEs in 2020, representing 60% of the Department's budget. However, since NOAA was established 50 years ago, more than one Secretary of Commerce has been appointed with little or no knowledge of the NOAA portfolio. Given its essential role as a climate information agency, it will be very important for the new Secretary to be a champion for NOAA and its climate data and services.

NOAA's goal in a new administration should be to expand and make climate data, products, and services even more easy to access and use, provide climate-related support to state and local governments as well as to the private sector, and connect people making specific adaptation and planning decisions with the tools and resources they need. At the same time, NOAA should expand both mitigation and adaptation opportunities to coastal communities and fisheries by expanding coastal resiliency and blue carbon habitat restoration efforts, and by establishing a mandate for climate-ready fisheries.

Although public trust in NOAA was somewhat eroded during the current administration and will need to be restored under new leadership, the agency is generally trusted by the public and should build on this to expand the services they provide.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE**

- Nominate a NOAA Administrator early (*Transition/Day 1*)
- Establish a NOAA Climate Council to ensure collaboration across line offices (*Day 1*)
- Convene a Day 1 all-hands meeting to reinvigorate morale among NOAA personnel (*Day 1*)
- Restore scientific integrity of NOAA and the Department of Commerce. (*100 Days*)
- Propose increased funding for:
  - Climate observations, predictions, and forecasts, and the computation needed to improve them;
  - The development and dissemination of climate products and services;
  - NOAA habitat protection, restoration and resilience programs that store carbon and protect coastal communities (*100 Days*)
  - National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Science Centers to support climate-ready fisheries management, national climate assessments, and the environmental reviews needed to expand offshore renewable energy siting

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**

- Issue a Day 1 Administrator's Order on climate change to (*Day 1*):
  - Establish a NOAA Climate Council
  - Require each line office to develop a near-term climate rapid response plan and 5-year research spending plan
  - Announce an initiative to expand and enhance NOAA's climate products and services, working closely with end users such as cities, states, federal agencies, and the private sector to better assess risks and opportunities and make informed decisions
  - Elevate, realign and reinvigorate the Marine Protected Area (MPA) program with a focus on climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience
- Expand and enhance climate observations, predictions, and forecasts (*100 Days*)
- Expand and elevate NOAA habitat protection, restoration and resilience programs to protect blue carbon and increase resilience for coastal communities (*100 Days*)
- Issue an Administrator's Order directing NMFS to prioritize integrating climate science into fisheries management decisions and increase funding for the science needed to support those efforts (*100 Days*)
- Elevate, realign, and reinvigorate the Marine Protected Area (MPA) program with a focus on climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience (*Day 1*)
- Support the development of offshore renewable energy (*100 Days and ongoing*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- Assert NOAA's commitment to serve all communities in the U.S.
- Re-establish NOAA's role and leadership internationally (*100 Days*)
- Rebuild relationships with Capitol Hill (*100 Days*)
- Rebuild the focus of NOAA as an Earth systems agency (*100 Days*)

Climate change is increasingly hurting American workers, businesses, and industry. Managing the economic and financial risks posed by a changing climate will require a whole-of-economy and whole-of-government approach. The challenge lies in spurring shared economic growth while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing our resiliency to climate shocks.

Addressing this challenge will necessarily need to account for the President's highest priorities in 2021: controlling the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting economic recovery. The Secretary of the Treasury will play a central role shaping the administration's economic recovery program and the Secretary likely will be the President's chief voice on these matters. To promote near-term job creation and durable long-term growth, the Secretary should have the perspective and resources needed to direct economic recovery efforts that prominently address climate issues.

The Secretary of the Treasury and the Treasury Department are crucial to the success of the administration's efforts to move the U.S. and global economy to a low-carbon trajectory and to protect the economy from climate change shocks. The Secretary plays a fundamental role in shaping the tax and spending policies that ensure both robust long-term economic growth and strong climate action. Treasury has oversight, consultative, or advisory responsibility across virtually every aspect of economic policy and every federal agency. Treasury can influence climate-focused regulations by providing candid economic advice informally through interagency discussions and through the formal OIRA process. Treasury can frame the financial regulatory agenda and federal insurance policy, as well as engage financial regulators on climate change threats to financial stability. Treasury helps design non-discretionary spending policies through its budgetary role and its oversight role for Social Security and Medicare.

The Secretary is America's top economic diplomat and is central to global economic and financial leadership. Our partners and allies—at the Group of 20, the IMF and World Bank, and at the Financial Stability Board—look to the United States to spearhead initiatives to spur global growth and ensure resilient and balanced development.

In the absence of federal action, the private sector and state and local governments have seized the initiative on climate policy innovation. Treasury can create an accommodating regulatory and policy environment to spur further private sector and state government efforts.

The first six months of the new administration are critical to advancing a robust economic policy and effective climate action. The Secretary will need to make the case to American workers and businesses that policies to achieve a climate-oriented economy and sustainable investments can spur economic growth, ensure strong employment and resilient financial markets, avoid adverse impacts to low-income and disadvantaged communities, and enhance U.S. national security.

Treasury will need an effective organizational focus that enlists all Treasury offices to identify and advance climate goals. The Secretary should appoint a senior Counselor, with a small staff with experience in climate and economic policy and private sector engagement, to spearhead and coordinate Treasury climate-related efforts across the department. The Secretary should task the undersecretaries to harness existing climate expertise within their offices and recruit staff with experience in domestic and international climate efforts.

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## LEAD AUTHORS

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**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT, BUDGET, AND STRUCTURE**

- Appoint a Counselor to the Secretary for Economic Growth and Climate to coordinate climate efforts within Treasury and represent the Department externally (*Day 1*)
- Issue a message from the Secretary announcing the new position and conveying Treasury's climate mission (*Day 1*)
- Establish a senior standing climate committee within Treasury to meet regularly to coordinate on domestic and international strategies, engagement, and implementation (*100 Days*)
- Identify budgetary opportunities to amplify U.S. climate re-engagement through financial contributions to international climate finance institutions and multilateral development banks (*100 Days*)
- Develop a plan to build staff capacity for effective domestic and international engagement on climate change (*100 Days*)
- Hardwire climate goals within each office's mission, job descriptions and strategic plan (*100 Days*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**

- Develop a climate strategy that articulates near-, medium- and long-term goals, including public messaging, domestic policy efforts, and international engagement (*100 Days*)
- Deliver a speech from the Secretary on economic growth and climate ambition before key domestic constituencies, such as major business chambers or associations (*100 Days*)
- Integrate climate objectives in economic recovery efforts and advance domestic climate policy through tax, budget, and regulatory initiatives (*6 months*)
- Develop an international agenda for climate finance and identify an international forum to announce strategy (*6 months*)
- Raise and emphasize climate and financial stability risks and opportunities on the agenda of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) (*6 months*)

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- Build strong working relationships with the National Climate Council (NCC), as well as with NEC on tax-related climate initiatives; OMB on spending and regulations; and the NSC and OMB on foreign assistance and international climate negotiations (*100 Days*)
- Strengthen Treasury's engagement with key climate agencies to ensure input on climate policy development, including on economic and budgetary implications, and use its board positions, such as at the International Development Finance Corporation and at the Social Security and Medicare boards of trustees, to incorporate climate goals (*100 Days*)
- Engage with financial regulators—through the FSOC and the Office of Financial Research (OFR)—to develop climate-focused priorities and undertake research and regulatory initiatives (*6 months*)



As the next Administration seeks to tackle the wide ranging and growing challenges associated with climate change, the need for an effective and efficient federal government workforce has never been clearer.

Over the last four years, staff working in key roles across the federal government on issues related to climate change have been demoralized, sidelined or have left their roles all together. As new leadership teams take the helm, they will inherit a workforce that has experienced a prolonged, systematic assault to disable effective capacities, demoralize its highly knowledgeable and dedicated staff, and undercut its own legal authorities. New leadership will need to both communicate a compelling long-term vision on combating climate change and quickly motivate, activate, recruit, hire, and retain dedicated career leadership and expert staff to supply analyses, ideas, and approaches to achieve that vision.

Achieving ambitious climate goals will require rebuilding capacity across federal departments and agencies, which means the new administration must mobilize existing federal employees and forge working relationships with key career employees on the agency and departmental level who will help facilitate hiring and recruitment efforts. Federal agencies and the Executive Office of the President will need to quickly assess vacancies, determine roles that will need to be created to support new initiatives, and generate targeted recruitment plans to attract top-tier talent.

The new administration will need to understand and avail itself of the full range of hiring authorities that exist across the federal government and the tools that will allow it to bring in talent for both the short and long term. Given the diversity of agency-specific needs and authorities, the transition and landing teams should also prioritize building a strong foundational understanding of effective hiring authorities and effective, respectful working relationships with agency hiring teams that can be deployed as newly minted political appointees work with existing career federal employees to revitalize and restock the government's climate change workforce.

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## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE

- **Forge partnerships with key HR staff in relevant agencies and departments.** Establish strong working relationships with career staff who facilitate hiring activities.
- **“Surge” Hiring Authorities.** Agencies have a range of authorities to hire in the short-term and to acquire specialized staff outside of the traditional civil service process, including through direct hires, the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, rehiring former and retired career officials, and certain Schedule A and Schedule B hiring authorities, among other mechanisms.
- **Long-Term Hiring Authorities.** To rebuild the federal government for the long term, agencies should look to the competitive service process and to special programs for recent graduates, including the Presidential Management Fellowship.
- **Focus on diversity.** Federal departments and agencies should develop comprehensive strategies to drive and integrate diversity and inclusion practices with a particular focus on areas where underrepresentation may exist.
- **Address burrowing.** Some of the previous administration’s political appointees may now be in career positions that would allow them to undermine climate related activities. Steps should be taken to understand where these individuals are.
- **Cross-governmental coordination around hiring and recruitment.** Climate Change related agencies and departments should establish working relationships across the government around hiring and recruiting.

## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS: HIRING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Map vacancies and design workforce plans.** Each agency should identify its talent needs and develop workforce plans that align with their climate change priorities.
- **Recruitment.** Agencies should proactively and effectively find the talent that aligns with their needs.
- **Mobilize and empower a demoralized workforce.** The next administration should take steps to re-energize and empower the existing workforce.
- **Appoint an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) director that considers climate change a crisis.** A supportive OPM director can help expedite the hiring process across the government.
- **Rehire former and retired federal employees.** Certain former and retired employees can be rehired quickly and play an integral role in getting programs off the ground quickly.
- **Focus on the hiring process.** Addressing choke points in the hiring process itself is an important aspect of making sure agencies are able to quickly bring on new talent.