

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2014

FACT SHEET: 16 U.S. Communities Recognized as Climate Action Champions for Leadership on Climate Change

From deep droughts to fierce wildfires, severe storms to rising seas, communities across the United States are already grappling with the impacts of extreme weather and climate change. Faced with these new challenges, many cities, towns, counties, and tribes in every region of the country are stepping up to cut carbon pollution, deploy more clean energy, boost energy efficiency, and build resilience in their communities to climate impacts.

That is why earlier this fall the White House launched the Climate Action Champions competition, to identify and recognize local climate leaders and to provide targeted Federal support to help those communities further raise their ambitions. Following a competitive process led by the Department of Energy (DOE), today the Administration is announcing 16 communities from around the country as the first cohort of Climate Action Champions.

The Obama Administration is committed to taking decisive action to combat climate change. Just last month, to drive international discussions leading up to the 2015 climate negotiations in Paris, President Obama made an historic joint announcement with Chinese President Xi Jinping of each country's respective targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the post-2020 period. Building on the United States' bipartisan history of supporting financing for clean energy and climate adaptation in developing countries, the President also announced the United States' \$3 billion commitment to the Green Climate Fund.

But international leadership begins at home, which is why the Obama Administration is continuing to partner with state and local governments, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to make progress on climate change in the United States. Building on the Administration's work with the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, which delivered its recommendations to the President on November 17, and the selection of the Climate Action Champions this week, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy launched a new Climate Education and Literacy Initiative, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the White House collaborated on the fourth in a series of local climate resilience exercises in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Climate Action Champions. From creating climate-smart building codes to installing green infrastructure to setting targets for reducing energy consumption, the 16 local and tribal communities selected as Climate Action Champions have considered their climate vulnerabilities and taken decisive action to cut carbon pollution and build resilience. In addition to being designated as the first cohort of Climate Action Champions, the selected communities will benefit from facilitated peer-to-peer learning and mentorship and targeted support from a range of Federal programs. Furthermore, a coordinator will be provided to each Climate Action Champion to foster coordination and communication across the Federal agencies, national organizations, and foundations in support of the Champions. The coordinator will also assist efforts to raise awareness of funding and technical assistance opportunities that are available specifically for Climate Action Champions.

The 16 designated Climate Action Champions represent a diverse group of communities that are defining the frontier of ambitious climate action, and their approaches can serve as a model for other communities to follow. They are:

- **Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe (CA):** The Blue Lake Rancheria, a Federally recognized tribal government, began its strategic climate action plan in 2008 and is a regional leader in strategically planning and implementing both climate resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction measures. To date, the Tribe has reduced energy consumption by 35 percent and has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2018, utilizing a range of approaches including the use of biodiesel to power public buses and aggressive energy efficiency measures.
- **Boston (MA):** The City of Boston has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. The city is the first in the region to adopt Green Building Zoning, add climate resilience to the large new construction review process, and work with utilities on a regional microgrid. Additionally, Boston implemented a “Green Ribbon Commission,” which represents businesses, non-profits, and community leaders from a variety of sectors working to develop shared strategies for fighting climate change in coordination with the city’s Climate Action Plan.
- **Broward County (FL):** Broward County, a member of the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, a regional partnership of four counties (Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach) to advance climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 2 percent per year, reaching a 10 percent reduction target by 2020, and 80 percent by 2050.
- **Dubuque (IA):** The City of Dubuque has adopted greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of 50 percent below 2003 levels by 2030. Alongside these

aggressive targets, the flood prone community of Dubuque is focused on risk reduction and resilience, especially as it relates to development and redevelopment of community infrastructure.

- **Knoxville (TN):** The City of Knoxville has set a short-term greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. In order to execute on that target, the city developed a planning process that engages major stakeholders, including utilities and community grassroots organizations, and formalizes efforts to integrate energy provision, utilization, procurement, waste, and urban/agricultural use into the city's Energy and Sustainability Work Plan.
- **Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (DC, MD, and VA):** The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) developed the National Capital Region Climate Change Report, demonstrating a fully integrated approach to climate change mitigation and outlining goals in the areas of greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, transportation and land use, sustainability and resilience, and infrastructure. The COG is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 20 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. As a Climate Action Champion, the COG plans to establish an innovative Climate Champions Training Initiative to disseminate the Federal technical assistance and resources it receives to stakeholders across the region.
- **Mid-America Regional Council (KS and MO):** The Mid-America Regional Council, a nonprofit association of city and county governments and the metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state Kansas City region, proposed the creation of a regional Resilience Working Group. Through leadership, planning, and action, the Mid-America Regional Council promotes regional cooperation and innovative solutions and seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2 percent per year.
- **Minneapolis (MN):** The City of Minneapolis developed the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan, which includes greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of 15 percent by 2015, 30 percent by 2025, and 80 percent by 2050. The city has partnered with two utilities, Xcel Energy and Center Point Energy, to jointly plan, market, implement, and track strategies to meet climate and energy goals.
- **Montpelier (VT):** Earlier this year, the City of Montpelier launched Net Zero Montpelier, a major initiative focused on making Montpelier the first effectively carbon-neutral capital city in the country by the year 2030. The city has demonstrated its leadership and innovation in climate mitigation and resilience by creating the first energy efficiency utility and the first standard offer program, and by making a commitment to eliminate fossil fuel use across all sectors.

- **Oberlin (OH):** The City of Oberlin has developed a climate change mitigation and resilience plan for power production, solid waste, and transportation, utilizing an innovative and collaborative model that includes partnerships between the town, the University, the utility, industry, and international, national, and regional non-profits. The city established aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets of 50 percent by 2015, 75 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2050.
- **Portland (OR):** The City of Portland is a regional leader for greenhouse gas reduction and climate change mitigation. With support from 20 agency partners, Portland's 2015 Climate Action Plan is a strategy to put the city on a path to achieve an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels.
- **Salt Lake City (UT):** Salt Lake City developed a comprehensive and well-integrated portfolio of programs and policies, including renewable energy, transportation, code revisions, water systems, and building policies as priorities. The city established a joint resolution to reduce its carbon footprint by 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, and 50 percent below 2020 levels by 2040.
- **San Francisco (CA):** The city of San Francisco has established some of the most aggressive climate and sustainability targets in the nation, covering a broad range of sectors, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, water, green infrastructure, and waste. With robust goals to measure progress, San Francisco aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2017, and 40 percent by 2025.
- **Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (MI):** The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians demonstrates a holistic approach to climate action and preparedness through their energy strategy, emergency operations plan, integrated resource management plan, solid waste management plan, sustainable development code, and land use planning process, with ambitious goals including a net-zero energy goal. The tribe aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4 percent per year.
- **Seattle (WA):** Adopted in June 2013, Seattle's Climate Action Plan focuses on city actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience while also supporting vibrant neighborhoods, economic prosperity, and social equity. The plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2017, and by 40 percent by 2025.
- **Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (CA):** The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) is the nation's first local

government agency created specifically to address climate change. The RCPA has committed to pursue a 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels through formal partnerships, pooling resources (financial and human), and working across silos.

Today, the Administration also announced new resilience funding opportunities available to local communities across the country, including those designated as Climate Action Champions:

- *Funding for Smart Grid Technologies:* DOE announced that up to \$3.5 million will be available through the Resilient Electricity Delivery Infrastructure (REDI) Initiative Funding Opportunity Announcement to help communities deploy pre-commercial and commercial smart grid technologies and tools that will help decision makers and resource managers to improve the recovery of electricity delivery services in their communities. The Funding Opportunity Announcement focuses on local and tribal governments that have experienced a Presidentially Declared Major Disaster in the past 30 years.
- *Funding for Resilient Coastal Communities:* The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will be releasing up to \$15 million for a Coastal Resilience Grant Program. The program will implement activities that build the resilience of forward-looking coastal communities and nearby ecosystems with the goal of mitigating the negative impacts of extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions.

Specific examples of Federal support that will be available to the winning communities include:

- *Data for Decision-Making:* Champions will be provided with validated climate science, data, vulnerability assessments, and risk projection tools needed to make smart planning decisions in their communities and receive technical assistance in using the tools. This support will be provided through programs within NOAA, the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and FEMA, among other agencies.
- *Adaptation, Preparedness, and Resilience Exercises:* Champions will have the opportunity to participate in FEMA-supported tabletop exercises. Participating communities will assess hazard mitigation and resilience planning already

underway to prepare for extreme weather events and other effects of a changing climate.

- *Peer Network:* Champions will have online and in-person access to lessons learned from the Administration's Sustainable Communities Initiative, a \$250 million investment in regions doing long-range planning for environmental, economic, and climate resilience in more than 140 communities nationwide.
- *Access to Renewable Energy Experts:* DOE's SunShot Initiative will work with Champions through two programs. First, the Solar Outreach Partnership will help Champions to accelerate solar energy adoption at the local level through a mix of educational workshops, peer-to-peer sharing opportunities, research-based reports, and online resources. Second, the Solar Technical Assistance Team at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) will bring together solar experts to provide Champions with unbiased information on solar policies and issues in order to facilitate the development of a market for solar photovoltaic technologies.
- *Tribal-Focused Technical Assistance:* Tribal communities designated as Champions will be offered the chance to participate in the DOE Office of Indian Energy Strategic Technical Assistance Response Team (START) program, an in-depth technical assistance program, as well as other targeted technical assistance and capacity building programs designed to help develop energy and resiliency planning and project development support for clean energy and energy efficiency projects.
- *Resilience Partnership with Federal Facilities:* Where possible, Champions will be able to participate in new preparedness pilots that are designed to pair local or tribal communities with nearby Federal facility partners to assess expected local climate impacts and develop plans to address them cooperatively. These would be modeled after two pilots that President Obama announced on July 16, in which the City of Houston is working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Johnson Space Center and the State of Colorado is working with the NREL.

Climate Education and Literacy Initiative. The Administration is also launching a new Climate Education and Literacy Initiative to help connect American students and citizens with the best available science-based information about climate change. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is hosting a roundtable at the White House today, bringing together education leaders from government, academia, philanthropies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to discuss efforts to increase student learning opportunities; equip educators with science-based information and resources; enhance climate-related professional development and training; and engage citizens through place-based and informal climate education. Today's launch of the Initiative includes a [host of exciting new commitments](#) by Federal agencies and outside organizations to develop and deploy innovative climate education approaches aimed at educating and engaging students and citizens of all ages. Examples of these commitments include:

- A new Federal program to train senior government executives as climate leaders;
- A new training program by the American Meteorological Society and partners to train faculty from Minority Serving Institutions to introduce climate science courses onto their campuses;
- An announcement by the Earth Day Network that the 2015 *Earth Week* will focus on climate education; and
- Plans supported by the Will Steger Foundation for more than a dozen public forums and educator workshops across the State of Minnesota to share credible information about climate change.

More information about the Climate Education announcement can be found [here](#).

Hampton Roads Pilot Project. The Administration also announced that a one-day exercise was offered yesterday at Old Dominion University in support of an intergovernmental pilot project created by the Hampton Roads community. The exercise was a component of the National Exercise Program Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Exercise Series, sponsored by the White House National

Security Council, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and supported by the National Exercise Division. The Hampton Roads pilot project seeks to develop a regional government- and community-wide approach to sea level rise preparedness and resilience planning that can also be used as a template for other regions. This fall, similar preparedness and resilience exercises were held in Houston, Texas, Fort Collins, Colorado, and Anchorage, Alaska.