

Climate Change

The latest scientific findings and economic impacts

The evidence of human-caused climate change is overwhelming and continues to strengthen

- Over the contiguous U.S., annual average temperature has increased by 1.8°F (1.0°C) since 1901.
- Recent decades (the past 30 years) in the U.S. are the warmest in at least the past 1,500 years.
- The past five years are the warmest years in the modern record.
- This warming has been driven in large part by increased emissions into the atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases caused by human activities.

Climate change is hurting the US economy now

- In 2018, 14 weather and climate disasters each exceeded \$1 billion in the United States. There were 247 known fatalities associated with these events, and their total costs were estimated to be about \$91 billion.
- A combination of western wildfires in summer and fall caused \$24 billion in losses. This was the second consecutive year in which a new record was set for national losses due to western wildfires.

What does unaddressed climate change portend for the U.S.?

- Climate change is transforming where and how we live and presents growing challenges to human health and quality of life, the economy, and the natural systems that support us.
- The severity of future impacts will depend largely on actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the changes that will occur.
- Risks are often highest for those that are already vulnerable, including low-income communities, some communities of color, children, and the elderly.
- Without more significant global greenhouse gas mitigation and regional adaptation efforts, climate change is expected to cause substantial losses to infrastructure and property and impede the rate of economic growth over this century.
- Regional economies and industries that depend on natural resources and favorable climate conditions, such as agriculture, tourism, and fisheries, are increasingly vulnerable to impacts driven by climate change

What can we do about it?

- The United States is not doomed to a catastrophic future. We have the technology and resources needed to reduce our share of global greenhouse gases. While some additional warming is inevitable, working with committed countries around the world, we will be able to avoid the worst consequences of climate change on people, the environment, and on the economy.

References:

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