
THE WHITE HOUSE

The Threat of Carbon Pollution: Wisconsin

We have a moral obligation to leave our children a planet that's not polluted or damaged, and by taking an all-of-the-above approach to develop homegrown energy and steady, responsible steps to cut carbon pollution, we can protect our kids' health and begin to slow the effects of climate change so we leave a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. Climate change impacts including severe weather, asthma attacks, prolonged allergy seasons, and sea-level rise are affecting our security, our economy, and our communities. In 2012 alone, the cost of weather disasters exceeded \$110 billion in the United States, and climate change will only increase the frequency and intensity of these events. Today, we already set limits for arsenic, mercury and lead, but we impose no limits on how much carbon pollution our power plants release. Carbon pollution is contributing a higher risk of asthma attacks and more frequent and severe storms, floods, heat waves, and wildfires, driving up food prices and threatening our communities. The President's plan is a comprehensive approach to cutting the pollution that causes climate change and threatens public health, setting us on a path to make our communities healthier, safer, and more resilient.

THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION AND EXTREME WEATHER IN WISCONSIN

In 2011, power plants and major industrial facilities in Wisconsin emitted more than 55 million metric tons of carbon pollution—that's equal to the yearly pollution from more than 11 million cars.

Recent incidents provide a reminder of the impacts to our public health and costs due to extreme weather in Wisconsin. Although we cannot say that climate change is responsible for any individual event, climate change is already increasing our risks from these events.

- In Wisconsin, there were over 4,800 hospital admissions for asthma in 2011, with an average charge of close to \$13,300 for each stay.
- Changing temperature and precipitation patterns can affect the life cycle and distribution of insects, many of which transmit disease that already pose problems to public health in Wisconsin. In 2010, there were 2,505 cases of Lyme disease in the state.
- Ragweed, which can cause hay fever and trigger asthma attacks, may bloom earlier due to warmer spring temperatures. Madison and Lacrosse experienced 13 and 14-day increases in their ragweed pollen season respectively between 1995 and 2011.

ANTICIPATED CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN THE MIDWEST

Midwesterners will experience increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events due to climate change, including heat waves, floods, and lake-effect snow. In 2011, 11 of the 14 U.S. weather-related disasters with damages of more than \$1 billion occurred in the Midwest. While severe flooding is already an issue in the region – in 2008, floods caused 24 deaths and \$8 billion in agricultural losses - likely increases in precipitation in winter and spring and more heavy downpours mean it is expected to become more commonplace. Greater evaporation in the summer is also likely to result in water deficits. Longer and more extreme heat waves will impact human health through reduced air

quality and increases in insect and waterborne diseases, and require increased use of electricity for cooling, further increasing carbon pollution. While the longer growing season provides the potential for increased crop yields, increases in heat waves, floods, droughts, insects, and weeds will present growing challenges to managing crops, livestock, and forests.

CUTTING CARBON POLLUTION AND INCREASING RESILIENCE IN WISCONSIN

Climate change is a long-term problem, but we can make substantial progress through a series of steady and responsible steps. The President's plan builds from progress already underway to work with states, local communities, and the private sector to reduce carbon pollution and to prepare our Nation for the impacts that cannot be avoided. Since 2009, President Obama has taken a number of common sense measures to combat carbon pollution, including:

- ***Investing in Clean Energy:*** During the President's first term, the United States more than doubled its use of renewable energy from wind, solar, and geothermal sources. In Wisconsin, renewable energy generation from these sources increased nearly 95 percent. Since 2009, the Administration has supported tens of thousands of renewable energy projects throughout the country, including nearly 230 in Wisconsin, generating enough energy to power nearly 10,000 homes and helping Wisconsin meet its own goal of generating 10 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2015.
- ***Improving Efficiency:*** Using less energy to power our homes, businesses and vehicles is critical to building a clean and secure energy future. President Obama has made essential investments in research and development for energy efficiency advances, and set new standards to make the things we use every day – from cars to microwaves – more efficient.
 - President Obama established the toughest fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles in U.S. history. These standards will double the fuel efficiency of our cars and trucks by 2025, saving the average driver more than \$8,000 over the lifetime of a 2025 vehicle and cutting carbon pollution.
 - Since October 2009, the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have jointly completed energy upgrades in more than one million homes across the country, saving many families more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone.
 - As part of the President's Better Buildings Challenge, Milwaukee committed to reducing energy intensity 20 percent by 2020 in 700,000 square feet of school buildings. Fort Atkinson School District made the same commitment for its 700,000 square feet of school buildings.
- ***Preparing Communities for the Consequences of Climate Change:*** The Obama Administration has worked since its earliest days to strengthen the Nation's resilience to climate change impacts, including investing in critical science and tools, developing the first-ever Federal agency climate adaptation plans, and directly partnering with communities. For example, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is supporting efforts to bring experts and resources together to better understand potential climate changes in Wisconsin, predict and monitor health effects, identify the populations most vulnerable to these effects, and develop programs to protect the public's health.