

CLIMATE ENVIRONMENT FUTURE ACT  
SUSTAINABLE  
BIODIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT  
POLICY  
COMMUNITY  
EMISSIONS  
PEOPLE  
RENEWABLE  
CRISIS  
DEFORRESTATION  
POLLUTION  
WATER PEOPLE  
JUSTICE  
ENSURE NATURAL  
CLEAN EPA  
ACCESS  
RESOURCES  
JOBS GAS  
ACT FOSSIL FUEL  
HEALTH  
NATURAL

# **BOLD. AMBITIOUS. TRANSFORMATIVE.**

## **Environmental and Climate Policy Recommendations for the 2020 Democratic Party Platform**



**DNC COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT &  
CLIMATE CRISIS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The DNC Environment and Climate Crisis Council, a permanent entity of the DNC, was established to push the Democratic Party to take bold and urgent action addressing the climate crisis and other environmental issues. The Council is recommending a sweeping set of policies for inclusion in the new four-year 2020 Democratic Party platform, which will be approved at the August convention.

These recommendations result from a three-month process that included a listening tour and meetings with environmental justice advocates, scientists, public health experts, members of frontline and vulnerable communities, engineers, educators, union members, artists, faith leaders, policy analysts, environmental architects, elected leaders, and environmental lawyers from across America.

## Priority Recommendations and Actions

At all levels of government, take urgent action on the climate and environmental emergencies.

- Develop and implement a science-based national climate action plan that employs the full palette of policy tools, including aggressive use of executive actions, establishment of new structures and practices, and bold legislation.
  - Commit to ambitious short- and long-term emissions and renewable energy targets: near-zero emissions by 2040; 100% clean renewable energy by 2030 in electricity generation, buildings, and transportation; and 100% zero-carbon new building infrastructure by 2025.
  - Commit to the spending necessary to address the climate emergency: \$10-\$16 trillion in federal expenditures over the next decade.
  
- Put communities and working families above fossil fuel corporations by ensuring a just transition and building a green economy with millions of new, family-sustaining jobs.
  - Establish a federal Just Transition Task Force to develop a program supporting communities and workers impacted by the climate crisis and the transition to renewables, and fund the program.
  - Direct massive investments to renewable energy infrastructure, creating millions of jobs, and end all incentives and subsidies of the fossil fuel industry, including passing the ReWIND Act.
  - Shift subsidies and federal procurement policies to support the growth of sustainable, regenerative agriculture powered by 100% clean energy.
  
- Support the growth of healthy, just, sustainable green communities and address the disproportionate environmental and climate harms to frontline and vulnerable communities.
  - Elevate the EPA to a federal department; make the EPA Office of Environmental Justice permanent.
  - Use health impact assessments and climate equity screenings for major federal government actions.
  - Direct 40% of climate and environment investments to frontline and vulnerable communities.
  - Rescind Trump-era rollbacks on environmental protections.
  - Protect 30% of all U.S. lands and oceans by 2030 and 50% by 2050.

“No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.”

— PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

## VISION

We stand at a crossroads.

Our nation and world face integrally related crises: the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, and an epic economic downturn. All this is taking place against the backdrop of decades of increasing racial and income inequality, the deterioration of our social safety net, and environmental and infrastructure degradation.

These complex threats pose enormous risks. They also offer an unparalleled opportunity for the transformative, structural change we so desperately need. We should embrace this opportunity to build a country that is healthy and just. A country that transitions, with the urgency dictated by science, from an extractive, fossil fuel-based economy to a regenerative economy powered by clean, renewable energy. A country that generates millions of high-quality, family-sustaining jobs. A country that ensures workers and communities impacted by the transition have the resources they need to make the shift. A country that upholds environmental justice and guarantees safe air, water, land, and food as fundamental human rights.

It is our responsibility, our privilege, and our imperative as Democrats to steward this Earth and this America, for ourselves and for future generations.

## PRINCIPLES

### Take Urgent Action on Climate and the Environment

The world is on course to break through the Paris Agreement’s 1.5 degrees Celsius goal well before century’s end. Parts of America have already warmed by 2 degrees. The climate crisis fuels extreme weather, worsening social, economic, and environmental disruption. This is an emergency. We must employ the full range of tools—legislative, executive, and regulatory—at our disposal and do it now.

### Commit to Inclusive, Science-Based Climate Policy Frameworks

Climate and the environment touch every aspect of our lives. Policy frameworks at all levels of government must be informed by science and incorporate, not marginalize, considerations of climate, environment, equity, health, and workers’ rights. The rights of future generations and the long-term livability of the planet must be prioritized. Frontline and vulnerable communities, disproportionately impacted by environment and climate crises, must be integrally involved in policy design and implementation.

### Prioritize People Over Polluter Profits

For too long, our political system has privileged and subsidized fossil fuel and other polluting industries over American families and the environment. This must change. The U.S. must prioritize people, the natural world, and our collective future. We must recognize and uphold the crucial role of those taking the lead on climate and environmental issues—and call on the Democratic Party to ensure they have the tools and resources necessary to succeed.

## Achieve 100% Clean Renewable Energy, Zero Emissions, and an End to Fossil Fuel Production

Now is the moment to end fossil fuel extraction and transition to clean, renewable energy—wind, solar, and geothermal. The collapse of the global demand for fossil fuels and of the consistently unprofitable fracking industry presents an unprecedented opportunity to end the pollution, injustice, and global heating driven by our fossil fuel reliance.

## Ensure Environmental Justice

Millions of Indigenous people, people of color, and low-income people are vulnerable to climate change and extreme weather—and also lack access to clean air and water, healthy homes and schools, and sustainable communities. This environmental justice crisis results from a complex legacy of housing segregation, appropriation of tribal lands, land use and zoning discrimination, and inequitable environmental law enforcement. Systemic and institutional environmental injustice results in disproportionate exposures to environmental hazards and polluting facilities, contributing to health disparities and shortened lifespans. We must retake leadership and address these issues.

## Invest in Good Jobs, Worker Empowerment, and Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure investment, at the scale necessary to address the climate crisis, will revitalize our crumbling infrastructure and stimulate the economy. We can dramatically accelerate the necessary transition to clean, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture while creating millions of high-quality, family-sustaining union jobs. The transition must be equitable and just: supporting, engaging, and empowering the underemployed, workers, and communities. No worker or community should be left behind.

## Ensure Healthy People, Places, and Planet

The climate crisis is our greatest health challenge. Its impacts are already upon us, exacerbating extant health inequities. To ensure healthy people, we must ensure healthy workplaces, homes, schools, and communities—and a healthy planet that supports biodiversity.



## Lead the World on Climate Science Research

To regain global leadership in addressing the climate crisis, America must invest in engineering, science, health and education research and development across the public sector and higher education. We must strengthen linkages between what we know and learn and the decisions we make.

## Engage Globally and Commit to America's Fair Share of Emissions Cuts

The long emissions history of wealthier nations gives us both the responsibility and the capacity to do our fair share—to make deeper and faster emissions cuts than less-industrialized countries and take leadership on global climate agreements and mobilizations. America, the world's largest producer of oil and gas, must lead the way in doing our part to protect the world's climate.

# POLICIES

## DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Fossil fuels account for three-fourths of all greenhouse gas pollution. To avert climate catastrophe, hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and create a green, just, and healthy future, we must urgently implement a managed phaseout of our exploration, production, and extraction of fossil fuels and transition rapidly to 100% clean, renewable energy. A net-zero emissions goal is not good enough; we need near-zero emissions to save the Earth from catastrophic warming.

### Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Achieve a 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.
- Reach near-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

### 100% Clean, Renewable Energy

- Achieve 100% zero-carbon new building infrastructure by 2025.
- Achieve 100% clean renewable energy by 2030 in electricity generation, buildings, and transportation.

A national climate and environment action plan through 2050, informed by the vision and aspirations of the Green New Deal and aligned with these aggressive, necessary emissions and energy generation goals, should be immediately developed and implemented. It should be overseen by a Climate Crisis Agency headed by a Climate Administrator of Cabinet rank, in coordination with state, tribal, and local governments. A public investment of \$10 to \$16 trillion in implementing this plan over the next decade will pay dividends in human lives, jobs, vibrant communities, and vigorous natural areas—and will preserve over \$30 trillion in economic activity by the end of the century.

### Transition to Renewables, End Fossil Fuel Exports, Halt New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

- Declare a National Climate Emergency under the National Emergencies Act, acknowledging the climate crisis and unlocking key statutory powers enabling the president to do so.

- Reinstatement the ban on crude oil exports, and halt gas exports pursuant to the Natural Gas Act.
- Direct federal agencies to deny permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure and end federal financing of fossil fuel projects at home or overseas, set a science-based national pollution cap for greenhouse gas emissions for all sectors, issue a strict pollution prevention rule for the oil and gas sector, and develop and implement plans to reach 70% reduced emissions by 2030 and near-zero emissions by 2035 for their operations.
- Pass legislation permanently banning fracking and enhanced oil recovery and initiate a managed phaseout of existing operations.
- Accelerate decarbonization of federally owned power supplies and invest in decarbonization of rural electricity cooperatives and public power.
- Build renewable energy generation and storage capacity to meet our nation's needs, and develop a modern smart grid to move the energy where it's needed.
- Provide regulatory and financial support for shared renewable energy microgrids and for home-based and community energy storage.
- Provide assistance and funding for local, state, and tribal governments to create and implement Climate Action Plans for their operations and jurisdictions through an inclusive, community-based process.

### Transportation

The largest single source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, the transportation sector, must move aggressively to become 100% renewable and accessible.

- End the sale of new fossil fuel vehicles by 2030 through reinstatement and acceleration of stringent fuel economy standards and national vehicle emissions standards, and regulate non-road vehicles, small equipment, and engines at levels consistent with national emissions goals.

“The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things.”

— VINE DELORIA, JR. SCHOLAR, AUTHOR, MEMBER OF THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX (LAKOTA) NATION

- Electrify trucking, rail, and transit systems through greatly increased levels of public funding, including a national EV charging network for both cars and long-haul trucks.
- Align transportation spending with goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase public transit, walking, bicycling, and electric bicycle use.

### **Buildings, Civic Infrastructure, and Industry**

Buildings, civic infrastructure, and industry are the source of more than one-third of America’s greenhouse gas emissions. Thirty million households are energy insecure and need access to cost-saving renewable energy to keep their housing affordable. We can reduce those emissions to near zero while creating millions of union construction jobs and vastly reducing Americans’ utility bills.

- Support retrofits for electrification, renewable energy generation, increased energy efficiency, and broadband access in buildings in all sectors, prioritizing low-income housing and Title 1 schools, through federal grants and no-interest loans administered by states. Pass the Green New Deal for Public Housing Act to retrofit public housing, and expand the Weatherization Assistance Program to retrofit at least 1 million low-income homes annually by 2024.
- Shift and expand federal energy financing programs to prioritize funding for clean energy projects including alternative energy governance models.

- Work to enhance the nation’s most widely adopted model building codes to include advanced building energy efficiency standards, require 100% electrification for new buildings by 2025, improve accessible design standards, and improve resiliency.

### **Fund the Future We Want, Not the Past We Need to Leave Behind**

- Direct massive investments to clean, renewable energy; energy efficiency; and green transformation of our transit system, built environment, and agriculture systems.
- End all incentives for fossil fuel exploration and production immediately, including subsidies, tax breaks, and bailouts.
- Direct federal agencies to ensure that polluters’ settlements in connection with wrongdoing are not tax-deductible.
- Establish a mandate for the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Secretary to assess and manage climate risk, recognizing the fundamental connection between climatic and economic stability.
- Divest public funds, including pension funds and endowments, from fossil fuels and industrial agriculture and redirect resources to climate-safe investments.
- As Democrats, we should ensure our party organizations do not accept contributions associated with fossil fuel interests.

## BUILD A GREEN ECONOMY, EMPOWER WORKERS, CREATE A JUST TRANSITION

The U.S. has suffered 40 years of deindustrialization and deregulation, a widening gap between the rich and everyone else, the stagnation of workers' purchasing powers, and a dramatic erosion of their bargaining powers.

The rapidly growing green sectors of renewable energy, climate mitigation and resilience, green research, and regenerative agriculture offer crucial opportunities to create high-quality jobs while countering these toxic trends. These are jobs which empower workers and strengthen unions; are healthy and safe; provide family-sustaining wages and benefits, access to training and advancement, and inclusive hiring practices; and include the opportunity to form a union and engage in collective bargaining.

### The Just Transition

No worker or community should be left behind as we face structural disruptions associated with the climate crisis, the transition to a green economy, or any major disruption. The federal government should invest in projects that diversify and revitalize impacted tribal, state, and local economies, in addition to making up local government revenue shortfalls resulting from the closing of extractive industries, paying for cleaning

up legacy pollutants, and supporting the massive agriculture sector transition necessary due to the climate crisis.

- Establish an interagency Just Transition Task Force with a six-month deadline to create a comprehensive, multisector national program to support affected communities and workers. The task force must meaningfully engage with unions, workers, Indigenous peoples, farmers and farmworkers, and frontline community organizations. It should include the EPA; the new Climate Crisis Agency; the Departments of Energy, Labor, and Agriculture; and other agencies.
- Provide transition benefits for workers displaced from extractive industries, including wage and benefit extensions, health care, pension protections, job training and education, and job opportunities with inclusive hiring practices and pay commensurate with skills and previous pay—beginning with passage of the Clean Energy Worker Just Transition Act.
- Ensure full funding for the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund.
- Strengthen outdoor worker health and safety standards, engage in more robust enforcement, and institute a federal Heat Standard.
- Reform labor law to empower working people by expanding all labor protections to all workers, including domestic and agricultural workers; making it easier to form a union and to engage in sectoral bargaining; and protecting the right to strike.

### Invest in Renewable Energy, Green Infrastructure, Climate Mitigation, and Resilience

Millions of jobs will be generated by the manufacture, installation, operation, and maintenance of clean, renewable energy infrastructure. Expanding public transportation and regenerative agriculture as well as electrifying the transportation sector, building stock, industry, and agriculture will create millions more. Workers will be employed repairing our derelict roads and bridges, replacing contaminated water systems, and cleaning up every toxic site in America.



Green jobs deliver significant co-benefits. Extending broadband access to every household will support smart technologies that reduce emissions and end the broadband inequality gap that holds back students and rural businesses. Crucial infrastructure retrofits will increase energy efficiency and reduce energy bills for families.

- Leverage the federal procurement system, which spends over \$500 billion annually, requiring the system to take into account the total life cycle environmental impact of building, food, and other materials and to promote the sourcing of green American products.
- Amend the Davis-Bacon Act to extend prevailing wage requirements to all federally funded projects.
- Direct federal agencies to use Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for public spending.
- Incentivize state participation in the green transition through federal shared-cost programs that increase the percentage of federal contributions to green infrastructure projects as a state agrees to increasingly robust green procurement and other measures for the shared-cost programs, end restrictions on local governments' ability to require PLAs and prevailing wages on projects they help fund, and abolish so-called "right-to-work" laws.
- Incentivize private renewable energy projects to pay the prevailing wage and use PLAs, including by passing the Good Jobs for 21st Century Energy Act.
- Invest in development of green workers' cooperatives, including green infrastructure; regenerative agriculture; regional, small-scale food processing; and urban community gardens and farms.

## Invest in Green Research and Development

America must prioritize and massively increase investment in green research and development projects. Project funding should target energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies including energy storage cost and reliability; promising clean technologies such as hydrogen and geothermal; green agriculture systems including integrative pest management, organic pesticides, perennial grain crops, and low-carbon leguminous crops; recycling

technology; life-cycle health and climate impact assessments of new technologies; zero-emissions aircraft technologies; and community climate resilience and adaptation. Publicly funded research should be publicly owned and accessible. Federal agencies should end research into fossil fuel technologies.

## Invest in Green Agriculture and Food

Sustainable, regenerative agriculture powered by clean, renewable energy is necessary to a green future. Agriculture is the source of about 10% of America's emissions. And climate change in turn poses major challenges to food production, compounding harms from the growth and consolidation of corporate agriculture.

Farmworkers, farmers, and ranchers stand on the front lines of climate change. Historically, many have been leaders in conservation and resource use. With support and investment, they can be key partners in the transition to Green Agriculture. Deeper connections between our farms, schools, and families will contribute to healthy communities with dependable access to organic, affordable, and nutritious foods. Regenerative organic farming techniques are more climate resilient and will produce lower-carbon food on healthier soil than conventional practices.

- Transition away from carbon-intensive, industrial animal agriculture and monoculture production, starting with a moratorium on new Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and large-scale food and agriculture mergers.
- Support supply and grow demand for organic, low-carbon, diversified, and humanely raised foods by leveraging federal food procurement and investing in farm-to-school programs, and by a managed shift of subsidies and programs that primarily benefit large-scale, destructive farming practices to supporting regenerative, sustainable practices.
- Direct the USDA to ensure fair prices and access to land, credits, and markets for farmers, ranchers, and fishers, and to continue its focus on regional food systems and new and beginning producers.
- Pass a national right-to-repair law and investigate amending the Digital Millennium Copyright Act to allow farmers to repair and maintain their own equipment and technology.



- Improve water quality and health outcomes through strengthening enforcement of clean air and water rules, investing to help farmers reduce pesticide and chemical fertilizer use, and banning chlorpyrifos, neonicotinoids, glyphosate, and dicamba.
- Replenish and nurture healthy soils by requiring recipients of agricultural subsidies to implement comprehensive healthy soil practices.
- Support food waste reduction programs.
- Improve working conditions, pay, and protections for all food chain workers. Strengthen OSHA standards and enforcement practices, as well as Agricultural Worker Protection Standards.

## CREATE AND SUSTAIN JUST, HEALTHY, GREEN COMMUNITIES

The United States should become a country of vibrant green communities. We must protect our rights to healthy air, water, land, and food and ensure that all people have access to parks and wilderness where wild flora and fauna flourish. We must embrace and exercise powerful existing tools such as international accords and landmark environmental laws, while charting a bold path forward to meet our urgent challenges. This work begins with undoing the Trump administration’s nearly 100 actual and proposed rollbacks to environmental regulations.

### Frontline and Vulnerable Communities

America must end and repair the disproportionate harm done to frontline and vulnerable communities—Black, Brown, and other communities of color; Indigenous communities; under-resourced communities; migrant communities; deindustrialized communities; rural communities; women; elders; the

unhoused; people with disabilities; outdoor workers; and youth. These communities are disproportionately exposed to and negatively impacted by dirty energy extraction, hazardous pollution, CAFOs, extreme weather, systemic racism, and economic and systemic injustice. We urgently need a comprehensive set of policies and government practices addressing environmental justice, health, resilience, protection of human and natural rights, education and advocacy, accountability for polluters, and our global role in addressing the climate crisis.

- Elevate the EPA to a federal department, headed by a secretary who is a full Cabinet member.
- Expand the funding and reach of the EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice and support legislation to make it permanent, and create an Office of Environmental Justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality to expand cross-agency oversight of environmental justice directives outlined in Executive Order 12898.
- The U.S. must uphold its treaty obligations to tribal nations and ensure access to sacred lands. Tribal nations must have free, prior, and informed consent to the use of their lands and waters, and the rights of Indigenous peoples must be upheld through climate and environmental policies, including those outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous Principles of Just Transition.
- Target at least 40% of climate and environment investments to frontline and vulnerable communities.
- Direct the EPA to create a community-driven model of Green Zones in disadvantaged communities.
- Create a national Climate Action Corps to engage youth on climate solutions in frontline and vulnerable communities.

“Choices about emissions now and in the coming years will have far-reaching consequences for climate change impacts.”

— U.S. GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAM, 2009

- Increase federal funding for research into adaptive technologies for disaster response as well as climate risks for persons with disabilities.
- Avoid carbon offset strategies, which undermine greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts and disproportionately harm frontline and vulnerable communities.

## Public Health

The climate crisis is one of the greatest health threats we have ever faced, compounding existing health and economic inequities and disproportionately harming the most vulnerable. Air pollution from fossil fuels causes nearly 200,000 deaths annually. The air, food, and water systems we depend on for survival are under threat. The COVID-19 pandemic is showing us that our public health care system is unprepared for crisis and that we must invest in health and health care system resilience.

- Invest in our chronically underfunded public health system, ensure a resilient hospital system, ramp up funding for public health agencies and mental health agencies, and ensure universal access to affordable health care.
- Fund and implement local, state, and national climate-health risk assessments as well as expanded disease surveillance and warning systems.
- Direct the EPA to require buffer zones between air-polluting infrastructure such as industrial sites, oil and gas infrastructure, landfills, pesticide-dependent agricultural land, and power plants, and vulnerable sites such as homes, schools, and hospitals.
- Instruct the EPA and all major federal government actions to utilize both cumulative and interactive health impact assessments and climate equity screening that account for pollution from multiple sources and legacy pollution when making permitting decisions.
- Support planning and funding to protect communities from the adverse health impacts of climate change and reduce energy use, including heat island mitigation; expansion of tree canopies, green spaces, and green infrastructure; cool roofs and cool pavements; rainwater and greywater



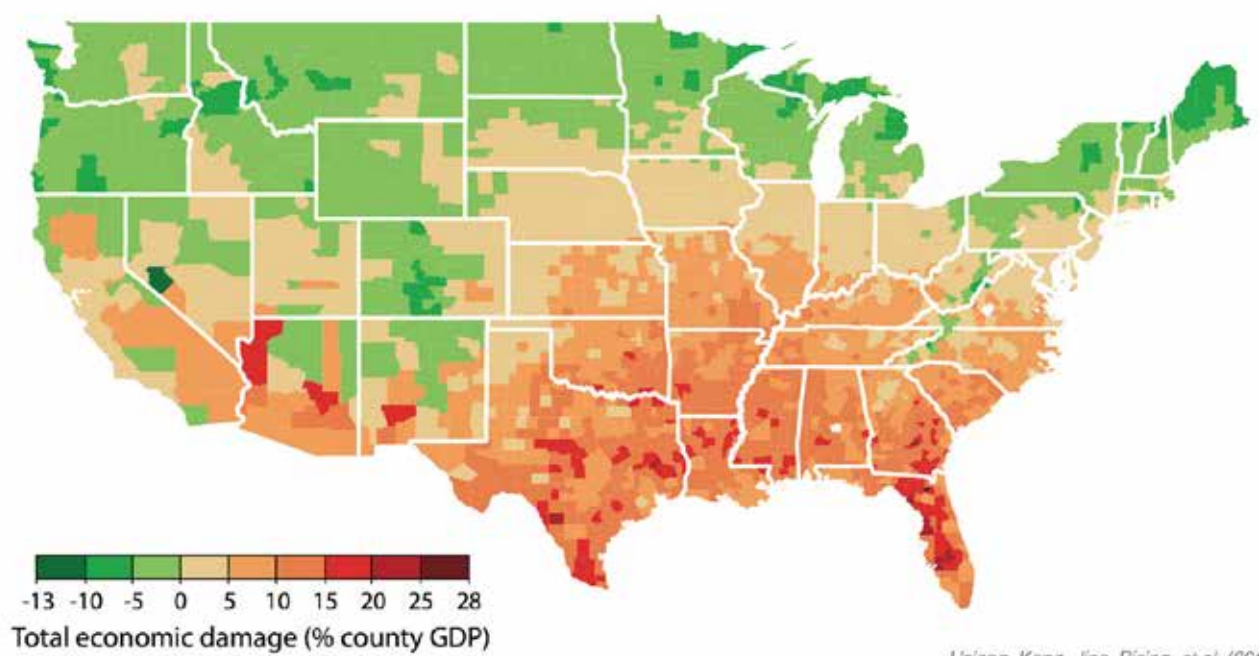
capture; and strategies to reduce the occurrence and impacts of wildfires, floods, and other extreme weather.

## Sustainable, Resilient Communities

To protect and create sustainable, just, healthy, green communities requires a multi-pronged, targeted approach focused on climate sustainability, risk reduction, resilience, and recovery.

- Climate-related disasters disproportionately put frontline communities at risk. Create a federal advisory committee to address racial discrimination in disaster assistance, direct FEMA to ensure its staff reflect the diversity of our country and have the language skills necessary for disaster relief work, and establish equitable disaster recovery funding standards for disaster relief funds, prioritizing impacted communities.
- Support integration of housing, transportation, infrastructure, food security, and environmental goals through relaunching and expanding the Sustainable Communities Initiative; tying tax incentives for development or rehabbing low-income, affordable rental housing to transit and walkability criteria; investing in the National

**SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECTED DAMAGES DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AT COUNTY LEVEL MEDIAN VALUES FOR 2080 TO 2099.**



Hsiang, Kopp, Jina, Rising, et al. (2017)

Source: California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, 2018, pg 41

Housing Trust Fund to fund mixed-income housing that is transit friendly and walkable; and expanding funding and expediting approval of Community Development Block Grants.

- Ensure that every state and municipality has infrastructure and emergency response protocols to deal with disasters proactively. Increase grant funding available through the national Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, fully implement the multi-agency national mitigation network, and empower the development of community-controlled resilience hubs.
- Reinstate and strengthen the EPA's Chemical Disaster Rule and task FEMA and the EPA to conduct immediate monitoring of toxins released during natural disasters by toxic waste sites and industrial facilities.
- Ensure equitable disaster recovery and preparation by supporting policies that safeguard against climate-driven gentrification, such as community benefits agreements, mixed-income housing, and homeowner and tenant protections. Amend

the Stafford Act to protect community cohesion through structuring buyout programs to keep neighborhoods together and to allow a right to disaster assistance and recovery.

- For those displaced by climate events, provide affordable, sustainable housing that is located—and built or retrofitted—based on our best science and adaptive strategies.
- Require FEMA to use the best available climate change data and sea level rise mapping to reflect actual flood risk, to provide a nationwide plan for flood disclosure and risk, and to analyze and avoid impacts to wildlife habitat.

**Protecting our Common Natural Resources**

We share one planet that supports us all, and it is our responsibility to be good stewards, for ourselves and for future generations. Clean land, air, soil, and water, including access to safe drinking water, are fundamental human rights. We must legislate to protect our natural resources and uphold our bedrock environmental laws which are currently under attack.

## Public Lands

- Conserve iconic landscapes, unique ecosystems, oceans, forests, and grasslands by protecting 30% of all lands and oceans by 2030 and 50% by 2050.
- Codify the Roadless Rule into law to permanently protect critical national forest land.
- Undo the dismantling of national monument designations, prevent fossil fuel extraction in or adjacent to critical public lands such as the Arctic Refuge and the Everglades, and rescind the downsizing of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase national monuments.
- Stop construction, rescind environmental waivers, and tear down the offensive, racist southern border wall, which is injurious to humans and wildlife.
- Reform the 1872 Mining Act and ensure that mining companies clean up the thousands of abandoned mines across the nation that foul our waters and lands.

## Air, Water, Soil

- Direct the EPA to reconsider, based on science, all Trump-era rollbacks of rules, programs, and oversight, including those related to air, soil, and water quality.
- Invest in programs for water conservation and efficiency, water resources management, infrastructure maintenance, and protection from flooding and salt-water inundation.
- Close loopholes in the Clean Water Act to enable stricter regulation of water contamination from agriculture and mining.
- Ensure access to safe drinking water through a national ban on water shutoffs and ensure affordability through passage of the Emergency Water is a Human Right Act and expanded investment in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Direct the EPA to develop safe drinking water action plans for community water systems that are regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act. Pass the WATER Act to create a National Water Trust Fund to provide \$35 billion annually for water and wastewater infrastructure nationally. Invest \$100 billion in lead pipe replacement and removal of lead paint from homes.

- Pass the PFAS Action Act, requiring the EPA to create a drinking water standard for PFAS compounds.
- Increase funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to protect the source of drinking water for 30 million people from multiple climate and environmental threats.
- Significantly increase funding and enforcement of EPA Superfund and Brownfield cleanup programs, which face unacceptable backlogs.

## Biodiversity and Nature

The natural world gifts our country with beauty as well as vital ecosystem services, such as pollination and water filtration, worth billions to our economy. Access to green spaces contributes to healthy bodies and minds. Yet the natural world is in extreme peril due to environmental and climate causes, with more than 1 million species in danger of extinction over the next decades—and this peril is linked to the increased risk of vector-borne diseases.

- Land use legislation and policy should create increased access for all—and equitable access for frontline and vulnerable communities—to natural areas and should prioritize green exercise, play, gardening, and recreation.
- Restore protections for endangered species and migratory birds and end illegal wildlife trade.
- Establish a commission, similar to the President's Council on Sustainable Development, to explore incorporating Rights of Nature principles into U.S. law.

## Education and Outreach

In this time of climate denialism and fake science, Americans should be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to tackle increasingly complex environmental and climate issues.

- Establish an inter-agency President's Council on Environmental Literacy, chaired by the Secretary of Education, to make environmental literacy a federal government priority, support state efforts to develop environmental literacy plans, support redesign of curricula across all levels from kindergarten through post-graduate and professional education to foster

climate literacy and expertise, and improve access to environmental and outdoor education.

- Roll back funding cuts to the National Environmental Education Act of 1990, and expand the scope and funding to strengthen sustainability education in higher education.
- Launch local and national campaigns to inform the public about the environmental, health, economic, and justice impacts of climate change.

### Polluter Accountability

For over 40 years, the fossil fuel industry knew the harm its products were doing. Yet their executives concealed that knowledge and spent billions actively discrediting climate science while protecting their own assets from climate impacts.

Polluters need to pay restitution for the human, social, and economic harms caused by their pollution and take responsibility for cleanup. The DNC Environment and Climate Crisis Council calls on the SEC and DOJ to investigate and prosecute legal violations by polluters and to support the nuisance and fraud suits brought by local and state governments against fossil fuel producers. Monetary restitutions for past, present, and future harms should be used to compensate impacted communities and heal natural areas. We strongly oppose fossil fuel industry bailouts, and we also oppose legislation to shield polluters or reduce their liability.

- Strengthen the EPA's ability to prevent, respond to, and mitigate pollution events via the creation of trust funds modeled after the 1990 Oil Pollution Act.
- Direct the EPA to aggressively enforce existing available penalties under the Clean Air Act.

- Reinstating a right of action under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to allow individuals to bring actions against entities engaging in discriminatory practices that have a disparate impact.

### Global Environment Responsibilities and Green Foreign Policy

The U.S. must fully re-engage with the international community to address the climate crisis, beginning with recommitting to the Paris Agreement and signing on to the Kigali Amendment to reduce the use of hydrofluorocarbons. We cannot continue to offshore emissions to locations with weaker emissions standards or enforcement, and it is our responsibility to create and support clean global supply chains. America's trade deals must align with our commitment to a green transition and zero-carbon future. Trade delegations must include representatives of labor, climate, farmers, and local government, and trade agreements must center meaningful, enforceable labor and environmental standards. The U.S. must commit to our fair share of emissions reductions and of investments to the Green Climate Fund.

Protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples in other countries to own and manage their lands pursuant to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a key component to any effort to prevent climate change.

The climate emergency and increasing levels of climate chaos are driving global instability and migration as food insecurity, extreme weather, and the disappearance of entire communities and countries increase. This creates an imperative for our new president to institute a strong, humane climate aid policy, to create and implement a compassionate, expansive immigration and refugee policy, and to re-establish America's global leadership on climate.

“We have arrived at a moment of decision. Our home—Earth—is in danger. What is at risk of being destroyed is not the planet itself, of course, but the conditions that have made it hospitable for human beings.”

— AL GORE



“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.” — RACHEL CARSON

The DNC Environment and Climate Crisis Council, a permanent entity of the DNC with its own elected officers and bylaws, launched in February 2020 to push the Democratic Party to take bold and urgent action to address the climate crisis and other environmental issues.

The DNC Environment and Climate Crisis Council’s Recommendations for the 2020 Democratic Party Platform result from a three-month process involving many people, not a few, beginning with our listening tour across America and continuing with the participation of our [Officers and Executive Board](#) and of our [Advisory Platform Committee and Panel](#). The Council is grateful to the many people who contributed.



# DNC COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CRISIS

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DNCClimate.org @dnclimate