

## Climate Policy

- The environment is deeply connected to health; water may be [tainted](#) by toxins and air pollution can [trigger](#) asthma and makes people [vulnerable](#) to respiratory infections and other diseases, like COVID-19.
- Ailments related to the environment can be [propelled](#) and exacerbated by climate change.
- The effects of climate change [disproportionately affect](#) some communities, like those living in poverty, tribal communities, children, and elderly people, and their needs warrant particular attention.
- Policies that protect the environment, reduce the effects of climate change, safeguard clean water, and support clean and renewable energy sources can help [mitigate health consequences](#) for everyone.

Existing resources and policy tools that address climate and environmental policy	Who in state government can address climate and environmental policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State environmental standards</li> <li>- Clean energy blueprints</li> <li>- Carbon pricing</li> <li>- Energy emission limits</li> <li>- Energy efficiency incentives</li> <li>- Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (Green Purchasing)</li> <li>- Environmental health regulations</li> <li>- Green building standards</li> <li>- Community benefit requirements</li> <li>- Multi-sector climate change councils and work groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of environment</li> <li>- Department of transportation</li> <li>- Housing authority</li> <li>- Treasury department</li> <li>- Medicaid agency</li> <li>- Public health department</li> </ul>

## State Policy Options

- **Establish cross-agency work groups and committees.** Governors can create multi-sector committees to align work across state agencies to assess their state’s climate impact, track their state’s climate action progress, and create benchmarks to work towards their environmental policy goals. For example, the [Maine Climate Council](#) is a multi-sector council with policymakers, agricultural, economic, environmental, transportation and health commissioners, and appointed members whose special interests are affected by climate change.
- **Set state environmental standards.** States can set policies to cut harmful pollutants from entering the environment by setting specific greenhouse gas reduction targets. Policies [include](#) carbon pricing, emission limits, energy efficiency incentives, and promoting clean transportation. For example, New York passed the [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#) to orient New York’s economy around clean energy and zero out net greenhouse gas emission by 2050. Utah passed a [resolution](#) that recognizes the impact of the changing climate on Utah citizens and sets a standard to incentivize reduced environmental emissions.
  - **Work with the health care system.** The health care system can also contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, smog formation, and other toxic pollutants. States can work with hospitals and the health care system to set requirements that new hospitals and renovations meet established national green [building standards](#).
  - **Community health needs assessment (CHNA).** CHNAs require tax-exempt hospitals to identify health priorities, many of which are affected by the changing climate. This incentivizes hospitals to invest in climate change mitigation strategies. States can also leverage [community benefits](#) or [certificate/determination of need](#) to invest in climate change mitigation programs.

## Evidence and Resources for State Leaders

Policy Option	Resource	Notes
Establish cross-agency work groups and committees	<a href="#">US Climate Alliance</a>	Twenty-five governors have joined the US Climate Alliance, committed to transitioning to a clean economy and meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. Over the past decade, alliance member states <a href="#">reduced</a> their collective greenhouse gas emissions at more than twice the rate of states that did not join the alliance.
	New Mexico's Interagency <a href="#">Climate Change Task Force</a>	New Mexico established a Climate Change Task Force targeted to achieve a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. In the task force's <a href="#">first report</a> , members noted that emissions were dropping and will continue to drop.
	Hawaii's <a href="#">Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission</a>	The Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is tasked with "creating ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies" for climate adaption and mitigation. The <a href="#">first report</a> noted Hawaii's health department should continue collaboration with the CDC, as well as state and county partners, to identify climate vulnerability hotspots.
	The <a href="#">Healthier Hospitals</a> coalition	More than 1,400 hospitals and health systems across the country joined the Healthier Hospitals coalition to address the health and environmental impact of this sector. Members are committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and are <a href="#">taking steps</a> to become carbon-neutral.
Set state environmental standards	Washington State plans to become 100% carbon-neutral and carbon-free by 2045.	Washington State passed clean energy <a href="#">legislation</a> requiring various state agencies to set benchmarks to transition out of coal-powered electricity. The policies outlined in the suite of legislation are designed to <a href="#">reduce greenhouse gas emissions</a> and <a href="#">super-pollutants</a> , <a href="#">electrify the transportation infrastructure</a> , <a href="#">create jobs</a> , and ensure that the health of all workers and vulnerable communities benefit.
	Rhode Island's <a href="#">Plan</a> to Achieve 100% Renewable Energy by 2030	The Resilient Rhode Island Act establishes annual targets for the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The next target is 45% below 1990 levels by 2035. Rhode Island has taken significant steps to reduce carbon emissions in the electric sector, and its clean energy sector has had a 74% increase in jobs since 2015.
	Colorado's <a href="#">Roadmap</a> to 100% Renewable Energy by 2040 and Bold Climate Action	Colorado has empowered the Public Utilities Commission to transition rapidly to renewable energy across the state by working with large utilities to invest in renewable energy. Colorado also created an <a href="#">Office of Just Transition</a> to deliver programming and funding to communities disproportionately impacted by pollution.
	Virginia's <a href="#">transition</a> to clean energy	Virginia's transition to clean energy has been accelerated by passing the <a href="#">Virginia Clean Economy Act</a> , a law that positions Virginia to fight climate change effectively, and by joining the <a href="#">Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative</a> , a mandatory market program in the US to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Highlight environmentally preferable purchasing	New York's Green Purchasing <a href="#">Plan</a>	New York's state government uses its buying power to purchase environmentally preferable products and encourages suppliers to provide greener products. A <a href="#">report</a> found the state has spent over \$93 million on green purchasing, and over 80% of reporting agencies use green procurement specifications.