

CALIFORNIA CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY



Frequently Asked Questions Updated California Climate Adaptation Strategy

Q1: What is the Climate Adaptation Strategy?

- California is required to issue a statewide climate adaptation strategy every three years (AB 1482, 2015).
- Previous iterations of this Strategy have been referred to as “*Safeguarding California*” and the last update was released in 2018.

Q2: California has a lot of climate plans. How does the Climate Adaptation Strategy relate to other relevant sector-based plans?

- Previous state adaptation strategies served as inventories of sector-specific actions developed by relevant agencies every three years.
- The current climate crisis demands a more urgent, integrated, and adaptive approach, one that breaks down siloes, draws connections between sectors, and provides flexibility to enable updates and adjustments to keep pace with rapid climate change. To achieve this, the Strategy brings together climate actions from numerous state plans and strategies that generally fall into four types:
 1. **Statewide climate action plans** are centrally focused on delivering climate change action across California. Examples include the:
 - Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure
 - Putting California on the High Road: A Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030
 - State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan for California
 - Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy
 2. **Sector-based strategies** address many of California's most pressing challenges and include, but are not exclusively focused on, climate change-centered actions. Examples include the:
 - Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan
 - Water Resilience Portfolio
 - Integrated Energy Policy Report
 - Health & Human Services Agency's Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities

3. **Regionally-focused strategies** are developed by state entities to address climate change and other critical challenges in line with regional conditions and priorities. Examples include the:

- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan
- Salton Sea Management Program
- Integrated Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change in the Lake Tahoe Basin
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Adapting to Rising Tides

4. **State stewardship plans** guide approaches to state operations and stewardship that advance climate action and our broader policy agenda. Examples include the:

- State Parks Sea Level Rise Strategy
- Department of General Services Sustainability Plan
- CalPERS' Investment Strategy on Climate Change
- CalSTRS' Net Zero Implementation Framework

- Climate actions from this broad range of plans and strategies are reflected in California's Climate Adaptation Strategy. However, not every action underway across state agencies is listed in the strategy, as it is intended to focus on how our efforts collectively advance California's six climate resilience priorities.

Q3: How did you decide which actions got included in the Strategy?

- We selected nearly 150 actions from various plans, as recommended by state agencies and members of the public who commented on the draft strategy. Each of these actions help us achieve California's six climate adaptation priorities highlighted in the Adaptation Strategy.

Q4: What is new in the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy?

- The 2021 strategy builds on successful elements of previous strategies, and reflects recent efforts to double down on protecting communities, our economy, and nature from the impacts of climate change. This update:

A. *Organizes the state's climate adaptation efforts around six outcome-based priorities for building resilience, and increases our ability to measure progress.*

- The Strategy shows how the state's existing, planned, and resourced climate adaptation efforts fit together to deliver on our six outcome-based priorities.
- These priorities reflect and reinforce regional climate resilience priorities, as they were explored and finalized through robust regional engagement with and in consultation with California Native American tribes.
- The Strategy also specifies timeframes and metrics to drive progress and enable accountability.

B. *Seeks to break down siloes and unify collective climate adaptation efforts across all sectors and regions.*

- Shifting to an outcome-based approach sets strategic direction and reflects our efforts to drive coordinated and integrated approach to building climate resilience.
- This approach recognizes how climate adaptation is implemented on the ground, and reflects our commitment to integrating climate resilience into the work of *all* state agencies.

C. *Makes it easier for Californians to understand and contribute to California's climate resilience agenda.*

- The final Strategy is available as an interactive website that serves as a hub for state climate resilience action.
 - This website will be updated to reflect progress and make adjustments, and will allow for Californians to easily access information on our efforts.
- Significant changes in California's approach to the 2021 Climate Adaptation Strategy update are summarized in this chart:

	Previous Strategies	2021 Update
Goal	Report on state agency actions	Drive collective action moving forward
Organization	Sector-specific	Outcome-based priorities
Format	Document	Dynamic website
Actions	Inventory of all state actions	Key actions that drive on our collective climate resilience agenda, with links to more detailed actions underway
Size	300-1000 actions	6 priorities, nearly 150 actions
Transparency	Includes existing and recommended actions	Reflects actions underway and with clear state commitments for implementation
Accountability	Implementation reporting, Unfunded actions included	Includes success metrics and timeframes; only reflects actions underway; improves implementation reporting

Q5: Why are these priorities strategic?

- These priorities deliver on a suite of California policy goals:
 - Prioritizing actions that *meet the needs of the most climate vulnerable communities* in California.

- Bolstering the health and safety of all Californians *reduces risks to human life and property.*
- Positioning the state's economy to thrive in the face of climate-driven disasters, *protects and increases jobs,* and strengthens public and private entities to continue to make key investments and generate *continued economic growth.*
- In addition to building the resilience of our natural systems, advancing nature-based solutions can *deliver on carbon neutrality, protect public health, and strengthen local economies.*
- Our science-to-action approach supports future-proofed investments and policies across regions and sectors in California.
- And increasing partnerships, coordination and collaboration that build climate resilience can deliver on our goal to build a California for All.

Q6: How did you incorporate public comment on the draft?

- We received significant feedback on the draft California Climate Adaptation Strategy. This input largely fell into three categories:

Issues That Should be Elevated

- These comments identified elements of our approach to building climate resilience that were not adequately reflected in the strategy, such as:
 - Actions in the energy sector
 - Work with Californian Native American tribes to build climate resilience
 - Addressing mental health effects of climate change
- The final strategy includes amendments and additions that elevate these elements of our approach.

Balancing Statewide and Regional Actions

- These comments identified opportunities to scale some regionally-specific actions statewide.
- We addressed these comments by making all actions in the strategy statewide, with regionally-specific success metrics included as suggested by state agencies and public feedback.
- Moving forward, we are committed to building out regionally-specific actions that showcase our work in all regions through implementation reporting and future updates to the California Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Recommendations for New State Actions

- These comments identified new state actions to build climate resilience. These suggestions will be considered by relevant state agencies for possible for incorporation into sector-based, regionally-focused, or climate action plans.

Q7: Why didn't you include new actions proposed through public comment in the final strategy? How are these actions being considered?

- The Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to link together the state's *existing and planned* climate adaptation efforts, showing how they fit together to achieve California's six climate resilience priorities.
- The climate crisis demands we be very clear about the work *actually* underway to reduce climate risks; to effectively strengthen climate action across sectors and regions, to see where we are leading the way, and to identify gaps in our approach.
- We are compiling the new proposed actions from the public comment process, and discussing whether and how to incorporate them into the state's approach.

Q8: How will you report on implementation?

- We will update the website to reflect progress made and adjustments in approach on actions in the Strategy throughout the year.

Q9: How does California's 2021 Climate Adaptation Strategy relate to the new Extreme Heat Action Plan?

- Updating California's Climate Adaptation Strategy is an opportunity to identify and close gaps in our approach to reducing climate risks.
- The need for an updated comprehensive, interagency approach to extreme heat was identified early on in our process to update the strategy. To close this gap, the state committed to updating the "[Preparing California for Extreme Heat Guidance and Recommendations](#)" report released in 2013.
- California released the draft Extreme Heat Plan on January 10, and sought public input through a public workshop on January 24. We will incorporate the Extreme Heat Action Plan into future updates of the California Climate Adaptation Strategy.