

**Climate Change Action Plan
Adaptation (ADP) - Draft Action Report List and Summaries**

**New Hampshire Climate Change Policy Task Force
Draft Action Report List and Summaries**

**Adaptation
Working Group**

**Prepared by NHDES
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Adaptation Action Report List

ADP Action 1 – Development and Distribution of Critical Information

ADP Action 2 - Focus policies and actions to help the most at risk populations prepare for the impacts of Climate Change

ADP Action 3 – Charge and Empower Public Health Officials to prepare for the public health impacts of Climate Change

ADP Action 4 - Strengthen the protection of New Hampshire’s natural systems

ADP Action 5 - Increase Resilience to Extreme Weather Events

ADP Action 6 - Strengthen the NH economy for adaptability to Climate Change.

ADP Action 7 - Permanently establish a Climate Change Advisory Council

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ADP Action 1 – Development and Distribution of Critical Information

Summary – Invest in the analysis and dissemination of accurate and understandable information about the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change to policy makers and decision makers in the public and private sector. Desired outcomes are policies and decisions that are more fact-based, easier to achieve, and more effective. This is critical because of the complexity and volume of the information involved and the need to synthesize and graphically illustrate key concepts and facts to make them more understandable and relevant.

This work should be coordinated by a public-private partnership convened and administered by senior state officials from the Department of Environmental Services or related agencies. The members of this partnership should include leading research and policy institutes such as UNH and the Center for Public Policy Studies; state and municipal elected and appointed officials; business; and non-profit organizations. Their charge would be to assess existing sources of information to identify gaps and develop a strategic plan to address those gaps, with a focus on getting the information into the hands of decision-makers responsible for protecting public safety and environmental integrity.

Work products would include integrated and updated Geographic Information System maps showing high risk flood areas, assessments of vulnerable housing and other infrastructure, assessments of at-risk populations, including the elderly and low-income residents, who have limited ability to withstand sudden or long-term changes in weather. This is both an information gathering process and a review, synthesis, consolidation, and dissemination process. Included would be the development of comprehensive modeling tools, mapping, data sets and observations to track potential and actual impacts from Climate Change scenarios on public health and safety, environmental integrity, and highly vulnerable economic activity such as tourism, agriculture, and forestry.

ADP Action 2 - Focus policies and actions to help the most at risk populations prepare for the impacts of Climate Change.

Summary – Focus policies and actions to help the most at risk populations (elderly, low income, chronically ill and children) prepare for the impacts of Climate Change and related social impacts (i.e. cost and availability of: commuting/transportation, heating and cooling homes, ‘cool shelters’, food and potable water, health care and the potential need for relocation). Public Health agencies need to continue to identify individuals at risk and work with DES in the areas of health related impacts from Climate Change (i.e. changes in air quality) and public health outreach. Public Health and the Office of Emergency Management need to coordinate and participate in Climate Change discussions. What is currently hard for at risk populations will likely get worse under Climate Change conditions. They will be affected by transportation costs and infrastructure and they may likely be displaced as many live in vulnerable areas.

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ADP Action 3 – Charge and Empower Public Health Officials to prepare for the public health impacts of Climate Change

Summary - Charge and Empower Public Health Officials to prepare for an increased incidence and impacts of existing and emerging infectious diseases and other acute and chronic conditions. Public Health action areas should include: 1) vector borne infectious disease, 2) heat related injuries, and 3) respiratory illness. Public Health Officials need better data/analysis for vector-borne infectious disease forecasting, understanding what indicators to track (i.e. weather patterns, mosquito pools, tick populations etc...).

ADP Action 4 - Strengthen the protection of New Hampshire’s natural systems

Summary – Strengthen state and local protection of New Hampshire’s natural resources which includes agricultural soils, drinking water, hydrology, and wildlife habitat connectivity and maintain the available clean air, available and clean water, food and flood protection. Encourage growth in developed areas and protect natural areas. Place greater emphasis on regional development strategies.

ADP Action 5 - Increase Resilience to Extreme Weather Events

Summary – Increase resilience to extreme weather events. Given the climate change forecasts for drought punctuated by extreme precipitation events and higher sea levels, our built environment may be at increased risk in inland flood prone areas and the seacoast. Future development may both put more people and infrastructure at risk and exacerbate the problem. The desired outcomes of adaptation policies in this area are:

- Guide future development away from most vulnerable flood prone areas.
- Render the existing built environment more resilient to weather related impacts.
- Explore ways to move existing development out of harm’s way.

Mechanisms to accomplish these outcomes focus on municipal ordinances, building codes, land use practices, infrastructure planning, and incentives. Costs of inaction are potential loss of life, property and economic activity, especially in flood prone areas and the seacoast. In short, the weather related problems of today will be exacerbated by the climate of the future.

ADP Action 6 - Strengthen the NH economy for adaptability to Climate Change.

Summary - Develop policies supportive of economic development which reduce and/or mitigate green house gas emissions, mainstream climate considerations into the economic growth model and attract climate friendly employers. Examples include anticipating the effects on key current industries (skiing, tourism, agricultural etc.); developing “green collar” training and education programs; and, attracting alternative energy and other “clean-tech” industries.

Embrace this proactive opportunity and take advantage of a potential new economy. Provide the necessary infrastructure, and as appropriate, tax incentives.

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ADP Action 7 - Permanently establish a Climate Change Advisory Council

Summary - Engage and charge public and private partners and agencies to plan for episodic and chronic incidences as a result of Climate Change. NH's population growth will result in an increased demand on public services during extreme weather events. This Council should be charged with pro-actively planning for these incidences and how to minimize their impacts on human health, the natural environment and the built environment (homes, businesses, roads, bridges, dams etc). The Council will work with the players listed in the above Actions to be sure all necessary data are available for decision makers. There is a general lack of urgency for planning for Adaptation to Climate Change. This Council's charge is to provide the necessary education and information to keep NH moving in a pro-active manner as we continue to face evolving Climate Change conditions. The Council will be responsible for keeping our state and our decision makers focused on implementation of Adaptation Strategies.