



Overview

Climate change impacts everyone. But because human societies were built on inequities, climate change does not impact everyone in the same way. For example, low-income communities have fewer resources to recover from climate disasters. In the United States, communities of color bear the brunt of pollution associated with fossil fuels and energy infrastructure. Worldwide, climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and children.

Both in the U.S. and worldwide, individuals and communities that contributed the least to the climate crisis will face the greatest impacts. Because climate change amplifies existing injustices and inequities, policies to address climate change should be designed to mitigate inequities and disproportionate impacts. To advance climate justice, state legislation needs to identify and center environmental justice communities, build an inclusive economy, support community-driven solutions, require local pollution reductions, and facilitate a just transition.

Legislation ^{(***) indicates bipartisan support}

- *****Illinois S.B.2132/H.B.3624 (enacted 2021):** Invested up to \$40 million per year to replace lost property taxes, and support economic development and job training; created a “bill of rights” for displaced workers and provided them with services and training.
- **Maine L.D.2018 (enacted 2022):** Established definitions for “environmental justice” and “front line communities;” set methods to incorporate the weighing of equity decisions in deliberations at the state’s Department of Environmental Protection and the Public Utilities Commission.
- **New Mexico S.B.48 (enacted 2025):** Established the Community Benefit Fund, a non-reverting fund within the state treasury of New Mexico, designed to support projects that address environmental and economic challenges.
- **New Hampshire S.B.152 (enacted 2023):** Establishes a marine trades pathway, career and technical education workforce development and innovation fund, and establishes an offshore wind industry workforce training center committee.

KEY POINTS

- Climate change worsens environmental conditions associated with chronic illness and injury and causes social and economic dislocations that most impact disadvantaged communities ([Public Health Institute](#)).
- Black Americans are 40% more likely to currently live in areas with the highest projected increases in extreme temperature related deaths ([EPA](#)).
- People in low-and lower-middle-income countries are around five times more likely than people in high-income countries to be displaced by extreme weather disasters ([Oxfam](#)).

- **Washington H.B.1870 (enacted 2024):** Mandates the Department of Commerce to aid local communities in applying for federal grants, including providing state matching funds, and promotes partnerships between public and private sectors to foster economic growth.

Other Resources

- Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning ([Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#))
- Solutions Library ([Just Solutions Network](#))
- Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook ([Georgetown Climate Center](#))
- State-Based Policies to Build a Cleaner, Safer, More Equitable Economy ([Blue Green Alliance](#))
- Tools to Help Plan For and Fund a Just Equitable Transition From Fossil Fuel Power Plants and Mining ([Just and Equitable Transition Coalition](#))

