

THE WHITE HOUSE

The Threat of Carbon Pollution: Hawaii

We have a moral obligation to leave our children a planet that's not polluted or damaged, and by taking an all-of-the-above approach to develop homegrown energy and steady, responsible steps to cut carbon pollution, we can protect our kids' health and begin to slow the effects of climate change so we leave a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. Climate change impacts including severe weather, asthma attacks, prolonged allergy seasons, and sea-level rise are affecting our security, our economy, and our communities. In 2012 alone, the cost of weather disasters exceeded \$110 billion in the United States, and climate change will only increase the frequency and intensity of these events. Today, we already set limits for arsenic, mercury and lead, but we impose no limits on how much carbon pollution our power plants release. Carbon pollution is contributing to a higher risk of asthma attacks and more frequent and severe storms, floods, heat waves, and wildfires, driving up food prices and threatening our communities. The President's plan is a comprehensive approach to cutting the pollution that causes climate change and threatens public health, setting us on a path to make our communities healthier, safer, and more resilient.

THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION AND EXTREME WEATHER IN HAWAII

In 2011, power plants and major industrial facilities in Hawaii emitted more than 9 million metric tons of carbon pollution—that's equal to the yearly pollution from more than 1.9 million cars.

Recent incidents provide a reminder of the impacts to our public health and costs due to extreme weather in Hawaii. Although we cannot say that climate change is responsible for any individual event, climate change is already increasing our risks from these events.

- The US Department of Agriculture designated 31 counties in Hawaii as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses from drought in 2012.
- In March 2012, Oahu experienced its largest hailstorm on record. Severe storms and flooding in December 2008 impacted 541 residences and required over \$4.6 million in Federal assistance for cleanup and recovery. Hawaii's hurricane losses from 1957-1995 surpassed \$2.7 billion. In 1992, the most powerful storm to hit Hawaii, Hurricane Iniki, caused seven deaths and \$2 billion in damage. Storms in late 2003 and early 2004 inundated many Hawaiian businesses with several feet of water, and the December 2003 storm alone caused an estimated \$20 million in damages.
- In Hawaii, there were over 1,000 hospital admissions for asthma in 2011, with an average charge of over \$21,800 for each stay.

ANTICIPATED CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN THE ISLANDS

While each island's individual location and topography make its climate impacts unique, islands in the Pacific will all be affected by sea-level rise, more intense tropical storms and ocean acidification. Island communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems are vulnerable to coastal inundation due to sea-level rise and coastal storms. Pacific islands can expect more summer rainfall and increases in heavy downpours, potentially causing flooding and landslides that affect crop yields and damage

infrastructure. Unique ecosystems that drive tourism, like coral reefs, are threatened by higher temperatures and more acidic waters. These changes can also damage habitats and change migratory patterns of critical fish species, with potentially large impacts on the health and diet of Pacific islanders, many of whom get more than 25 percent of their animal protein from fish. Drinking water quality is likely to suffer due to contamination from increased flooding, with significant implications for island communities, economies, and resources.

CUTTING CARBON POLLUTION AND INCREASING RESILIENCE IN HAWAII

Climate change is a long-term problem, but we can make substantial progress through a series of steady and responsible steps. The President's plan builds from progress already underway to work with states, local communities, and the private sector to reduce carbon pollution and to prepare our Nation for the impacts that cannot be avoided. Since 2009, President Obama has taken a number of common sense measures to combat carbon pollution, including:

- ***Investing in Clean Energy:*** During the President's first term, the United States more than doubled its use of renewable energy from wind, solar, and geothermal sources. In Hawaii, renewable energy generation from these sources increased more than 30 percent. Since 2009, the Administration has supported tens of thousands of renewable energy projects throughout the country, including more than 1,800 in Hawaii, generating enough energy to power nearly 32,000 homes and helping Hawaii meet its own goal of generating 40 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.
- ***Improving Efficiency:*** Using less energy to power our homes, businesses and vehicles is critical to building a clean and secure energy future. President Obama has made essential investments in research and development for energy efficiency advances, and set new standards to make the things we use every day – from cars to microwaves – more efficient.
 - President Obama established the toughest fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles in U.S. history. These standards will double the fuel efficiency of our cars and trucks by 2025, saving the average driver more than \$8,000 over the lifetime of a 2025 vehicle and cutting carbon pollution.
 - Since October 2009, the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have jointly completed energy upgrades in more than one million homes across the country, saving many families more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone.
 - As part of the President's Better Buildings Challenge, the University of Hawaii at Manoa committed to reducing energy intensity 50 percent by 2015 in 5 million square feet of campus buildings. Additionally, Kauai County committed to a 20 percent reduction by 2020 in 360 thousand square feet of city-owned buildings.
- ***Preparing Communities for the Consequences of Climate Change:*** The Obama Administration has worked since its earliest days to strengthen the Nation's resilience to climate change impacts, including investing in critical science and tools, developing the first-ever Federal agency climate adaptation plans, and directly partnering with communities. For example, The US Army Corps of Engineers commissioned the West Maui Watershed Study to help incorporate climate change impacts into the water management plan extending to coral reefs offshore."