

## THE WHITE HOUSE

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### **The Threat of Carbon Pollution: North Carolina**

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 NORTH CAROLINA**

In 2011, power plants and major industrial facilities in North Carolina emitted more than 70 million metric tons of carbon pollution—that's equal to the yearly pollution from more than 14.8 million cars.

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

- North Carolina experienced seven billion-dollar weather events in 2011 and 2012, including Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy.
- Seventy-one percent of North Carolina's coastline is at high or very high vulnerability to sea level rise.
- In North Carolina, there were over 10,100 hospital admissions for asthma in 2011, with an average charge of over \$13,600 for each stay.

#### **ANTICIPATED CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN THE SOUTHEAST**

Sea level rise, dangerous storm surges and intense hurricanes already pose serious threats to coastal cities in the Southeast, and climate change will intensify these impacts. The Southeast experienced two billion-dollar extreme weather events in 2012. Decreased water availability is very likely to affect the region's economy as well as its natural systems. By the end of this century, much of the Southeast will experience more than 100 days above 90°F, which in the absence of adaptive actions is expected to lead to more heat-stress related illness and deaths, decreased agricultural production, and negative impacts on fish and wildlife. Warmer temperatures accelerate formation of smog in urban areas, exacerbating respiratory problems such as asthma.

## CUTTING CARBON POLLUTION AND INCREASING RESILIENCE IN NORTH CAROLINA

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 North Carolina, renewable energy generation from these sources increased more than 40 percent. Since 2009, the Administration has supported tens of thousands of renewable energy projects throughout the country, including more than 270 in North Carolina, generating enough energy to power nearly 43,000 homes and helping North Carolina meet its own goal of generating 12.5 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2021.
  
- ***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 state of North Carolina has committed to reducing energy intensity in 123 million square feet of state-owned buildings 20 percent by 2020.
  
- ***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, with support from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, North Carolina is identifying drinking water and wastewater infrastructure vulnerable to sea level rise and is developing a plan to mitigate risks to these facilities.