

U.S. CLIMATE ALLIANCE FOUR-YEAR STRATEGY | 2021-2025

OUR HISTORY

The Alliance was created in 2017 by U.S. governors to uphold and help achieve the U.S. Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) – our national commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Now a bipartisan coalition representing more than half the U.S. population and more than 60 percent of U.S. GDP, Alliance governors are committed to driving the nation’s ambitious climate agenda by working in partnership with each other, the federal government, and the international community. The Alliance Secretariat provides core support for state leadership, serving as the connective tissue between the states and offering demand-driven policy and technical assistance and expertise to help Alliance governors achieve their climate priorities.

The historic role and climate leadership of states and their necessary engagement to achieve current and future U.S. climate goals is enshrined in the most recent U.S. [NDC, released in April 2021](#):

A whole-of-government approach on climate action at the federal level will play an important role in achieving our target in 2030, building upon and benefiting from a long history of leadership on climate ambition and innovation from state, local, and tribal governments. Strong and predictable policy frameworks support private investment in innovation and deployment of carbon pollution-free technology and infrastructure, spurring markets that drive continued progress. All levels of government and the private sector will partner to drive and implement this NDC and create a more equitable, resilient, zero carbon future for the American people.¹

Collaboration will be essential to meet the ambitious climate goals set by the federal government and Alliance governors.

OUR GOALS

Alliance governors recognize that the climate crisis threatens our communities, ecosystems, and economies. Thus, bold climate leadership is necessary to safeguard public health, build a more equitable and resilient zero carbon economy, and create community- and family-sustaining jobs. To build this clean, equitable, and resilient future for their communities, Alliance governors are working together to achieve the Paris Agreement’s goal of keeping temperature increases below 1.5 degrees Celsius by:

- Reducing collective net GHG emissions at least 26-28 percent by 2025 and 50-52 percent by 2030, both below 2005 levels, and collectively achieving overall net-zero GHG emissions as soon as practicable, and no later than 2050;
- Accelerating new and existing policies to reduce GHG pollution, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and promote clean energy deployment at the state and federal level;
- Centering equity, environmental justice, and a just economic transition in their efforts to achieve their climate goals and create high-quality jobs; and
- Tracking and reporting progress to the global community in appropriate settings, including when the world convenes to take stock of the Paris Agreement.

¹ The United States of America. *The United States’ Nationally Determined Contribution*. Submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change April 21, 2021.
<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/United%20States%20of%20America%20First/United%20States%20NDC%20April%202021%20Final.pdf>.

OUR STRATEGY

The Alliance will continue to do what it does best – support Alliance governors in advancing foundational and leading-edge climate policies, including driving collaborative, multi-state action that helps drive economic growth across multiple industries throughout the country. For the next four years, the Alliance will work in partnership with the federal government to achieve its common climate target, while continuing to go further, faster whenever possible at the state level. Transparency and accountability will guide the work of the Alliance, and it will continue to track, demonstrate, and report on progress toward Alliance goals in both national and international settings. To achieve its goals, the Alliance will work toward the following four core objectives:

1. **Help governors build a more equitable, resilient zero-carbon economy, create high-quality jobs, and drive down emissions by utilizing the best available science and a whole-of-government approach.**

The Alliance supports states by: providing technical, policy and analytical support; convening officials and experts to problem solve; and strategically engaging federal leaders. The twin economic and health crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have increased demand for state resources and highlighted the critical role and response of governors. While these crises have impacted communities in different ways, it's clear they have exacerbated existing inequities in the U.S. and underscored the need to build resilient communities and create high-quality jobs. As communities rebuild, Alliance governors are committed to ensuring equity and environmental justice are core to state climate policy. Alliance governors are also committed to job training and economic diversification efforts as they pursue their climate goals. The Alliance will deploy the following strategies:

- **Mobilize and Engage Whole-of-Government:** Help governors break down silos and improve efficiency so that there is alignment, communication, and coordination across, and between, all levels of government to achieve climate, economic and job goals.
- **Strategize and Share Best Practices:** Convene governors' senior policy advisors and experts to share and execute strategies for successful policies and programs that achieve Alliance-wide goals and raise ambition.
- **Build and Expand State Capacity:** Provide deep policy support to individual states through in-house and third-party expertise, increase staffing resources through the Alliance Climate Leadership Grant Program, and facilitate information sharing to support decision making.
- **Leverage and Deploy Federal Funding:** Support states in leveraging funding opportunities to implement governors' climate priorities – including a suite of Alliance high-ambition actions – by:
 - Supporting the deployment of federal resources to create jobs and modernize, decarbonize, and enhance the resilience of our nation's infrastructure, including blue and green infrastructure;
 - Advocating for reforms to federal programs to enable states to receive flexible funding that can be efficiently deployed to meet state climate objectives; and
 - Supporting states as they access federal funding for climate priorities, including competitive grants.
- **Increase Participation to Support Equity and a Just Transition:** Deepen collaboration to create more participatory processes and practices across government, such as inclusive community engagement programs and equity screening tools, to help eliminate existing disparities and expand job training and economic diversification efforts to support workers and communities impacted by the transition to net-zero emissions.
- **Support Governors' Executive and Legislative Climate Initiatives:** Help governors achieve their climate goals through executive action, legislation, and policy implementation by providing

strategic communications guidance and support through targeted press, digital media, and stakeholder campaigns and engagement.

- **Share the Positive Impacts of Climate Leadership:** Support governors and help move and inform public opinion by sharing and amplifying compelling stories about the health, economic, and environmental benefits of climate leadership.

2. Support governors in driving multi-state action to move markets and put the U.S. on an irreversible path to progress.

Alliance states represent a large enough share of the economy that through climate-smart, coordinated action, they can begin to move markets – bringing down the cost and increasing availability of and access to resilient, zero-carbon products, services, and practices. The Alliance will deploy the following strategies:

- **Mobilize Action through Governor Leadership:** Leverage the collaborative and competitive spirit of Alliance governors to foster a race to the top through joint commitments to action.
- **Prioritize High-Impact Actions:** Identify and prioritize a set of Alliance high-impact policies to help achieve the Alliance’s collective 2025 and 2030 climate targets, put the coalition on a path to net-zero emissions by 2050, and ensure actions are equitable and support community and worker transition.
- **Operationalize Climate Risk and Resilience in Decision Making:** Provide tools and support to help communities adapt to climate change and integrate resilience priorities and climate-smart land management practices in investments and decisions to better prevent, reduce, withstand, and recover from current and future climate impacts.
- **Strengthen Collaboration and Service Delivery:** Deepen collaboration through state-driven, cohort-based learning via Alliance Working Groups to provide the services and tools that will help states meet the coalition’s collective 2025 and 2030 goals and reorient those groups to better serve state needs, including by sharing lessons through state climate planning processes.
- **Catalyze Action in Non-Alliance States:** Utilize regional approaches to support the highest ambition possible in all states, building on shared values and priorities, and in partnership with regional organizations.
- **Hold Each Other Accountable:** Regularly measure and publicly report progress toward achieving collective emission reduction targets, support Alliance states in regularly reporting progress towards their own climate goals, and work with one another to identify and overcome challenges.
- **Partner with Industry:** Collaborate with industry groups to inform and support state policy and find solutions, thereby supporting private sector investment in local economies.
- **Leverage the Collective Voice of Governors:** Through shared communications and messaging, leverage the voice of Alliance governors to mobilize action and send signals to the market.

3. Scale up climate action nationally through close federal collaboration and by demonstrating the benefits of climate leadership.

Collaboration and engagement with the federal government, will enable states to: 1) prioritize their actions in response to known federal action; 2) harmonize policies and practices to ensure effective policy implementation and to move markets, especially in sectors where emission reductions are most difficult; 3) reach for greater ambition, building on a new federal floor; and 4) implement the next generation of climate actions so that the federal government can scale them up when ready. Governors

can also help mobilize support for federal leadership by sharing the benefits of state climate action to their communities and industries. The Alliance will deploy the following strategies:

- **Strengthen Governor Participation in Strategic Federal Decision Making:** Advocate for and facilitate strategic dialogue between our governors and their staff and key federal government and Congressional leaders to inform national climate priorities. This is also an opportunity to tackle some of the most pressing issues, such as meeting the President’s commitment to ensure 40 percent of the benefits from climate investments go to environmental justice communities and 30 percent of land is conserved by 2030.
- **Inform Federal Policies and Programs:** Support targeted state engagement with the White House and federal agencies to build a trusted relationship and share timely policy information, leading to federal climate action that is more ambitious, supports state leadership, and helps communities and workers transition to a zero-carbon economy.
- **Explore Policy Alignment:** Provide states with the tools to align or harmonize policies with the federal government and other actors (e.g., universities, foreign governments) to create demand for zero- or low-carbon goods, such as through joint procurement or “lead by example” programs.
- **Support Legislative Engagement:** Provide timely, relevant information to states to support their strategic engagement with Congress to drive and inform enduring climate action.
- **Build Support for Federal Climate Leadership:** Develop and execute creative and impactful communications strategies, campaigns, and partnerships that spotlight how state-led climate leadership and action benefit communities, the economy, the workforce, and industry across the country – building a case and support for parallel federal action.

4. **Inspire international action by demonstrating the ambition and durability of U.S. state and federal climate leadership.**

Previous administrations’ withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement, and myriad other agreements originally negotiated and championed by the U.S. left some in the international community skeptical of the durability of U.S. climate leadership and commitments. By educating the international community about cooperative federalism, the authorities vested in U.S. governors, and the long record of state climate leadership, the Alliance can build and increase trust in U.S. action. This will help strengthen credibility and allow the Administration to better leverage its own influence to compel others to take action. The Alliance will deploy the following strategies in close coordination with the federal government:

- **Demonstrate the Durability of U.S. Climate Action:** Showcase governors’ climate leadership at key moments such as Climate Week, the climate negotiations, the UN Conference of the Parties, G20 or similar forums, and through official U.S. bilateral partnerships. In doing so, the Alliance will show how leadership at all levels of government ensures the continuity of climate action in the U.S. across administrations.
- **Directly Mobilize International Action:** Through bilateral partnerships and international forums, work with state, local, and international leaders to secure commitments to people-centered climate action and collaborate through technical exchanges to build each other’s capacity.