

Fourth National Climate Assessment Vol. II

Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States

Background Information

This document is provided for your situational awareness, and may be helpful in formulating responses to inquiries. Included in this document is the following background information:

- About This Report
- Mandate and Structure
- Scope
- Development, Review, and Clearance Processes

ABOUT THIS REPORT

- Volume II of the Fourth National Climate Assessment, or NCA4, is an authoritative assessment of climate change impacts, risks, and adaptation across the United States.
- It builds upon the physical science assessment presented in Volume I of NCA4, *The Climate Science Special Report*, released in November 2017.

MANDATE AND STRUCTURE

U.S. Global Change Research Program

- USGCRP was established by Presidential initiative in 1989 and mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act (GCRA) of 1990.
- USGCRP's mandate is to develop and coordinate "a comprehensive and integrated United States research program which will assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change."
- USGCRP comprises 13 Federal agencies that conduct or use research on global change and its impacts on society.
- USGCRP functions under the direction of the SGCR of the National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Environment. The committee is overseen by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

NCA4: A Two-Volume Effort

- Section 106 of the U.S. Global Change Research Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-606) mandates that the Program prepare a quadrennial assessment, which has become known as the National Climate Assessment (NCA).

- The Climate Science Special Report (CSSR) serves as Volume I of NCA4 and was released in November 2017. It can be accessed at science2017.globalchange.gov
- CSSR provides the scientific foundation for the second volume of NCA4, *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States*, which analyzes the impacts of global change on: (1) sectors identified in the Act, and (2) issues of regional importance as identified by stakeholders.
- NCA4 Vol. II is being released in its final form today. It can be accessed at nca2018.globalchange.gov.

SCOPE

- NCA4 Vol. II is a technical, scientific assessment of climate change-related impacts, risks, and adaptation. It assesses a range of observed and projected climate-related impacts and risks, while also presenting potential response actions.
- A primary objective of the NCA is to help stakeholders better identify, avoid, and/or reduce climate-related risks.
- NCA4 Vol. II places a strong emphasis on regional information, addressing the impacts of climate change on 10 regions of the United States. It also evaluates the risks from climate changes across 15 national-level topics, often using case studies to provide additional context and showcase community success stories. The report concludes with two response chapters discussing how climate-related risks could be reduced or avoided through adaptation action or emissions mitigation.
- NCA4 does not evaluate policy or make policy recommendations. It remains policy-relevant without being policy-prescriptive.
- The findings in NCA4 Vol. II are based on a large body of scientific, peer-reviewed research, as well as a number of other publicly available sources, including well-established and carefully evaluated observational and modeling datasets. The report contains over 6,000 unique references across its 29 chapters.

DEVELOPMENT

- As administrative agency for NCA4, NOAA established the procedures for the report and released Federal Register Notices at key points in the production process.
- Report development was overseen by the Subcommittee on Global Change Research (SGCR) through a Federal Steering Committee (SC) made up of representatives from U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) agencies and appointed by the SGCR.
- Planning for the report began soon after the release of the Third NCA in 2014. Development of process guidance began in early 2016. A prospectus was released for public comment in summer 2016, with author teams largely named by the end of 2016. Report drafting began in the winter of 2016.

Production

- NCA4 Volume II was written by more than 300 Federal and non-Federal authors representing a range of expertise, a number of whom were selected through a public call for author nominations.
- A series of Regional Engagement Workshops and sector-specific webinars reached more than 1000 stakeholders across dozens of cities, ensuring that chapter content reflected the concerns and needs of the end users.
- Production and editorial support was provided by a Technical Support Unit at NOAA's National Center for Environmental Information.
- Coordination, facilitation, and logistical support was provided by USGCRP's National Coordination Office.

Review

- NCA4 Volume II (like Volume I) underwent a rigorous, multi-step review process, including a 90-day public comment period and simultaneous review by an expert panel of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
- Review Editors were selected through a public nominations process. Review Editors were tasked with ensuring that authors adequately responded to all comments received during the public and National Academies review periods. Comments received during these two reviews, as well as author responses are publicly available on the report's website (nca2018.globalchange.gov).
- In total, Volume II of NCA4 went through eight rounds of expert, technical review both inside and outside the Federal government.