

CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING 101: A Quick Guide to Climate Action Planning Resources

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What is a Climate Action Plan?

A Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a strategic action plan to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A CAP provides a framework to help a city, county, or region achieve its environmental goals by describing actions like policies, programs, and cost-effective projects. The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) has been working on climate action planning since 2008. The SBCCOG's sub-regional approach to the management and coordination of climate action planning is to assist its cities in complying with legislation such as AB 32, SB 375, AB 118, SB 32, and AB 197. Other plans, such as the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, provide guidance to sub-regions like the South Bay by outlining environmental policy goals and actions that lower GHG emissions, reduce energy costs, protect air quality and public health, and improve the economy and environment.

This fact sheet on climate action planning provides information on:

- AB 32
- SB 375
- AB 118
- SB 350
- SB 32
- AB 197
- CPUC Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan
- Other Climate Adaptation Work

AB 32: Global Warming Solutions Act (2006)

This legislation requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop a plan to help California reduce GHG emissions back to 1990 levels by 2020 as mandated by Executive Orders S-3-05 and B-16-2012. AB 32 required the ARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve this goal. The Scoping Plan was first approved by the ARB Board in 2008 and must be updated every five years. The [First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan](#) was approved by the ARB Board on May 22, 2014. ARB is moving forward with a second update to the Scoping Plan to reflect the 2030 target established in Executive Order B-30-15.

The First Update builds upon the initial Scoping Plan with new strategies and recommendations. It identifies opportunities to leverage existing and new funds to further drive GHG emission reductions through strategic planning and targeted low carbon investments. The First Update defines ARB's [climate change](#) priorities for the next five years, and also sets the groundwork to reach long-term goals set forth in Executive Orders [S-3-05](#) and [B-16-2012](#). It highlights California's progress toward meeting the "near-term" 2020 GHG emission reduction goals defined in the initial Scoping Plan. It also evaluates how to align the State's "longer-term" GHG reduction strategies with other State policy priorities for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy, transportation, and land use.

ARB focuses on six key areas to reduce GHG emissions:

- Energy
- Transportation, land use, fuels, and infrastructure
- Water
- Agriculture
- Natural and working lands
- Waste

ARB has implemented the following programs to help achieve the 2020 goals:

- Cap-and-Trade program
 - The Cap-and-Trade program sets a statewide limit on certain sectors and sources in California, including electric utilities and large industrial facilities. If a business emits less GHGs than the cap, they can trade or bank the allowances. The overall cap will continue to decline annually. The program was expanded in 2015 to include distributors of transportation, natural gas, and other fuels.
- Advanced clean vehicles
- Statewide energy-efficiency initiatives
- Low carbon fuel standard

AB 118: The California Alternative and Renewable Fuel, Vehicle Technology, Clear Air, and Carbon Reduction Act of 2007 (2007)

This bill created the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program in California. It allows the California Energy Commission (CEC) to develop and use innovative technologies to help reach California's environmental goals by moving away from petroleum use. It also provides incentives for private investment in the transportation sector to support projects that improve vehicle technologies, reduce the overall impact and carbon footprint of vehicles, and increase sustainability of alternative and renewable fuels. Alternative and renewable fuels include electricity, hydrogen, natural gas, biomethane, ethanol, renewable diesel, and biodiesel.

SB 375 and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (2008)

This bill aims to reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks through integrated transportation, land use, housing, and environmental planning. Per SB 375, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)—like the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)—are in charge of developing a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The SCS is a newly required part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and integrates land use and transportation strategies to meet GHG emissions reduction targets.

A SCS needs to include actions that:

- Identify areas that could accommodate regional housing needs in an eight-year projection (this projection must take all socioeconomic needs into account, as well as net migration, population growth, household formation, and employment growth)
- Identify ways to serve the transportation needs of the region
- Consider state housing goals
- Lay out a plan using transportation and housing to lower GHG emissions from autos and light trucks
- Comply with the Federal Clean Air Act

If the targets cannot be met through the SCS, a back-up plan, or Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) can be developed to show how targets could be achieved through other methods. The focus of the SCS changes along with the focus of each updated RTP. Unique to SCAG is the option for sub-regions to create their own SCS or APS. These sub-regional SCS or APS, if developed, will be incorporated into the regional SCS.

South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) SCS (20xxx)

The SBCCOG completed a South Bay Sustainable Strategy (SBSS) to address land use and mobility in an area that is transit poor. While the SBCCOG does not intend to produce an SCS, it hopes instead to use its SBSS as a guide to develop a Scenario Planning Model (SPM) that will allow the SBCCOG to independently

plan and evaluate its member cities' development scenarios. This approach will supplement the regional SCS with a concrete tool to demonstrate to SCAG, Metro, and South Bay cities planning staff a strategy that best fits the conditions in the South Bay.

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) – Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan (2008)

With support from the Governor's Office, the California Energy Commission (CEC), the California Air Resource Board (ARB), and key stakeholders, the CPUC has adopted the Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan. The plan's goal is to achieve maximum energy savings by encouraging sustained market transformation in the state between 2009 and 2020. This plan aims to emphasize energy efficiency as the highest priority resource in meeting California's energy needs, makes energy efficiency the standard for all sectors in California, and shows how California will use energy efficiency to grow its economy and meet its global warming goals.

The plan has four main strategies:

1. All new residential construction will be zero net energy by 2020. The draft *New Residential Zero Net Energy Action Plan* proposes the following definition for zero net energy:
“*The societal value of energy consumed by the building over the course of a typical year is less than or equal to the societal value of the on-site renewable energy generated.*”
2. All new commercial construction will be zero net energy by 2030
3. The Heating, Venting, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) industry will be re-shaped to deliver maximum performance HVAC systems
4. All eligible low-income customers will have an opportunity to participate in the LIEE program and will be provided all cost-effective energy efficiency measures in their residences by 2020

The Strategic Plan provided a report to achieve maximum energy savings across all major groups and sectors in California. In January 2011, it was updated to include a lighting chapter and is currently going through a full draft update.

SB 350 Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (2015)

This bill requires that:

- The amount of electricity generated and sold to retail customers per year from eligible renewable energy resources be increased to 50% by December 31, 2030
- The State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission establish annual targets for statewide energy efficiency savings and demands reduction that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas final end uses of retail customers by January 1, 2030.
- The PUC establish efficiency targets for electrical and gas corporations consistent with this goal.
- Local publicly owned electric utilities establish annual targets for energy efficiency savings and demand reductions consistent with this goal.

SB 32 California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: emissions limit (2016)

This bill will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. California is on track to meet or exceed the current target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, as established in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). The new 2030 requirement in SB 32 will help make it possible to reach the ultimate goal of reducing emissions 80 percent under 1990 levels by 2050.

AB 197 State Air Resources Board: greenhouse gases: regulations (2016)

This bill requires several actions be made by the state board, including:

- Making available the emissions of greenhouse gases, criteria pollutants, and toxic air contaminants, throughout the state. This information shall be updated on its website annually and will be broken down to a local and sub-county level for stationary sources and to at least a county level for mobile sources.
- Annually presenting, at a hearing of the Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policies, an informational report on the reported emissions of greenhouse gases, criteria pollutants, and toxic air contaminants from all sectors covered by the scoping plan. This reporting will continue to ensure that the state's actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are conducted with transparency and accountability.
- Identifying specified information for each emissions reduction measure, including each alternative compliance mechanism, market-based compliance mechanism, and potential monetary and nonmonetary incentive.

Climate Adaptation Work

Although bills like AB 32, SB 375, AB 118, SB 350, SB 32, and AB 197 are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, California already has started to experience climate change impacts. In addition to identifying mitigation strategies to reduce the severity of these impacts, the state and local governments are starting to plan for how to adapt to climate change. In January 2017, California will update the “Safeguarding California Plan,” which discusses the most up-to-date impacts and strategies for climate adaptation planning. The state has also recently developed an Adaptation Planning Guide (APG) to help local and regional stakeholders interpret climate science and make decisions that help reduce the risks caused or made worse by climate change. There are other resources that are also becoming available such as the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Energy Commission (CEC) have a website called Cal-Adapt to enable people to identify potential climate change risks in specific areas throughout California.