

U.S. state climate initiatives 2026

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The Paris Climate Accord is a legally binding international treaty adopted on 12 December 2015 at COP21 in Paris, with 194 Parties as of January 2026, aiming to limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

Overview

The Paris Agreement was adopted by 195 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. As of 27 January 2026, 194 Parties have joined. 

Its central objective is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. This threshold is critical because exceeding 1.5°C significantly increases the risk of severe climate impacts such as extreme heatwaves, droughts, and heavy rainfall.



Key Goals

- **Mitigation:** Substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet the temperature goals. 
- **Adaptation:** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate impacts. 
- **Finance:** Developed countries provide financial support to developing nations for mitigation and adaptation. 

How It Works

The Agreement operates on a **five-year cycle** of increasingly ambitious climate action:

- Countries submit **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** outlining their climate actions.
- Each successive NDC must represent a progression beyond the previous one.
- A **global stocktake** every five years assesses collective progress. The first stocktake concluded at COP28 in 2023.



Legal Status

The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding treaty**, though the specific emissions targets within NDCs are nationally determined and not legally enforceable by the treaty itself. The framework requires transparency, reporting, and accountability. 

Entry Into Force

The Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016 after meeting the threshold of at least 55 Parties representing at least

 UNFCCC

The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

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The Paris Agreement | United Nations

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>

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How Does The Paris Agreement... >

Implementation of the Paris Agreement requires economic and social transformation, based on the best available science. The Paris Agreement works on a five-year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action -- or, ratcheting up -- carrie...



How Are Countries Supporting One... >

The Paris Agreement provides a framework for financial, technical and capacity building support to those countries who need it.

How Are We Tracking Progress? >

With the Paris Agreement, countries established an enhanced transparency framework (ETF). Under ETF, starting in 2024, countries will report transparently on actions taken and progress in climate change mitigation, adaptation measures ...



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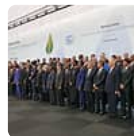
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Paris Agreement - Wikipedia

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The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit is one of the first international treaties on the topic. It stipulates that parties should meet regularly to address climate change, at the Conference of Parties or COP. It forms the foundation to future climate agreements. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997, regulated greenhouse gas reductions for a...

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United Nations - Office of Legal Affairs

<https://legal.un.org> › avl › ha › pa › pa.html

Paris Agreement - United Nations

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BBC

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Today, 195 Parties (194 States plus the European Union) have joined the Paris Agreement. The Agreement includes commitments ...

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https://unfccc.int/.../parisagreement_publication.pdf

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This booklet of the Paris Agreement has been published by the UNFCCC secretariat for ease of reference and as a 'souvenir' edition ...

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 Council on Foreign Relations
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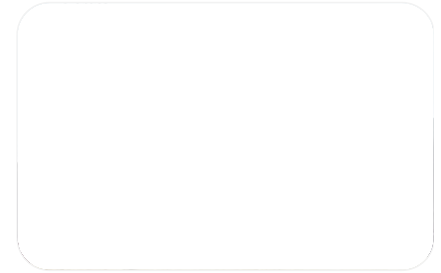
paris climate accord



The Paris Climate Accord is an international agreement aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, preferably to 1.5°C, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing climate resilience.

Overview and Purpose

The Paris Climate Accord, adopted in **December 2015** under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), brought together **196 countries** to collectively address climate change. Its primary goal is to **mitigate global warming** by curbing greenhouse gas emissions while promoting adaptation strategies and financial support for vulnerable nations.



 Paris Agreement on Climate Change...

Key Objectives

- **Limit Global Temperature Rise:** The agreement aims to keep the increase in global average temperature **well below 2°C**, with efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** Each country submits **NDCs**, which are voluntary climate action plans that outline targets for reducing emissions and strategies for adaptation. Countries are expected to **update NDCs every five years** with increasingly ambitious goals.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The Paris Accord includes a **monitoring and reporting system** to track progress and ensure countries are meeting their targets.
- **Climate Finance:** Developed nations have committed to providing **financial support** to developing countries to help them transition to clean energy, build climate resilience, and cope with the impacts of climate change.
- **Adaptation and Resilience:** The accord emphasizes efforts to **strengthen societies' ability to respond to climate impacts**, including early warning systems, infrastructure improvements, and disaster preparedness.

Significance and Impact

The Paris Accord is significant as it represents a **global consensus on the urgency of climate action** and encourages international cooperation rather than punitive enforcement. While the Accord is **non-binding**, the emphasis on transparency, peer pressure, and regular updates encourages countries to take concrete actions. It also facilitates **innovation in clean technology** and promotes policies that blend economic growth with sustainability.

Challenges

Despite its broad acceptance, challenges remain:

- Limited enforcement mechanisms mean that countries may fall short of their targets.
- Global emissions are still rising, and more aggressive measures are needed to meet the 1.5°C goal.
- Financing and technology transfer for developing countries face practical and political obstacles.

In summary, the **Paris Climate Accord serves as a framework for collective global effort** to address climate change, combining emission reduction targets, adaptation strategies, financial mechanisms, and regular reporting to foster international accountability and cooperation. It remains the central pillar of global climate policy.

The United States has had a dynamic participation in the Paris Climate Accord, with periods of withdrawal and re-entry, while the EPA plays a key role in supporting U.S. climate commitments domestically and internationally.

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U.S. Involvement in the Paris Climate Accord

The United States initially signed the Paris Agreement in 2016 under President Obama, pledging to limit global warming well below 2°C and contribute US\$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund to assist developing nations [↪ Wikipedia](#) **+1** . The Trump administration withdrew the U.S. from the agreement in 2017 and again in 2025, citing economic concerns and prioritizing domestic fossil fuel production [↪ nycfpa.org](#) **+1** . During these withdrawals, state governments, cities, universities, and businesses, through initiatives like the “We Are Still In” movement, continued efforts to reduce emissions at subnational levels [↪ Wikipedia](#) **+1** . President Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement on February 19, 2021, setting ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030** and instituting comprehensive domestic climate policies [↪ maweb.org](#) **+1** .

EPA’s Role and International Engagement

The Environmental Protection Agency actively represents U.S. interests in international climate efforts. The EPA participates in multilateral and bilateral programs to **advance energy efficiency, track greenhouse gas emissions, and support capacity-building for national inventories** [↪ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) . Through international conventions and initiatives such as the Global Methane Initiative and Clean Cookstoves Initiative, the EPA helps countries meet emissions reduction commitments and provides technical tools, reinforcing the global climate framework while maintaining U.S. policy oversight [↪ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) . Domestically, EPA regulations and enforcement support national climate goals, monitoring emissions and ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

Impact and Strategic Significance

The U.S.’s engagement affects international climate diplomacy, global emission trajectories, and domestic clean energy investments. Re-entries into the Paris Agreement signal U.S. commitment to global collaboration, while withdrawals can create uncertainty and reduce funding for climate initiatives [↪ nycfpa.org](#) **+1** . The EPA’s technical and policy contributions are essential for translating these commitments into actionable data-driven climate strategies.

In summary, the **United States’ Paris Accord journey has been marked by alternating withdrawal and recommitment**, reflecting political and economic priorities, while the **EPA ensures scientific support and coordination for both domestic and international climate compliance**.



American Strategy on Climate Change and International...



United States and the Paris Agreement - Wikipedia



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

International Climate Partnerships | US EPA



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USA current status (September, 2026)



The United States officially withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement on January 27, 2026, making it one of the few countries not participating in the global climate pact.

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Withdrawal Timeline and Policy Context:

The process to exit the Paris Agreement was initiated by President Donald Trump in January 2025 after his re-election. Following the treaty’s formal one-year notification period, the U.S. withdrawal became effective on January 27, 2026 [POLITICO](#) **+1** . This marks the second time the United States has exited the agreement, having first left under Trump’s initial term before rejoining under President Joe Biden in 2021 [POLITICO](#) **+1** . The withdrawal also coincided with plans to disengage from related international climate organizations including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other climate-focused international bodies [Harvard University](#) **+1** .

Domestic Implications:

Domestically, the withdrawal has led to the rollback of several clean energy and climate initiatives. Federal support for renewable energy projects has been curtailed, and federal agencies have shifted focus toward prioritizing fossil fuel development and energy security [nycfpa.org](#) . States participating in the US Climate Alliance have indicated intentions to maintain efforts aligned with Paris Agreement goals despite federal withdrawal [ESG Today](#) .

Global Impact and Response:

Experts and advocacy groups have highlighted concerns that the U.S. exit may diminish global climate leadership and contribute to slower international progress on emissions reductions [JURIST](#) **+2** . Despite this, the broader international community remains largely committed, with over 130 countries having submitted updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for 2035, covering approximately 75% of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions [IEA – International Energy Agency](#) . The withdrawal potentially adds 0.1°C to projected global warming on top of the existing trajectory [The Brussels Times](#) .

Current Status:

As of September 2026, the U.S. does not hold an active NDC under the Paris Agreement and is officially not a party to the accord. Meanwhile, many subnational actors, states, and cities continue independent efforts to mitigate emissions and pursue clean energy initiatives, partially offsetting federal disengagement [ESG Today](#) **+1** .

Overall, the U.S. remains outside the Paris Agreement framework, with domestic and international implications for climate policy and global cooperation.

 POLITICO

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