



***ANNOUNCING: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS***

***LOOKING FORWARD:***

***PRIORITIES FOR MANAGING FRESHWATER RESOURCES IN A CHANGING CLIMATE***

**A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

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**Draft Document available at:**

**[http://acwi.gov/climate\\_wkg/iwrcc/nap\\_refresh\\_pub\\_comment\\_draft-05182016.pdf](http://acwi.gov/climate_wkg/iwrcc/nap_refresh_pub_comment_draft-05182016.pdf)**

**Submit comments and questions to: [Water\\_Climate\\_Change@epa.gov](mailto:Water_Climate_Change@epa.gov) by July 15, 2016**

**Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup Co-chairs:** Council on Environmental Quality, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**Member Agencies:** Army Corps of Engineers, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of the Interior, FEMA, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate (NAP)*<sup>1</sup> was published in 2011 as the product of the Federal interagency Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup (Workgroup). Member agencies have made progress in advancing understanding of climate change impacts on water resources and developing information and approaches to adapt to these changes. Meanwhile, the Nation has witnessed the effects of more intense storms, drought, and unseasonable weather that is causing significant damage to property and loss of life. Consequently, interest in building greater resilience to extreme weather and other impacts of a changing climate has grown.

In presenting this draft report, the Workgroup is reaffirming the importance of continuing to improve the Nation's resilience to the impacts of climate change on water resources. This document focuses on priority actions that the Workgroup plans to address in the next several years. In addition, as new priorities and challenges emerge, the Workgroup will refocus efforts as needed. Recommendations and specific actions are identified in three thematic areas.

### **Data and Research**

Many different water resource managers and others throughout society rely largely on the Federal government's data systems to collect and analyze information on hydro-meteorological conditions. Maintaining observational networks remains a challenging task and there is a recognized need to better understand how to both detect emerging trends attributable to

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<sup>1</sup> *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate*, 2011, available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/2011\\_national\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/2011_national_action_plan.pdf).

climate change as well as how to incorporate the concept of nonstationarity into projections of future conditions. Meanwhile, the competing demands for use of water resources suggests that research into improving water use efficiencies could benefit not only water supply managers but also users such as the energy sector that rely on availability of supplies for production.

Recommendations include:

1. Sustain and expand existing monitoring networks and data collection on hydrologic and meteorological conditions and water demand;
2. Modernize statistical analyses of observational data sets so that climate changes that have already occurred are recognized in water resources decision-making;
3. Improve reliability and accessibility of water-related projections of future conditions; and
4. Enhance water supply through investment in energy-water technologies.

### **Planning and Decision Support**

It has long been recognized that climate change impacts are unique to every locality and sector and that solutions are also necessarily unique. Managing the development of new information and tools and applying them to localized decisions necessitates close cooperation among researchers and practitioners. Many activities are underway to 'downscale' production, delivery, and application of climate change information to regional and local levels. Improving collaboration between agencies and regional and local decision-makers and improving guidance on use of climate information is the focus on the following two recommendations:

1. Advance regional coordination among Federal water resource management agencies to support climate change adaptation and resilience efforts; and
2. Develop guidance and provide assistance to communities and water resource managers on use of climate change information and tools for assessing vulnerability and facility resilience.

### **Training and Outreach**

In response to the demand for information about projected impacts of climate change, there has been an explosion of information including many different websites, models, guidebooks, and training resources. Now, water resource decision-makers are expressing frustration at the overwhelming amount of information. Decision-makers need to know how to readily find applicable information and how to decide which tools best support a specific decision. Some key recommendations are:

1. Increase involvement in the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit Water Theme.
2. Sustain and build upon the existing Professional Development Series for Water Resource Professionals on Climate Change Principles and Practices.
3. Encourage stakeholder partnerships to improve delivery of tools and training and to identify gaps.

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