

Obama proposes \$1 billion climate protection fund

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US President Barack Obama (2nd L) tours a farm in Los Banos, California, on February 14, 2014

President Barack Obama proposed a \$1 billion fund to mitigate the impact of climate change in the United States, and unveiled financing to combat drought parching swathes of California.

The president landed in the Central Valley area and met farmers who

have lost livestock and seen once fertile lands wither through lack of water.

"The budget that I send to Congress next month will include \$1 billion in new funding for new technologies to help communities prepare for a changing climate," Obama said on Friday.

The president also noted that the snowpack in California mountains—which he overflew in Air Force One was less extensive than normal—compounding water scarcity.

"As anybody in this state could tell you, California's living through some of its driest years in a century. Right now, almost 99 percent of California is drier than normal," Obama said.

It is unclear whether the fund has much prospect of advancing past Republicans on Capitol Hill, where skepticism of the science of global warming and Obama's wider political agenda runs deep.

White House spokesman Jay Carney argued earlier that [climate change](#) was already having a demonstrable impact on the American climate.

"We've always had heatwaves, but now the worst ones are longer, and they're hotter," Carney said.



US President Barack Obama (2nd L) talks to Rep. Jim Costa while walking to Air Force One, at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, February 14, 2014

"We've always had droughts, but the worst ones are getting longer and drier.

"We've always had severe storms, but instead of 100-year storms that happen once in a hundred years, we're having 100-year storms that happen every other year or every five years."

The new Climate Resilience Fund is intended to finance research into better understanding of projected impacts of climate change and how to better protect communities and infrastructure.

It is also designed to help vulnerable communities plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change and to encourage local measures to reduce future risk and to fund new resilient technologies and infrastructure to

combat a warming climate.

The drought emergency has sparked wildfires and prompted Governor Jerry Brown to ask Californians to cut their water use by 20 percent.



California Governor Jerry Brown (L), farmer Joe Del Bosque (2nd L) and Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) listen to US President Barack Obama speaking after touring the Empresas Del Bosque, Inc. farm in Los Banos, California, on February 14, 2014

Obama pledged to implement \$100 million in livestock disaster assistance for California producers contained in a recently passed agriculture bill.

He highlighted \$15 million in conservation funding for extreme drought

areas in California, Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

A further \$5 million will be provided for emergency watershed protection for California, among other measures that also include a mandate for federal facilities to use less water.

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