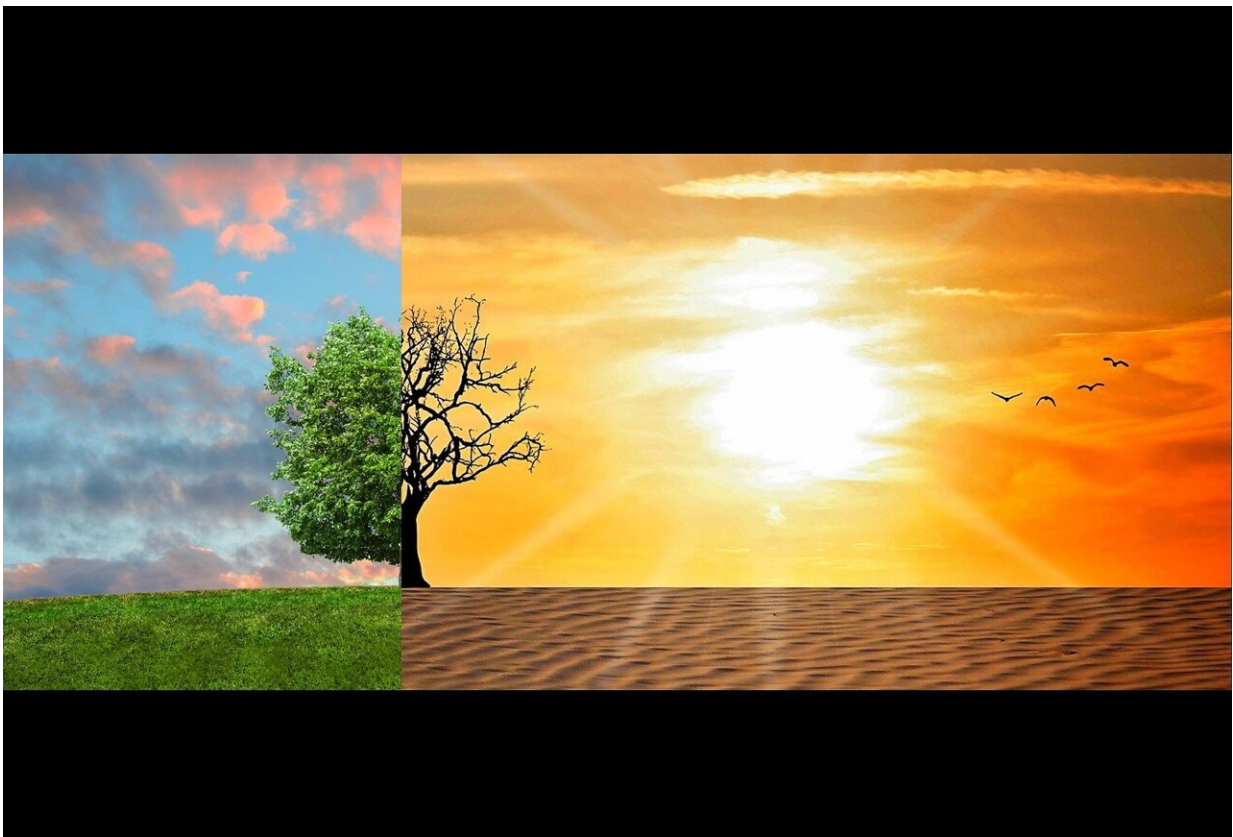


# How is climate change affecting the US? The government is preparing a nearly 1,700 page answer.

November 23 2022, by Dinah Voyles Pulver

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While the release of the fifth National Climate Assessment is still a year away, people across the country have two opportunities to contribute,

either by commenting on a recently released draft or by submitting artwork to illustrate the report.

The [assessment](#), updated every four years, analyzes trends in [global climate change](#) and looks at how the warming planet affects people, resources, environment, agricultural and biological diversity.

"Every part of the U.S. is feeling the effects of [climate change](#) in some way," said Allison Crimmins, assessment director.

Many people are experiencing climate change through extreme weather events, Crimmins said during a November webinar sponsored by the ICF Climate Center. "The especially concerning part is just how frequently we're experiencing these extreme weather events and how severe they are; and how they often compound or cascade impacts so that a lot of communities are barely recovered from the previous event before the next one is coming along."

The assessment, a congressionally mandated review by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, summarizes the science of climate change and its impacts on the nation. Congress mandated the program to coordinate federal research and investment, through collaboration among 13 federal agencies.

This almost 1,700 page draft document examines the "cascading impacts of more frequent and more severe extreme weather events," she said. It also looks at what's at risk—the things that Americans value most—including food and water supplies, jobs, livelihoods, culture and heritage.

The 1,526 page fourth assessment was published in 2018 and updated in 2021.

More than ever before, the new assessment highlights communities that are finding solutions, she said. It also looks at future temperature projections and how they could be influenced by greenhouse gas emissions.

The [final report](#) is expected to be released late in 2023. Here's what we know so far:

## **You can read, comment on climate assessment draft**

The research group really wants to hear from the public, "especially people who may be using this report," Crimmins said. "Is the science accurate? Are we including all the right information, and is that information accessible and understandable?"

The report is available at [review.globalchange.gov](https://review.globalchange.gov), which requires users to create an account to read and comment. The comment deadline is Jan. 27.

## **Submit art for US Climate Assessment**

This is the first time the assessment has ever released a public call for art. In a collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, the authors are looking for art in two categories, 13-17 and 18 and up.

"We are hoping to get a lot of really great submissions of art that speak to the themes," Crimmins said.

Artists are invited to creatively visualize climate change, its causes, impacts and shared vulnerabilities.

## **New to the National Climate Assessment**

- More information about the actions communities across the country are taking to adapt, with solutions to prepare and protect their communities.
- More emphasis on environmental justice and the use of indigenous knowledge.
- Publication of the chapter on the Caribbean in Spanish so residents of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands can read and comment on the draft in Spanish.
- A higher level of documentation and a plan to publish the data behind all of the charts and figures used in the report.

## **Climate change evidence is stacking up**

The climate assessment, which reviews [scientific research](#) over the past several years, examines what needs to be done to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, but doesn't advocate policy, Crimmins said.

They've seen an improvement in the understanding of the Earth, which helped reduce the uncertainty in some of the projections and the uncertainty about how sensitive the climate is to greenhouse gas concentrations, she said. "We have a better understanding of people and how they are experiencing climate change right outside their window."

"We've also seen some advances in our understanding of [extreme weather events](#) and the role that climate change plays in individual events," she said. "Attribution science in specific events has advanced a lot in just the last few years."

This assessment delves into the benefits of adaptation actions more than ever before, including a first look in the report's very first chapter.

It's apparent that climate change is exacerbating existing inequalities,

said Crimmins and Adam Parris, a chapter author and fellow at the Climate Center.

It's creating disproportionate impacts and situations where historic injustices are exacerbated by [climate](#) change, Parris said. The long-term evidence being collected in the assessments adds up to the need for "some pretty significant changes."

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Citation: How is climate change affecting the US? The government is preparing a nearly 1,700 page answer. (2022, November 23) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-11-climate-affecting-page.html>

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