



FACT SHEET: CLIMATE ACTION AT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is embracing a **once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernize our nation's transportation system, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, boost the system's resilience to climate impacts, and advance environmental justice.**

To decarbonize the U.S. transportation system across all modes of passenger and freight travel, USDOT is committed to working at home and abroad to: 1) **increase convenience** by supporting smart community design and land-use; 2) **improve efficiency** by expanding affordable, accessible, and less energy-intensive options like transit, rail, and high-efficiency vehicles; and 3) **transition to clean options** by deploying zero-emission vehicles and fuels.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE ACTIONS:

In the past year, President Biden signed into law two historic climate bills: **the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), and the **Inflation Reduction Act**. The projects and programs established by these new laws are projected to reduce GHG emissions economy-wide emissions by 40% by 2030, relative to 2005 emissions levels, bringing the United States close to its goal of a 50-52% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by the end of the decade. The laws make historic investments in infrastructure for transit, rail, active transportation (like walking and biking), and electric vehicles (EVs). The laws provide tax credits for new and improved clean vehicles and fuels, including sustainable aviation fuel; rebates for the purchase of clean and electric school buses and trucks; incentives for investments in EV and battery supply chains; and much more.

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 initiative, which establishes the goal that at least 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities, USDOT has committed to advance environmental justice and ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a decarbonized and resilient transportation system. USDOT has identified 39 programs that are covered by the Justice40 Initiative.

Through the new tools available in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and other actions, USDOT seeks to:

Increase Convenience by supporting community design and land-use planning that ensure that job centers, shopping, schools, entertainment, and essential services are strategically located near where people live to reduce commute times, improve walkability and bikeability, and boost quality of life.

- **Roadway Safety:** BIL will support strengthened protections for those who walk, bike, or use a wheelchair to get around, including a first-of-its-kind Safe Streets and Roads for All program, which will support local and tribal governments in their efforts to make streets safer, especially for those walking, biking, and rolling.

- **Active Transportation:** BIL strengthens the Transportation Alternatives program, which supports pedestrian and bike infrastructure, recreational trails, safe routes to school, and more.
- **Transit-Oriented Development:** BIL enables USDOT to support a new Pilot Program that is making significant investments in transit-oriented development. Additionally, USDOT now allows transit-oriented development projects to qualify for the maximum financing available under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program.
- **Fix-it-First:** Recognizing that investments in expanding roadway capacity can, in the long run, increase maintenance expenditures and induce additional travel without alleviating congestion, USDOT is working with U.S. States and localities to use BIL resources to prioritize repair, rehabilitation, and modernization of existing roads and bridges, rather than to expand capacity.

Improve Efficiency by expanding affordable, accessible, efficient options like public transit and rail, and improving the efficiency of all vehicles.

- **Rail:** USDOT is carrying out the largest investment in U.S. passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak. This investment will support the buildout of new rail corridors.
- **Transit:** USDOT is carrying out the largest federal investment in public transit in American history, including funding to keep transit in a state of good repair, expand transit, and improve accessibility.
- **Vehicle Efficiency:** USDOT's new, landmark fuel economy standards will make vehicles more efficient, save consumers money at the petrol pump, and reduce transportation emissions. The new Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards are the strongest cost savings and fuel efficiency standards to date and will increase fuel efficiency 8% annually for model years 2024-2025 and 10% annually for model year 2026.

Expand Clean Options by deploying zero-emission vehicles and fuels for cars, commercial trucks, transit, boats, airplanes, and more.

- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure:** BIL is supporting the development of a network of half a million EV chargers across the United States, while helping automakers establish a strong domestic supply chain. USDOT and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) have established a Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to facilitate this and other electrification efforts.
- **Maritime:** BIL is supporting the U.S. Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP), including projects to reduce or eliminate pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions at seaports.
- **Electrifying Transit:** BIL is supporting the U.S. Low/No Emission Vehicle program for transit buses, and BIL establishes a new Electric/Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot program.
- **Aviation Emissions:** At COP-26 in Glasgow in 2021, the United States launched the U.S. Aviation Climate Action Plan with the goal of net-zero carbon dioxide emissions from U.S. aviation by 2050, and the U.S. joined the International Aviation Climate Ambition Coalition. At the October 2022 41st Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization, without attributing specific obligations to individual States, ICAO Member States adopted a long-term aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions from international civil aviation by 2050, and ICAO strengthened its flagship Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA). To help put the United States on the path to achieving these goals, the United States adopted a Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Grand Challenge, with the aim of producing, by 2030, 3 billion gallons of SAFs that achieve at least a 50% reduction in life cycle GHG emissions compared to conventional fuel, and by 2050, enough of that SAF to power all of U.S. aviation. USDOT, with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of

Agriculture (USDA), in September 2022 published a Roadmap for achieving the Grand Challenge goals. A key catalyst will be the new competitive grant program for projects located in the U.S. that produce, transport, blend, or store that SAF or develop, demonstrate, or apply low-emission aviation technologies.

- **Innovative Technologies:** The White House launched a [Net-Zero Game Changers Initiative](#), which identified 37 net-zero research and development opportunities, of which 8 were specific to transportation. Net-zero aviation was identified as one of the initial priority opportunities for enhanced coordination between federal agencies, road mapping pathways from early-stage research to widespread deployment, and leveraging investments made under the BIL and IRA, and USDOT will be engaged on next steps for this gamechanger.

Other USDOT efforts to reduce emissions include:

- **Clean Materials:** USDOT's Buy Clean Initiative jumpstarts better data and reporting, better procurement and purchasing policies, and better education and research to ensure the use of sustainable materials across its programs. USDOT's new Low-Carbon Transportation Materials Grant program will reimburse or provide incentives to projects in the U.S. that use construction materials with substantially lower life-cycle GHG emissions.
- **Carbon Reduction:** BIL directed USDOT to establish a new Carbon Reduction Program, which provides funding to reduce transportation-related emissions. Also under this program, states will develop carbon reduction strategies to support efforts to reduce transportation emissions.
- **Climate Uses of the Right-of-ways (ROW):** USDOT issued guidance to help states use their existing transportation rights-of-ways to host transmission lines, build renewable energy projects, and support EV charging infrastructure.
- **Discretionary Grants:** USDOT includes climate mitigation and resilience as considerations in many discretionary grants to U.S. States and localities.
- **Taking a Whole-of-Government Approach:** USDOT has partnered with DOE, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency [to accelerate the United States' affordable and equitable clean transportation future](#). The agencies will work collectively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation sector and to ensure resilient and accessible mobility options for all Americans. In the next few months, the agencies will release a comprehensive blueprint for decarbonizing the transportation sector to help guide future policy decisions, as well as research, development, demonstration, and deployment in the public and private sectors.
- **Dedicated Climate Leadership:** For the first time, USDOT has a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Climate Policy, a position dedicated to working with USDOT modal administrations and other departments across the federal government to advance the Administration's climate priorities.

Enhance Resilience by ensuring our transportation infrastructure can withstand the impacts of climate change through initiatives such as:

- **Funding for Resilience Projects:** BIL provided the first legislative definition of resilience and includes the first USDOT-administered program dedicated to resilience – the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) program. PROTECT includes funding for evacuation routes, coastal resilience, making existing infrastructure more resilient, or efforts to move infrastructure to nearby locations not continuously impacted by extreme weather and natural disasters.

- **Discretionary Grants:** USDOT includes climate resilience as a consideration in many discretionary grants to increase funding for projects that use the best-available climate data and tools to assess climate-related vulnerabilities and risks and develop resilience solutions to address those risks.
- **Facilitating Resilient Investments:** USDOT developed a climate resilience assessment tool that uses critical system vulnerability data, historical exposure data, and projected exposure to heat and precipitation data from downscaled global climate models to calculate site-specific climate-risk scores for Departmental facilities and operational assets. In addition, USDOT developed a vulnerability assessment framework and partnered with more than 50 pilot project teams across the U.S. to conduct climate change vulnerability assessments and analyze options for improving resilience.
- **Natural Infrastructure:** The BIL prioritizes natural infrastructure as a resilience solution, provides the first ever definition of natural infrastructure, and expands opportunities to utilize funding for natural infrastructure within the new PROTECT program. This includes projects like tidal wetlands that not only protect our infrastructure from flooding, but often also help reduce carbon emissions in the first place.
- **Advancing Resilience Research:** The BIL authorizes the creation of new USDOT Resilience and Adaptation Centers of Excellence. These Centers will advance research to help make surface transportation infrastructure more resilient to natural disasters and extreme weather.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

USDOT understands that in order to meet the climate challenge, we cannot go it alone, and we are committed to working with our international partners to share best practices, provide technical assistance, and collaborate with other nations, multilateral organizations, industry, and non-governmental organizations to collectively lead a global transformation. The USDOT is eager to work together with our global partners through programs such as:

- **President Biden’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE):** As part of PREPARE, USDOT is committed to improving existing and future infrastructure in developing countries to help vulnerable communities better adapt to climate impacts. USDOT works through global initiatives such as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to build capacity by providing tools and resources that will improve the resiliency of existing and future infrastructure in developing countries, including accelerating investment in nature-based infrastructure.
- **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII):** As part of the United States’ implementation of PGII, USDOT developed initiatives to promote high-quality, sustainable, and resilient transportation infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries. USDOT partners with national, subnational, and multilateral partners to emphasize best practices in planning, finance, project delivery, safety, sustainability, and maintenance.
- **MOMENTUM:** USDOT’s global engagement program harnesses the Department’s broad array of transportation expertise to share it with a global audience of transportation officials from national and sub-national government agencies and regional organizations. *Momentum* comprises an ever-growing set of digital resources, including toolkits, publications, research, and manuals, as well as virtual and in-person technical assistance, capacity-building activities, and exchanges. *Momentum’s* climate-related resources include:
 - *Addressing Transportation’s Impact: A Starter Guide to Reducing Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

- *Building Resilient Infrastructure: How to Create Strong and Adaptable Transportation Systems*
- **Drive To Zero MOU:** At COP27, the U.S. government became a signatory to the Drive to Zero Global Memorandum of Understanding on Zero-Emissions Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles, a non-binding agreement to work to identify pathways and support implementation actions to enable 30% zero-emission sales of new medium- and heavy-duty vehicles by 2030, and 100% zero-emission sales by 2040. Several USDOT programs and initiatives are supporting efforts to lead an efficient, effective and equitable transition to zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in the U.S.
- **ACT-CORSIA:** USDOT provides technical assistance to the CORSIA Assistance, Capacity-Building, and Training program (ACT-CORSIA).
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF):** USDOT supports research and development of sustainable aviation fuels globally, including through projects conducted by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Aviation Sustainability Center (ASCENT), which is implementing a SAF Global Supply Chain Development program. USDOT partners with research institutions around the world to evaluate local needs and opportunities for successful development of a SAF supply chain.
- **Green Shipping Challenge Announcements at COP27:** Building on the Clydebank Declaration, and working with other U.S. agencies, USDOT joined the announcement of two new bilateral workstreams focused on facilitating green shipping corridors at COP27 to help lead the transition to zero-emission shipping. These announcements build on U.S. leadership in zero-emission shipping, including U.S. efforts at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to advance a goal of phasing out GHG emissions from the international shipping sector no later than 2050.
 - **Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Green Shipping Corridor Network Initiative:** The U.S. and Canada will work with state, provincial, local, private-sector, non-governmental leaders, and Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the U.S. to host consultations with ports and other stakeholders to facilitate the establishment of green shipping corridors.
 - **UK-U.S. Green Shipping Corridor Task Force.** The U.S. and the United Kingdom announced their intention to support the establishment of green shipping corridors between the U.S. and the UK by convening subnational and private-sector stakeholders to collaborate on driving innovation, research and development, and demonstration projects.
- **Quad Shipping Task Force.** USDOT leads efforts through the QUAD (United States, Australia, Japan and India) to establish green shipping networks to catalyze the transition to sustainable port infrastructure and the use and bunkering of low and zero-emissions fuels and technologies at the scope and scale required to meet demand.