

# **THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS**



## **2012 Petition to President Obama to Host a National Summit on Climate Disruption**

We the undersigned, current and former elected officials and representatives from the scientific, business, finance, labor, youth, national security, conservation, racial justice, civil rights, arts, faith and other communities of the United States, declare that our nation faces an unprecedented climate emergency. All Americans must rapidly prepare for and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate just as we reduce our contribution to its causes. We therefore petition President Obama to publicly acknowledge the climate emergency and commit to hosting a summit within his first 100 days in office to formulate remedies.

For many years the National Academy of Sciences has warned that the continued human-caused emission of greenhouse gases would produce more frequent and intense droughts, heat waves, precipitation, floods and other extreme weather events, rising sea levels and ocean acidification. These events would, in turn, generate far-reaching and long-term adverse impacts on our health, economy, communities, and quality-of-life. Although no single event can be attributed to climate change, this year's weather extremes and the rise in extreme weather our nation has experienced over the last decade are fully consistent with NAS projections and with the science of human-induced climate change. Rising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are among the factors affecting our weather patterns.

This summer's heat waves, for example, broke thousands of temperature records. July was the hottest month and May-July the second warmest on record for the lower 48. Colorado experienced one of its largest wildfires in history, and other states, such as Texas and Oklahoma, have witnessed similar massive burns. Essential infrastructure has been damaged, businesses have been impacted, and people have suffered due to the loss of homes and jobs. The Gulf coast and other Southeast and East coast states now also face the threat of increasing severe hurricanes.

In addition, the momentous drought has caused extensive damage to our economy and the wellbeing of American farmers, companies, workers, their families and communities. Forecasts are that food availability and prices will be negatively impacted for at least 18 months. As a result, by the first day of August the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued drought disaster declarations for 1,600 counties in 32 states, representing more than half of all U.S. counties.

Although essential, these and the many other disaster declarations issued this year by Governors and the President address the symptoms of the problem. The real emergency remains largely unacknowledged and unabated. Average global surface temperatures have so far increased a little more than 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit since the 1880s. Climate scientists estimate that without rapid and significant emissions reductions, global temperatures are very likely to rise by as much as 3.6 degrees above pre-industrial levels or even much higher well before 2100. As the heat climbs close to or beyond that level, so do the risks of catastrophic consequences. The American people need the leadership of our nation's President to prepare for these impacts and to address their root causes.

Our great nation has the spirit, know-how, and tools required to prepare for and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate. We also have the capacity to significantly reduce our contribution to the problem. Ample research and experience shows that smart preparedness and emissions reductions will in many cases save money, create jobs, improve public health, and produce numerous other benefits. But the current level of deployment of the practices, technologies, and policies needed to accomplish these goals is woeful compared to the scale of the challenge.

As the holder of the highest office in the land, President Obama has a responsibility to candidly tell the American public that human-induced climate change is happening and that it is a very serious problem that must be rapidly and meaningfully addressed. He also has a responsibility to lead our nation's efforts to respond to the crisis.

We call on President Obama to act in the best interests of this and all future generations of Americans now by publicly acknowledging the climate emergency and to hosting a summit within his first 100 days in office to craft a national action plan to rapidly scale up and deploy needed solutions.

Signed,

A diverse group of more than 1,050 people signed onto this letter. See a list of signatories here:

<http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/storage/npcs/NatlClimateSummitPetition2012Signatories.pdf>