

SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America



Climate Change in the U.S. Territories

Located in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean, the U.S. territories are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change—especially ocean acidification, sea level rise, coastal erosion, and increasing storm impacts—that threaten lives, critical infrastructure, and local economies. In 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, contributing to the deaths of thousands of people and decimating their electric grids and infrastructure. U.S. territories also have the opportunity to harness the sun, wind, and waves to develop clean energy solutions and their economic and climate benefits.



ENHANCE CLEAN ENERGY AND RESILIENCE IN INSULAR AREAS

U.S. territories are on the front lines of the impacts of climate change and require unique scientific and technical assistance and robust financial support to understand climate-related threats, develop renewable energy systems, and build resilience. Congress must embed insular areas throughout an equitable and just national climate policy.

CONGRESS SHOULD:

Ensure that Insular Areas are eligible for technical assistance and funds under the new National Climate Adaptation Program.

Establish a process for offshore wind leasing in the U.S. territories.

Deploy resilient renewable energy and microgrid systems in U.S. territories by providing technical assistance and funding through USDA.

Include Insular Areas in the advancement of climate science, including development of climate risk information, tools, and monitoring for real-time weather and conditions.

Increase funding for DOI's Office of Insular Affairs to work with territories on implementing climate solutions.

Strengthen the health care sector in Insular Areas by ensuring their inclusion in programs to provide grants and planning assistance for energy efficiency, resilience, and preparedness.