



STATE FACT SHEET

# A 100 Percent Clean Future

How state policy successes can inform federal action on climate change












In considering a successful strategy for action on climate change at the federal level, the experiences at the state level can help provide lessons for how to create strong coalitions around climate action and move toward a 100 Percent Clean Future. While the Trump administration has dismantled nearly all federal climate policy, state leadership has risen to the challenge with innovative and ambitious new policies. States representing 55 percent of the U.S. population and 40 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions committed to upholding the Paris agreement’s climate goals, and nine states along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have gone much further to enact laws that set them on a path to a 100 Percent Clean Future.

The combination of the following three pillars building on state success should serve as a guide for federal action.

- **A 100 percent clean target.** Nine states across the country, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have enacted policies to move toward a 100 Percent Clean Future by 2050 or earlier, including through clean electricity standards and aggressive economywide emission reduction targets.
- **A worker-focused approach.** Many states have included initial plans for a worker-centered transition that would ensure the jobs necessary to build a clean future are good-paying, quality jobs.
- **An environmental justice commitment.** Some states have also taken preliminary steps to develop policies that would advance environmental justice, including by identifying and cutting disproportionately high levels of toxic pollution in economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color.



For more detail, see also, [“A 100 Percent Clean Future”](#)

-  **California:** Passed legislation for 100 percent zero carbon electricity by 2045 and executive order for economywide carbon neutrality by 2045.<sup>1</sup>
-  **Colorado:** Passed legislation requiring 90 percent emission reductions below 2005 levels economywide by 2050, setting a goal to eliminate emissions by 2050, and requiring large investor-owned utilities to reduce emissions by 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Gov. Jared Polis (D) has put forth a plan to move to 100 percent clean electricity by 2040.<sup>2</sup>
-  **Hawaii:** Passed legislation for 100 percent renewable electricity by 2045 and economywide goal of being carbon-neutral by 2045.<sup>3 4</sup>
-  **Maine:** Passed legislation for 100 percent renewable electricity by 2045 and economywide reductions of 80 percent by 2050.<sup>5</sup>
-  **Nevada:** Passed legislation setting a goal of 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2045.<sup>6</sup>
-  **New Mexico:** Passed legislation requiring 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2045.<sup>7</sup>
-  **New Jersey:** Passed legislation to reduce emissions 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050 and rejoined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in June 2019.<sup>8</sup>
-  **New York:** Passed legislation requiring 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 and goal of net-zero emissions economywide by 2050.<sup>9</sup>
-  **Washington:** Passed legislation requiring 100 percent clean electricity by 2045.<sup>10</sup>
-  **District of Columbia:** Passed legislation for 100 percent renewable electricity by 2032.<sup>11</sup>
-  **Puerto Rico:** Passed legislation for 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.<sup>12</sup>

Below are examples of states that have enacted preliminary policies to advance environmental justice and create good, high-paying jobs. The focus here is on the enacted policies; this is not an endorsement of or commentary on the merits of any particular state's community or public engagement process, unique on-the-ground dynamics, or coalition activity.

**California:** Alongside expansion of California's cap-and-trade program in 2017, then-Gov. Jerry Brown (D) signed AB-617, which requires the California Air Resources Board to directly address air quality in communities most exposed to toxic and criteria air pollutants by consulting with environmental justice organizations, affected industries, and other stakeholder groups to prepare a statewide strategy for air quality.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, then-Gov. Brown signed the Buy Clean California Act to address carbon emissions from imported manufacturing materials, which received strong support from labor unions, business and industry leaders, and environmental organizations.<sup>14</sup> The Newsom administration has strengthened labor protections in the state's climate program, committing \$35 million per year of California's cap-and-trade revenues in the 2019-2020 budget to two programs focused on ensuring that jobs created by clean energy investment programs are high-quality jobs. The budget also supports a high road construction career ladders program, providing pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships into multicraft construction careers.

**New York:** In June 2019, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) signed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Among its many provisions, it states that a minimum of 35 percent of all state climate and clean energy spending, including funds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the state’s Clean Energy Fund, and any future initiatives established by this program go to disadvantaged communities. The law also creates a climate justice working group with representatives from environmental justice groups, vulnerable industries, and disadvantaged communities, to advise on how to ensure the transition reduces pollution that disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color.<sup>15</sup> The law also creates a just-transition working group to advise on workforce training and job impacts. In addition, the New York State Public Service Commission’s offshore wind order includes commitments to project labor agreements and prevailing wages as contract requirements for awarded projects.<sup>16</sup> As a result of these provisions, labor has supported the offshore wind request for proposals—the projects selected for contract negotiation will feature jobs with salaries of approximately \$100,000.<sup>17</sup>

**Washington:** In May 2019, Washington enacted a comprehensive energy and climate legislative package, which included completion of a Cumulative Impact Analysis to identify the communities most vulnerable to climate and environmental health impacts. There are provisions for utilities to fund low-income energy assistance programs, such as direct bill reductions, weatherization, and energy efficiency improvements.<sup>18</sup> The bill also includes a tiered system of 50 to 100 percent sales and use tax exemptions for projects that meet certain labor requirements, including contracts with women, minority, or veteran-owned businesses, compensation of workers at prevailing wages determined by collective bargaining, and projects developed under a community workforce or project labor agreement.<sup>19</sup>

**Colorado:** On May 30, 2019, Gov. Polis signed 11 energy- and climate-related bills. Among these are provisions to require tracking of conventional pollutants from regulated sources and implementation of strategies to reduce pollution in disproportionately impacted communities that have borne the costs of pollution.<sup>20</sup> The state enacted legislation to create a state Office of Just Transition, with support from the Colorado AFL-CIO,<sup>21</sup> to align and deliver targeted programming and funding to communities and workers impacted by a transition away from coal-fired electricity. The state also enacted plans for community assistance to any local government or school district that will lose revenue due to plant retirements.

The experiences of these states provide valuable insights into the coalition building, processes, and examples of policy elements that will be required to successfully take federal action to transition to a 100 Percent Clean Future. Collaboration with environmental justice and labor experts is now needed to design climate policies at the federal level that identify and cut disproportionately high levels of toxic pollution concentrated in low-income communities and communities of color and ensure that the jobs of a 100 Percent Clean Future are good-paying, high-quality jobs.

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## Endnotes

- 1 The 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2018, SB 100, State of California, 2017-2018 Legislative Session, (September 10, 2018), available at [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=2017201805B100](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2017201805B100).
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- 6 SB 358, Nevada State Legislature, 80th session, (April 22, 2019), available at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/6651/Overview>.
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- 10 SB 5116, State of Washington, 66th Legislature, (May, 7, 2019), available at [https://app.leg.wa.gov/bills/summary?BillNumber=5116&Initiative=false&Year=2019&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://app.leg.wa.gov/bills/summary?BillNumber=5116&Initiative=false&Year=2019&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).
- 11 Washington D.C. Department of Energy and Environment, "Mayor Bowser signs Historic Clean Energy Bill Calling for 100% Renewable Electricity by 2032," January 18, 2019, available at <https://doee.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-signs-historic-clean-energy-bill-calling-100-renewable-electricity-2032>.
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