

**AMERICA'S
PLEDGE**

**WE ARE
STILL IN**

We Are Still In to Deliver on
America's Pledge: A Retrospective



Overview

Since the launch of *We Are Still In* and America's Pledge in June 2017, climate action by US states, cities, businesses, universities, healthcare organizations, cultural institutions, and more has increased dramatically.

In 2017, only 1 state and 33 cities had committed to get 100% of their energy from clean sources; now, 13 states, Puerto Rico, and 165 cities have 100% clean energy commitments. A full **one-third** of all Americans live in a jurisdiction that will be powered by 100% clean energy. Renewable energy is the fastest-growing source of energy, while coal retirements have accelerated over the last three years. The US electric vehicle market has more than doubled over the past three years. And up from zero, **16 states** have passed or committed to pass regulations and legislation that would phase down the use of HFCs, a potent greenhouse gas. These are just a few examples.

Add all this action up, and America's Pledge analysis shows that ambitious states, cities, businesses, and others can deliver up to a 37% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030.

Yet, if we are going to keep the world on a 1.5°C trajectory, and avoid the worst impacts of climate change—impacts which disproportionately harm people of color and other marginalized populations in the United States—the US federal government must re-engage and lead.



States, Cities, Businesses, and Others Are **Delivering Bolder, Faster Climate Action Than Ever Before**

We Are Still In and America's Pledge formed in June 2017 to make a promise to the global community that Americans were fully committed to the global pact to reduce emissions and stem the causes of climate change. Since that declaration, amazing progress has been made and continues to accelerate. We feature highlights from the last three years here.

25 Governors. Tribal associations representing hundreds of tribes. 500+ cities and counties. 350+ colleges and universities. 80+ cultural institutions. 850+ faith groups. 30+ health care organizations, representing 900+ hospitals. 2,275 businesses and investors. This is the bench of US climate actors committed to aligning their actions with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

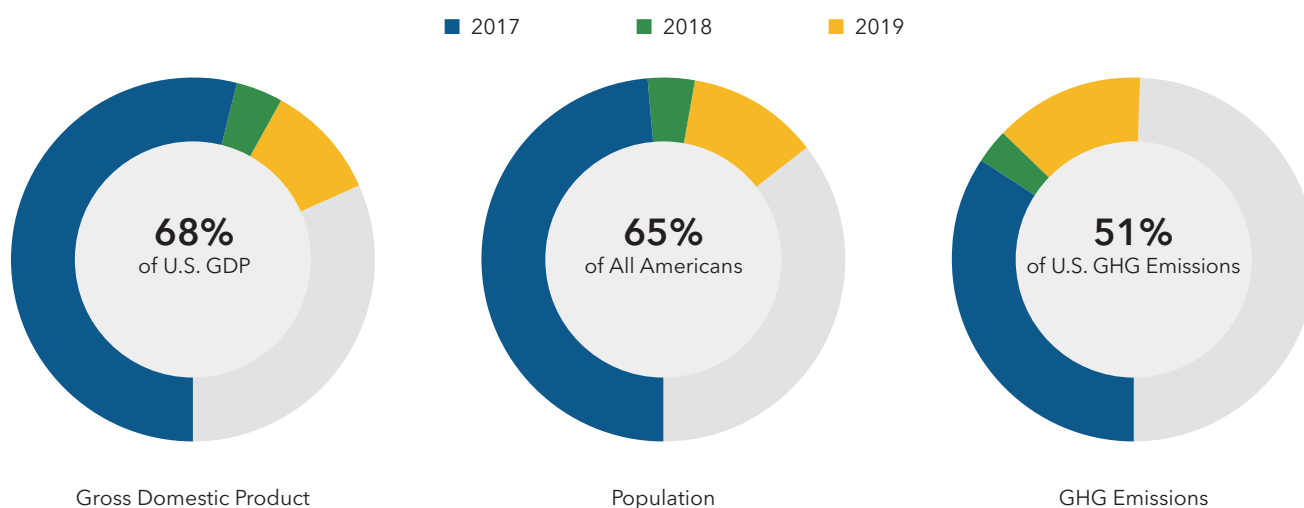


- US coalitions committed to climate action now represent nearly 70% of US GDP, nearly two-thirds of the US population, and over half of US greenhouse gas emissions. This constitutes an economy larger than any other country except the United States itself.
- The nearly 4,000 members of the We Are Still In coalition are from all 50 states—spanning large and small businesses, mayors and governors, university presidents, faith leaders, tribal leaders, and cultural institutions. They are innovating individually and as part of a variety of coalitions and movements across the country, bringing us steadily closer to our linked goals of climate solutions, widespread and shared economic vitality, and environmental justice.
- America’s Pledge has tracked and reported on this progress, and this year’s America’s Pledge report, *Delivering on*

America’s Pledge: Achieving Climate Progress in 2020, found that even the devastating impacts of COVID-19 have not slowed the overall pace of state, city, and business climate progress.

- America’s Pledge found that ambitious and rapidly *expanded* bottom-up action could reduce US greenhouse gas emissions up to 37% below 2005 by 2030. Full achievement of already *on-the-books* policies would reduce emissions 25% below 2005 by 2030.
- In a resolution outlining its 2020 policy platform, the National Congress of American Indians identified climate change as one of the greatest threats to Native peoples and called on the United States to invest in tribal climate resilience and mitigation programs.

Exhibit 1 Share of U.S. Total from Coalitions Committed to the Paris Agreement



A widespread movement is galvanizing the public around climate action.

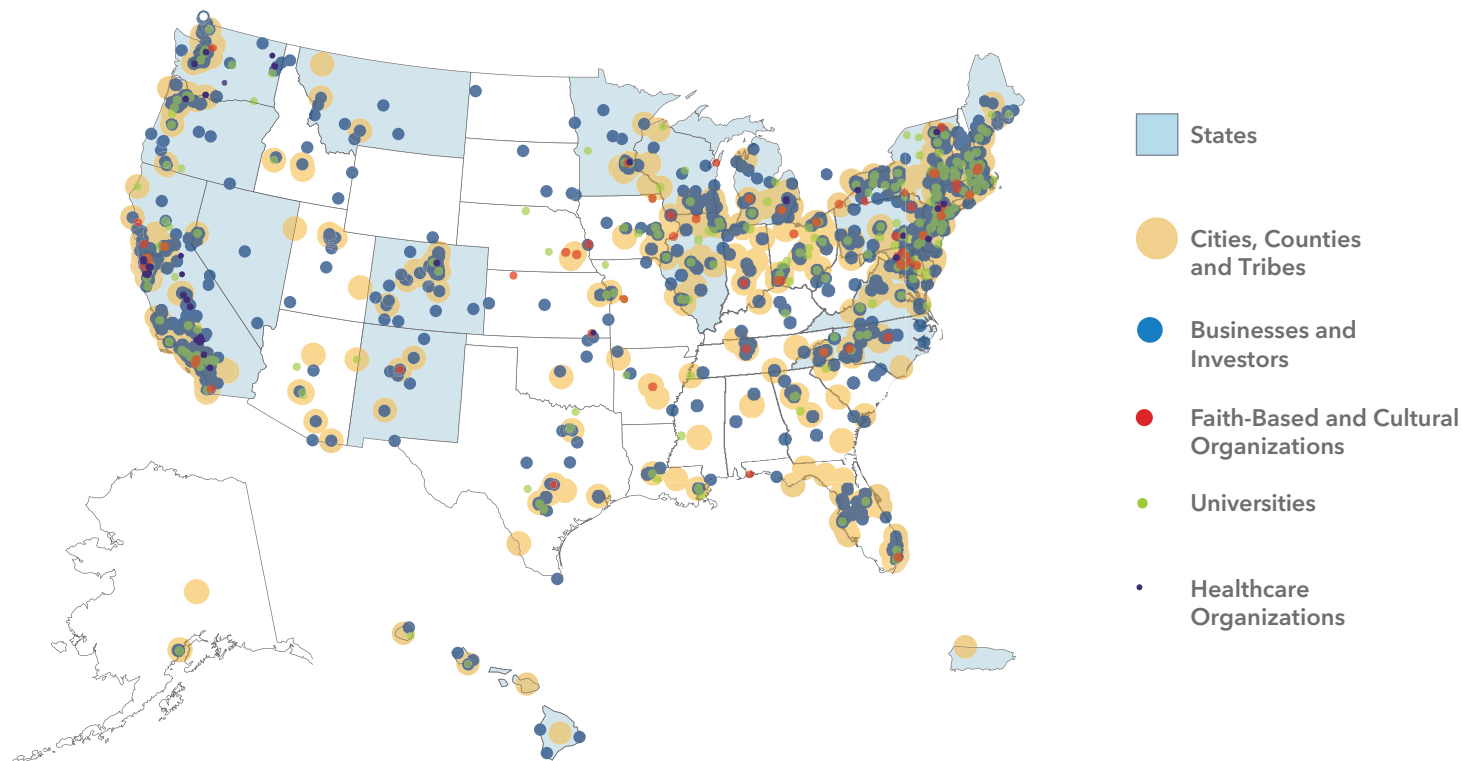
A youth-led climate movement has inspired a generation to demand more action from those in power, and consumers, students, and constituents have reaffirmed their support for ambitious policies and programs.

- The climate strikes of September 2019 brought together over 10 million citizens of 150 countries in 4,500 locations to demand action on the climate crisis.
- Youth-led organizations, including Zero Hour, the US Youth Climate Strike, Sunrise Movement, and Fridays for the Future, have led a massive movement for transformational change. Together, these

groups and others have directly informed and shaped Democratic politics and climate policy platforms in the United States.

- The Green New Deal, a once-novel policy approach linking economic and environmental restoration, has grown to influence global movements. For example, the elected ruling party of South Korea recently introduced Asia’s first “South Korea Green New Deal,” seeking to create new jobs while retooling its economy to focus on renewable energy. Whether this leads to greater emissions reductions in one of the world’s most fossil fuel-reliant economies remains to be seen.

Exhibit 2 U.S. Coalition of Climate Actors*



*Map represents climate actors as of 2019 documented in *Accelerating America’s Pledge*.

Climate has become a core issue for American voters.

- Concerns over climate change and support for renewable energy are at an **all-time high**: 60% of Americans view climate change as a major threat, 65% of Americans believe the federal government is doing too little to fight climate change, and 79% of Americans think the country should prioritize its energy supply toward developing renewable energy.

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- **Sixty-four percent of Americans say** the issue of global warming is either “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” important to them personally.
- The 2018 midterm elections ushered in new leadership devoted to climate action, including 11 governors who ran with climate and clean energy agendas and a new crop of committed members of Congress.
- Climate change is a top issue in the US presidential election. The Democratic primary included more focus on climate than ever before, and candidate climate plans have never been more ambitious.

The connection between climate, equity, and health has been elevated in the national conversation.

The efforts of environmental justice organizations, the Black Lives Matter movement, and others have advanced the nation’s urgent conversation around racial, social, and economic disparities in climate policy. Health care systems are sounding the alarm on the connection between climate and health. And COVID-19 has elevated the importance of health and equity in climate action.

- More than 100 cities have implemented measures to give pedestrians, cyclists, diners, and recreationists increased opportunity for social distancing through safe-streets initiatives.
- Health Care Without Harm has organized over 30 US health systems and hospitals that have committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions in their operations.
- Kaiser Permanente committed to carbon neutrality by 2020; the University of California Health System has committed to 100% clean electricity by 2025; Seattle Children’s Hospital will be carbon-neutral by 2025; the Cleveland Clinic has committed to carbon neutrality by 2027.
- In just the past two years, the States of Washington, New Mexico, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and North Carolina have released energy plans with significant emphasis on equity and workforce development.

- More than 200 US cities and counties have declared a climate emergency, sometimes passing explicit climate and health emergency declarations.
- Despite COVID-19 and the economic recession, states, cities, and businesses are doing more on climate now than ever before.

Climate Action Has Accelerated Across Sectors



Electricity

Policies requiring 100% clean energy are now the norm. States, cities, utilities, and businesses across the country have committed to 100% clean electricity and are following through to make it happen.

- Renewable energy is now the fastest growing source of electricity. Wind and solar continue to outpace gas, adding **more than 35 GW** of capacity since June 2017, approximately equivalent to the total energy generation capacity of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota combined.
- Despite the Trump administration's efforts to prop up the coal industry, America has retired 37 GW of coal since 2017, more than ever before in a similar time period. Coal CO₂ emissions in June of 2020 were **over 50% less** than they were in June of 2017.
- Three years ago, Hawaii was the only US state committed to 100% renewable electricity. Today, another 12 states and Puerto Rico have committed to 100% clean electricity: California, Colorado,

Connecticut, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Even more have set zero-carbon electricity goals.

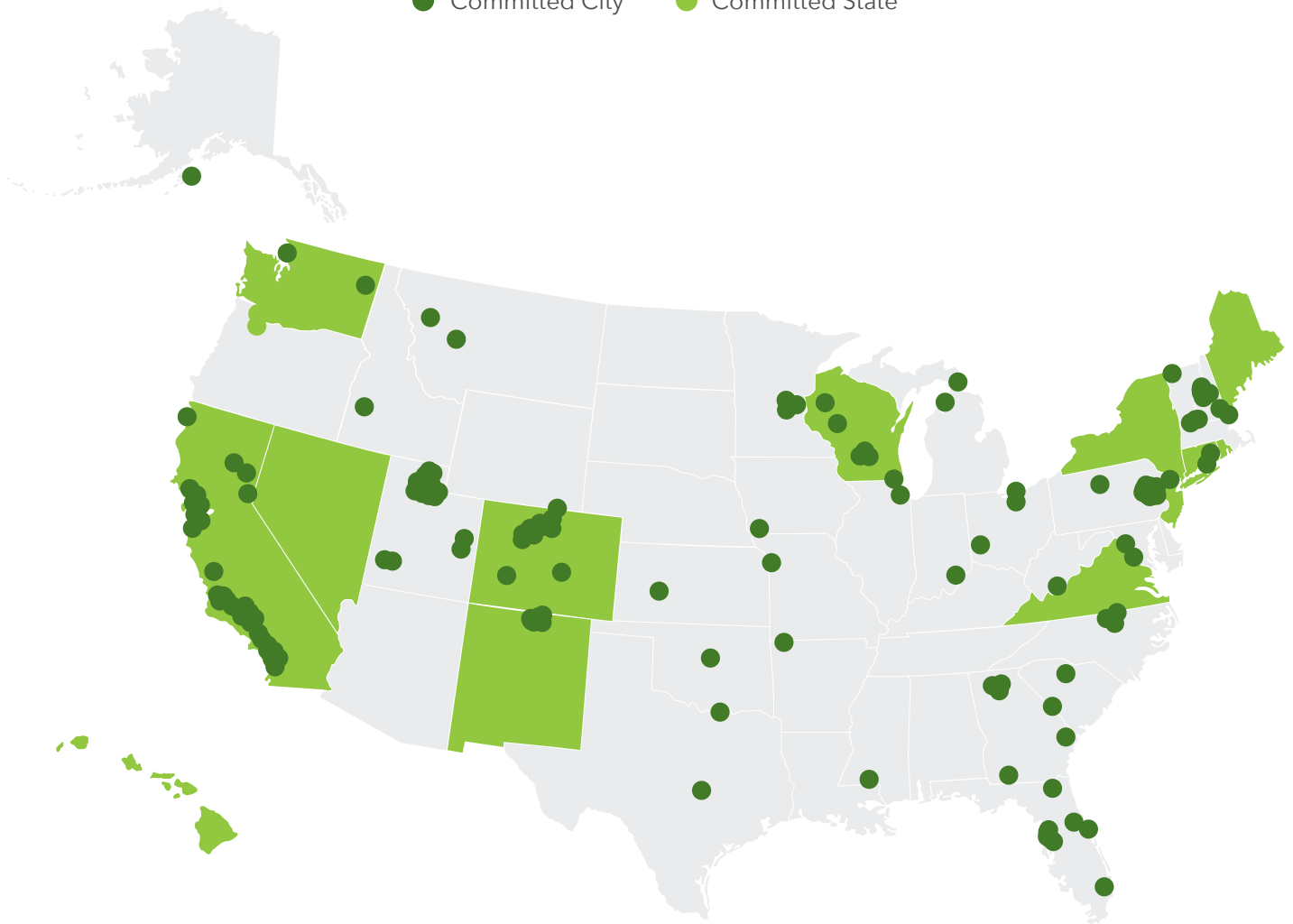
- Three years ago, **33 cities** had committed to get 100% of their energy from renewable sources; now, 165 cities have 100% renewable energy commitments. With state and city commitments, a full one-third of all Americans live in a jurisdiction that will be powered by 100% clean energy. Twenty-nine cities have already achieved the goal and are powered by 100% clean electricity.
- Fifty-six utilities, representing **68% of all customer accounts** in the United States, have established carbon reduction goals. Twenty-seven of these utilities have goals to be carbon-free or net-zero emissions by 2050.
- By 2017, there were 85 corporate utility-scale clean energy purchases representing more than 7,600 MW. Today, there are **303 deals accounting for more than 28,800 MW.**
- More than 40 colleges and universities now obtain 100% or more of their electricity from renewable sources. In 2020, the University of Arizona finalized the state's largest renewable energy project between a university and a utility company. The partnership with Tucson Electric Power draws from a 100 MW solar farm, a 30 MW storage system, and a 247 MW wind farm to help the university meet 100% of its purchased electricity needs.



Exhibit 3 **States and Cities with Commitment to 100% Clean Energy by 2050***

Includes commitments made as of April 2020

● Committed City ● Committed State



Source: Sierra Club-Ready For 100, US Climate Alliance

*Map illustrates states with 100% clean or renewable energy commitments and cities with 100% renewable electricity commitments.

Transportation

The electric vehicle (EV) market is growing rapidly. The US EV market has more than doubled since 2017, and this market is increasingly supported by state-level policies and targets.

- Since June 2017, over 900,000 EVs have been **sold** in the United States, bringing the total on the road to over 1.5 million.
- The number of electric and plug-in hybrid passenger vehicle models has increased from 50 to over 70 since launching We Are Still In; medium-duty and heavy-duty plug in models increased from 95 in 2017 to 169 today.

2x

increase in EVs
on the road



- Since 2017, a now **12-state task-force** has committed to 3.3 million light-duty zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) on the roadways by 2024. The participating states include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. Another three states—Nevada, Minnesota, and New Mexico—have also committed to adopting the ZEV regulations.
- In July of 2020, 15 states and the District of Columbia came together to sign a memorandum of understanding committing to the development of a medium- and heavy-duty electric vehicle action plan, with the goal of achieving 30% zero-emissions medium- and heavy-duty vehicle sales by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
- Through the Climate Mayors **EV Purchasing Collaborative**, more than 210 cities, counties, ports, universities, and transit agencies have committed to purchasing over 3,700 EVs and electric buses by the end of 2021.
- Eighty-two companies have signed on to the Climate Group's **EV100 campaign** to commit to purchasing more than 2 million electric vehicles and 2,000 charging sites by 2030.
- Over one-third of US public transit fleets have committed to electrifying their buses, including the State of New Jersey and the Cities of Seattle and Washington, D.C.

Cities and states are making progress toward reducing vehicle use and prioritizing alternative transportation modes.

- By June 2017, 53 cities had committed to reducing car dependency by implementing urban mobility and street design measures to improve walking, biking, and transit ridership. Today, that number has risen to **more than 80 cities and transit agencies**.
- Kansas City, Kansas, and Olympia, Washington, are now offering free transit to their citizens and, in doing so, have launched a national discussion about the public good of eliminating fares for public transportation.
- The State of Oregon, the City of Portland, and the City of Minneapolis have reformed decades-old car-centric and exclusionary land-use policies to enable greater housing and diversity of uses where they are most needed to enable 15-minute, walkable communities.
- New York City and Portland, Oregon, are exploring equitable pricing measures for reducing vehicle use and improving air quality.



Buildings

Building electrification and energy efficiency have become pillars of climate action.

Climate strategies now prominently feature building electrification—replacing gas heating and appliances with clean and electric technologies—while energy efficiency commitments continue to grow.

6 million

people live in cities with all-electric new construction

- Health impacts of indoor gas use are better understood, including the fact that buildings cause more **air quality-related premature deaths** in the United States than electricity or transportation.
- In June 2019, Berkeley, California, became the first city to adopt a gas moratorium on new construction and to pave the way for electric buildings. Since then 36 more cities, with a collective population of over 6 million, have passed or are pursuing moratoria, electrification requirements, and zero energy legislation.
- San Jose, California; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and other cities are now exploring equitable electrification of existing buildings.

- Many states are taking action. For example, New York State is developing a statewide roadmap for building electrification, with an investment of \$6.8 billion for building electrification through 2025.
- Eleven US Climate Alliance states have adopted energy and/or water appliance efficiency standards on top of existing federal efficiency standards.
- New York City, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C., have all passed building energy performance standards. Many other cities are now exploring building energy performance standards, and others are pursuing rental efficiency standards.



Industry: HFCs and Methane

Since 2017, states, cities, and businesses have taken aim at hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)—high global warming potential chemicals used as refrigerants—and methane from oil and gas operations.

- The day before the launch of We are Still In, 13 GOP senators sent a letter to President Trump supporting the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which seeks to phase down HFCs by cutting emissions by 10 percent in 2019 and 40 percent in 2024.
- Despite the Trump administration's efforts to roll back standards, 16 states have passed or committed to pass regulations and legislation that would phase down the use of certain HFCs consistent with EPA's SNAP Program.
- California and Colorado are strengthening their commitment to common-sense methane capture standards for oil and gas, while Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Virginia are forging ahead with regulations of their own.
- Twenty-seven gas companies **have committed** to reduce methane emissions across the gas value chain to 1% (or less) by 2025, up from 16 companies in 2017.



Net Zero Is Now: Universities, Museums, and Cultural Institutions are Taking the Lead

- There are 139 We Are Still In signatories with net-zero commitments (by 2050 or sooner), including 78 universities, 48 investor companies, 4 subnational governments, 4 health care institutions, and 5 faith organizations.
- Presidents and Chancellors from over 800 higher education institutions have signed a commitment to become carbon neutral and 430 colleges and universities are actively pursuing this goal as part of Second Nature's Climate Leadership Network. They represent 4.7 million students, 1 million faculty and staff, \$212 billion in annual budgets, and \$178 billion in endowment investments. Nine of those institutions have achieved carbon neutrality.
- The University of California system fully divested from fossil fuels, one of over 100 institutions to have done so representing approximately 15% of the \$14.7 trillion of assets under management that have been divested.



- The United States' 35,000 museums, with over one billion in-person visitors and online program participants, and contributing \$50 billion to the nation's GDP, have signed on to We Are Still In. Since then, cultural institutions reported 259 existing climate commitments to climate action, and they added another 183 as they work to reduce emissions from transportation and building use and revise endowments and sponsorships to reflect fossil fuel-free operations.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium, the leading ocean and climate change research organization in the United States, is committed to net-zero carbon by 2025.
- The Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has fully divested from fossil fuels, and its on-site education programs have convinced 5,000 Pittsburgh-area homes to date to switch to green power sourced through Green Mountain Energy.
- Economic support for state and local governments through a federal stimulus program will likely be key to continued momentum.
- The White House, all federal agencies, states, cities, institutions, businesses, and other non-federal stakeholders must work together to raise ambition and follow through on that ambition.
- As both the auto industry and refrigerant manufacturers have made clear, it is economically and environmentally destructive to have the US market broken up into states that are setting forward-looking clean energy standards while other states are being held back by a backward-looking administration in Washington. National standards that move us forward maximize climate and financial benefits from clean energy innovation.

Federal Action

We are ready for federal leadership and action on climate change. To build on this significant progress, full commitment from the federal government is needed.

- A comprehensive, coordinated climate strategy that puts the United States on a path toward net-zero emissions by mid-century requires all-in action from states, cities, businesses, and the federal government, both in the executive branch and Congress.

We've already demonstrated that we're in, now we're sending a clear message that America is ready to unite in its efforts to tackle climate change.

Thank You for Being In

Since 2017, the collective actions and leadership of thousands of US states, tribes, cities, businesses, investors, universities, healthcare organizations, cultural institutions, and more have driven significant and accelerating progress to address climate change during a period when the US federal government stepped aside from its roles and responsibilities on addressing the climate crisis. America's Pledge and We Are Still In would like to thank and commend these many public and private entities for stepping up and taking unprecedented action when the country most needed their initiative, innovation, and participation. Their achievements have been bolder, faster, and more consequential than ever before. These leaders are moving America to a climate-friendlier future and have demonstrated that they will be a core part of solving the climate crisis.

About America's Pledge

In July 2017, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Action and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg and California Governor Edmund G. Brown launched America's Pledge, an initiative to aggregate and quantify the actions by US states, cities, businesses, and other non-federal actors to drive down their greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Since its launch, America's Pledge has published annual assessments of non-federal action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions based on a unique methodological approach developed by climate researchers and policy experts. To learn more about America's Pledge and download reports, visit www.americaspledge.com

About We Are Still In

Since We Are Still In launched in 2017, almost 4,000 leaders from America's city halls, state houses, boardrooms, and college campuses have stepped forward to declare their support for the global solution to climate change. Spanning all 50 states—red and blue—they are demonstrating America's enduring commitment to tackling climate change, ensuring a clean energy future, and upholding the Paris Agreement. To learn more about We Are Still In, visit www.wearestillin.com

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