

Message from the Secretary

California continues to lead the nation in science-based climate action. For more than two decades, our state has tracked how climate change is altering our land, water resources, coastlines, and communities. These efforts reflect what many Californians increasingly see and feel in their own lives and demonstrate the importance of sustained climate action. At a time when the federal government is attempting to inject doubt into climate science and roll back climate progress, the findings in the Fifth Edition of the *Indicators of Climate Change in California* report reaffirm the scientific foundation of California's efforts to protect our people and environment from the accelerating impacts of climate change.



This updated report presents 49 indicators and reports from eight California Native American tribes documenting long-term trends in the drivers and impacts of climate change. While earlier work established clear trends, this edition shows more fully what they mean for California's people and natural systems. Many of the changes have intensified and some have crossed thresholds that cannot be reversed. Since the publication of the Fourth Edition in 2022, the Trinity Alps glaciers have disappeared entirely; for the first time, we have sufficient data to confirm an upward trend in average annual heat-related deaths; and from 2020 through 2024, the average annual acreage burned was nearly six times the pre-2000 average. The impacts are deeply interconnected, as warming reduces the natural water storage provided by mountain snowpack and drier vegetation fuels wildfire and smoke that compound health effects from extreme heat.

The tribal reports show how ecological changes affect tribal lifeways. Rising oceans limit access to cultural sites on the coast and impacted salmon fisheries and culturally relevant plants make it harder to continue traditional practices related to food. Eight California Native American tribes authored these reports, offering perspectives in their own words and rooted in generations of experience that extend beyond instrumental scientific records.

Many communities across the state also experience disproportionate impacts from climate change. Rural and low-income communities, farm workers, and other outdoor workers often face the impacts from climate change with fewer resources to prepare and recover. When more than 2,000 domestic wells ran dry during the 2012–2016 drought, they were concentrated in low-income, rural, and Hispanic/Latino communities of the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills. By documenting the disparate impacts of climate change, this report shows why California must continue pursuing climate

actions that directly address inequities and strengthen protections for the communities most affected.

That is why California is advancing measures that help safeguard communities. In 2025, OEHHA launched CalHeatScore, a cutting-edge extreme heat warning system to raise awareness and help Californians prepare when temperatures rise. This tool translates weather and health data into local heat scores and connects Californians to resources, with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable. This summer, OEHHA also updated CalEnviroScreen, California's environmental health screening tool, which helps direct billions of the California Climate Investments toward projects that reduce pollution, build resilience, and support low-income and rural households.

Indicators of Climate Change in California continues California's longstanding efforts to document climate change impacts in the state and is a valuable resource for policymakers, communities, tribes, and academics. By making clear what has happened and what is at stake, this report underscores the importance of our continued commitment to protect all Californians from climate change.

Yana Garcia, Secretary

California Environmental Protection Agency