



## Fast Facts

Because burning coal is the predominant source of Georgia's energy, most of our greenhouse gas pollution comes from the electric utility sector. In 2006, Georgia Power's Plant Scherer was ranked as the single largest stationary source of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, emitting 27 million tons of carbon per year.

Poorly planned development—and the resulting motor vehicle emissions from cars and trucks—is another leading cause of greenhouse gas pollution in Georgia. According to the Energy Information Administration, in 2005, Georgia ranked 10th in the nation for petroleum consumption per capita.

Fifty separate policy recommendations in Florida's climate action plan pave the way for the state to realize \$28 billion in net economic savings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33% below 1990 levels between now and 2025.

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# Develop a State Plan to Address Climate Change

## What's at Stake?

Overwhelming scientific evidence exists that demonstrates that the release of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels by humans is the primary driver behind climate change. While some climate fluctuation has been recorded throughout history, the recent warming trend is unprecedented.

Climate change in Georgia may place coastal infrastructure, some state industries, and growing coastal developments at risk. Specifically, Georgia's 2006 State Energy Strategy, created by Governor Perdue's Energy Policy Council recognizes that, "Climate change could affect the economy through rising shoreline levels and resulting in damage to coastal development, disruption of growing seasons for agriculture and forestry, and reduced tourist trade."

Georgia's environment and economy stand to be affected by coastal flooding, shoreline erosion, saltwater intrusion and storm hazards caused by rising sea levels and higher ocean temperature. Warming temperatures can also increase the frequency of drought, alter growing seasons and wildlife migration patterns and wipe out prized trout fishing areas. Georgians' health will be jeopardized by added smog-related respiratory disorders, heat-related illnesses and scarce potable water supplies if warming trends continue.

## Challenges

Despite these concerns, Georgia is the only Eastern Seaboard state that has failed to take initiative to address climate change. Some 38 states have adopted or are developing climate action plans addressing steps including land-use and transportation, state purchasing, and energy-efficiency in public buildings and transportation. Many climate action plans map out the future of new technologies and renewable and efficient energy, creating opportunities for new jobs in sustainable, long-term markets. Climate action plans also advance public health and natural resource benefits through water conservation and improved water and air quality.

The comprehensive, integrated approach needed to effectively address climate change is a difficult undertaking, both politically and administratively. This challenge is made greater by current state budgeting constraints.

Bi-partisan coordination among state legislators and local, state and federal agencies is crucial to implementation of a Climate Action Plan. Energy and transportation interests, historically at odds with energy conservation and efficiency, renewable energy sources, and mass transit must be committed to the plan to ensure its success.

## Next Steps

Create a Joint Legislative Study Committee to draft a Climate Action Plan for Georgia to hedge against risks climate change poses to industry and coastal infrastructure. Coordinate the plan with the 2006 State Energy Strategy. The plan should include specific policy actions to be taken by state leaders and agencies as well as quantifiable outcomes.