



Environmental Data & Governance Initiative Website Monitoring Report

envirodatagov.org | edgi.websitemonitoring@protonmail.com

Removal from the Greening EPA Website of a Climate Change Adaptation Web Resource, Links to Resources, and Mentions of EPA's Own Greening Performance Goals

December 6, 2017

Updated December 7, 2017

Writing and review of this report was conducted and overseen by the members of EDGI's Website Monitoring Committee: Andrew Bergman, Gretchen Gehrke, and Toly Rinberg. Report writing was led by Marcy Beck.

EDGI DISCLAIMER - *The information and images within this report are for general information purposes only. The scope of this report is limited to version tracking information of publicly available websites. EDGI has no control over the nature, content, or sustained availability of the websites we monitor. While EDGI works to assure that the information in this report is correct, that information is subject to the limitations of version tracking software, and is provided "as is." EDGI makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness or reliability of this information, **nor does EDGI intend to assess any agency or entity's intentions or rationale for the demonstrated changes to any webpages or other online content that appear in this report.** Do not rely on the information in this report as predictive, or ascribe intent not presented within the report. In no event will EDGI or any of its members be liable for the use or misuse of the information in this report. Please consult with an appropriately qualified expert if you require qualitative evaluation of or advice about the content of this report.*

Removal from the Greening EPA Website of a Climate Change Adaptation Web Resource, Links to Resources, and Mentions of EPA's Own Greening Performance Goals

Overview

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Greening EPA website has been altered to remove access to Web resources on climate change adaptation, and to remove wording related to EPA's own goals for climate change resilience and adaptation. An EPA statement on climate change adaptation and a link to the Statement have been entirely removed. Links to EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans have been removed from at least two pages on the EPA website. References to EPA's federal leadership and goals to cover 100 percent of its own electricity use nationwide through purchasing renewable energy have also been removed.

Description

The [Greening EPA website](#) reports EPA's activities to implement "strategies to reduce the environmental impact of our facilities and operations across the country" at over 40 locations. In late September 2017, Greening EPA pages were altered to remove links to EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans and to EPA's Policy Statement on Climate Change Adaptation. While the Climate Change Adaptation Plans themselves are still hosted on the Greening EPA website, access to them has been reduced. Language around EPA's Strategic Sustainability Plans has changed, including the removal of EPA's stated broad goal of "Climate change resilience", and a more specific goal to purchase renewable energy to cover 100 percent of its nationwide electricity use.

Note: Access to the Climate Change Adaptation Plans on another part of the EPA's website has also been reduced, as reported by [E&E News](#), and confirmed by EDGI's Website Monitoring Team (see "Confirmed changes" section below).

The most notable changes to the Greening EPA webpages are summarized here:

- 1. Removed link to plans and statement on climate change adaptation**
 - a. Removed link that leads to a page hosting EPA's "Climate Change Adaptation Plans" from 2012, 2013, and 2014 (1.1c)
 - b. Removed link "U.S. EPA Policy Statement on Climate-Change Adaptation." The corresponding document is no longer hosted at the link URL and is not available from the [January 19 snapshot](#), but is available on the [EPA's Web Archive](#) (1.1d)
- 2. Removed wording related to EPA's own greening performance history, goals and leadership.**
 - a. Removed "climate change resilience" as a goal of EPA's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (1.1a)

- b. Removed references to EPA's purchase of renewable energy equal to 100 percent of its estimated annual electricity use nationwide (2.1a, 3.1a, 3.1b, 3.1c)
- c. Removed mention of exceeding greenhouse gas emission targets from sources that are owned or directly controlled (4.1b) and sources that are not owned or directly controlled (4.1c) by the EPA. Note: the EPA still appears to be exceeding its greenhouse gas emission targets, based on its own reporting (see additional context provided on Page 4 below).

Confirmed changes

This website monitoring report also confirms a recent online article. In the wake of Hurricane Harvey in September 2017, E&E News (Greenwire)¹ published an article highlighting the relationship between flooded Superfund toxic waste sites in the Houston area and the reduced access to EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans. The E&E News article points to a link from EPA's Superfund Climate Adaptation webpage that no longer provides access to a 2014 implementation plan describing vulnerabilities and measures to prepare Superfund sites for climate change. The plan remains unavailable from the Superfund Climate Change Adaptation webpage through the date of this report (Page 5). The "Final OSWER (Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response) Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan" link on [EPA's "Superfund Climate Change Adaptation" page](#), now redirects to EPA's "This page is being updated" [notice](#).

¹ "Missing EPA report warned of flooding at Superfund dumps," Greenwire, September 18, 2017 <https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060060957>

Detailed Description of Changes

Page 1: EPA Strategic Sustainability Plans

- URL: www.epa.gov/greeningepa/epa-strategic-sustainability-plans
- Side-by-side View: 6/9/2017 - 9/21/2017
- Changes occurred between **Sep 20, 4:39 AM** and **Sep 21, 4:37 AM ET**

Screenshot 1.1

(1.1a) Removed bullet point "Climate change resilience"

(1.1b) Removed sentence "EPA and other federal agencies are also required by Executive Order 13693 to update plans for how they will adapt to climate change:"

(1.1c) Removed link "EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans" linking to URL

www.epa.gov/greeningepa/climate-change-adaptation-plans

- URL leads to a live "Climate Change Adaptation Plans" page ([November 6, 2017](#))

(1.1d) Removed link "U.S. EPA Policy Statement on Climate-Change Adaptation (3 pp, 594 K, [About PDF](#))" linking to URL

<https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/Downloads/impacts-adaptation/adaptation-statement-2014.pdf> (live on [February 19, 2017](#))

- URL leads to a removed page ([October 24, 2017](#))
- Statement is not archived on the [January 19 snapshot](#) (link leads to a removed page outside the snapshot)
- Statement is archived on [EPA's Web Archive](#)

Comparison of [epa.gov/greeningepa/epa-strategic-sustainability-plans](http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/epa-strategic-sustainability-plans) -- history -- enable javascript -- view as gist

Jun 9 2017 5:38 PM rendered: side-by-side Sep 21 2017 4:37 AM

EPA Strategic Sustainability Plans

Strategic plans help EPA meet federal sustainability requirements and its own internal goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, resource use and other environmental impacts. EPA is also preparing for the effects of climate change through climate change adaptation plans.

EPA's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP) is a comprehensive, multi-year planning document required by Executive Order. The SSPP identifies targets for reducing Agencywide GHG emissions and outlines steps to reduce energy, water, waste and other resource use. It also addresses ways the Agency will incorporate sustainability across its facilities, purchases and operations. Goal areas include:

- GHG emissions reductions, including energy efficiency
- Sustainable buildings
- Renewable energy
- Water conservation
- Fleet management
- Sustainable acquisition
- Pollution prevention and waste reduction
- Energy performance contracts
- Electronics stewardship
- **Climate change resilience**

[Read EPA's SSPP and annual updates.](#)

EPA and other federal agencies are also required by Executive Order 13693 to update plans for how they will adapt to climate change:

- [EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans](#)
- [U.S. EPA Policy Statement on Climate-Change Adaptation](#) (3 pp, 594 K, [About PDF](#))

[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

EPA Strategic Sustainability Plans

Strategic plans help EPA meet federal sustainability requirements and its own internal goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, resource use and other environmental impacts. EPA is also preparing for the effects of climate change through climate change adaptation plans.

EPA's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP) is a comprehensive, multi-year planning document required by Executive Order. The SSPP identifies targets for reducing Agencywide GHG emissions and outlines steps to reduce energy, water, waste and other resource use. It also addresses ways the Agency will incorporate sustainability across its facilities, purchases and operations. Goal areas include:

- GHG emissions reductions, including energy efficiency
- Sustainable buildings
- Renewable energy
- Water conservation
- Fleet management
- Sustainable acquisition
- Pollution prevention and waste reduction
- Energy performance contracts
- Electronics stewardship

[Read EPA's SSPP and annual updates.](#)

[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

Greening EPA

- [Greening EPA Home](#)
- [EPA Sustainability Plans](#)
- [EPA Sustainability Progress](#)
- [Federal Demonstrations](#)

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous version from [August 8, 2017](#) and current version from [September 30, 2017](#)

Page 2: Renewable Energy at EPA

- URL: <https://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/renewable-energy-epa>
- Side-by-side View: 6/9/2017 - 9/24/2017
- Changes occurred between **Sep 18, 7:52 PM** and **Sep 25, 2:58 AM ET**

Screenshot 2.1

(2.1a) Removed sentence "In fact, EPA was the first major federal agency to purchase renewable energy equal to 100 percent of its estimated annual electricity use nationwide."

The screenshot shows a side-by-side comparison of the EPA website page titled "Renewable Energy at EPA". The left pane shows the page as it appeared on June 9, 2017, at 1:38 PM. The right pane shows the page as it appeared on September 24, 2017, at 11:58 PM. The browser's address bar shows the URL "Comparison of epa.gov/greeningepa/renewable-energy-epa" and the rendering mode is "side-by-side".

Renewable Energy at EPA

Using renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution associated with energy production and helps diversify the nation's energy supply. EPA supports the growing green power market by purchasing and generating renewable energy in a variety of forms.



Solar panels at EPA's Region 8 Office in Denver, Colorado

"Green power" is a subset of renewable energy and represents those renewable energy resources and technologies that provide the highest environmental benefit by reducing the emissions associated with traditional [electricity sources](#). Sources of renewable energy include:

- Wind power
- Solar power
- Geothermal technologies
- Landfill gas
- Biomass power
- Low-impact small hydropower

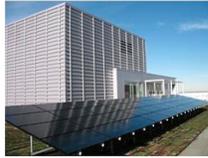
EPA acquires green power in one of three ways:

- Onsite generation
- Utility-supplied green power
- Renewable energy certificates (RECs)

These purchases promote growth in the green power marketplace and help the Agency avoid greenhouse gas emissions associated with its energy consumption. **In fact, EPA was the first major federal agency to purchase renewable energy equal to 100 percent of its estimated annual electricity use nationwide.**

Renewable Energy at EPA

Using renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution associated with energy production and helps diversify the nation's energy supply. EPA supports the growing green power market by purchasing and generating renewable energy in a variety of forms.



Solar panels at EPA's Region 8 Office in Denver, Colorado

"Green power" is a subset of renewable energy and represents those renewable energy resources and technologies that provide the highest environmental benefit by reducing the emissions associated with traditional [electricity sources](#). Sources of renewable energy include:

- Wind power
- Solar power
- Geothermal technologies
- Landfill gas
- Biomass power
- Low-impact small hydropower

EPA acquires green power in one of three ways:

- Onsite generation
- Utility-supplied green power
- Renewable energy certificates (RECs)

These purchases promote growth in the green power marketplace and help the Agency avoid greenhouse gas emissions associated with its energy consumption.

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous version from [June 29, 2017](#) and current version from [October 17, 2017](#)

Page 3: EPA Green Power Purchases/Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)

- URL: <https://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/green-power-purchases>
 - URL redirects to:
<https://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/green-power-purchases-epa>
- Side-by-side View: 6/9/2017 - 9/21/2017
- Changes occurred between **Sep 19, 9:42 AM** and **Sep 21, 9:03 PM ET**

Screenshot 3.1

(3.1a) Changed sentence from “EPA purchases RECs to account for 100 percent of Agencywide estimated electricity use at its 175 facilities across the country, augmented by a few direct green power contracts.” to “EPA purchases RECs to meet federal requirements for reducing GHG emissions and to support the clean and renewable energy market.”

(3.1b) Changed sentences from “EPA currently has a contract for RECs equivalent to 100 percent of Agencywide estimated electricity use through the end of the fiscal year. Procured through Defense Logistics Agency Energy, this contract supports renewable energy generation from wind, landfill gas and biomass resources.” to “EPA currently obtains RECs through blanket purchases coordinated by Defense Logistics Agency Energy. These contracts support renewable energy generation from wind, landfill gas and biomass resources.”

(3.1c) Removed sentence “Combined with additional contracts for delivered green power and RECs, this contract ensures that EPA has purchased green power for all of its electricity needs.”

(3.1d) Added sentence “These purchases are augmented by several smaller green power and REC purchases associated with individual EPA facilities.”

Comparison of [epa.gov/greeningepa/green-power-purchases](https://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/green-power-purchases) — history — enable javascript — view as gist

Jun 9 2017 1:59 PM ↻ rendered: side-by-side Sep 21 2017 6:03 PM ↻

EPA's Blanket Green Power Contracts

EPA purchases RECs to account for 100 percent of Agencywide estimated electricity use at its 175 facilities across the country, augmented by a few direct green power contracts.

EPA currently has a contract for RECs equivalent to 100 percent of Agencywide estimated electricity use through the end of the fiscal year. Procured through Defense Logistics Agency Energy, this contract supports renewable energy generation from wind, landfill gas and biomass resources. Combined with additional contracts for delivered green power and RECs, this contract ensures that EPA has purchased green power for all of its electricity needs.

Delivered Green Power

Green power can also be purchased from an off-site provider (such as a utility company) that is connected to the same regional power pool as the purchaser. EPA facilities that participate in delivered green power programs include:

- The Mid-Continent Ecology Division Laboratory in Duluth, Minnesota, purchases delivered wind power through Minnesota Power's WindSense program.
- The Western Ecology Division Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon, purchases delivered wind power through Pacific Power's Blue Sky program.

[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

Greening EPA

- [Greening EPA Home](#)
- [EPA Sustainability Plans](#)

EPA's Blanket Green Power Contracts

EPA purchases RECs to meet federal requirements for reducing GHG emissions and to support the clean and renewable energy market. EPA currently obtains RECs through blanket purchases coordinated by Defense Logistics Agency Energy. These contracts support renewable energy generation from wind, landfill gas and biomass resources. These purchases are augmented by several smaller green power and REC purchases associated with individual EPA facilities.

Delivered Green Power

Green power can also be purchased from an off-site provider (such as a utility company) that is connected to the same regional power pool as the purchaser. EPA facilities that participate in delivered green power programs include:

- The Mid-Continent Ecology Division Laboratory in Duluth, Minnesota, purchases delivered wind power through Minnesota Power's WindSense program.
- The Western Ecology Division Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon, purchases delivered wind power through Pacific Power's Blue Sky program.

[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

Greening EPA

- [Greening EPA Home](#)
- [EPA Sustainability Plans](#)

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous version from [July 7, 2017](#) and current version from [November 6, 2017](#)

Page 4: Greenhouse Gases at EPA

- URL: <https://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/greenhouse-gases-epa>
- Side-by-side View: 6/9/2017 - 9/21/2017
- Changes occurred between **Sep 19, 4:05 PM** and **Sep 21, 1:24 AM ET**

Screenshot 4.1

(4.1a) Removed extraneous “are” from phrase “Scope 2 GHG emissions are are indirect emissions”

(4.1b) Removed bullet point “EPA has far exceeded its target to reduce its Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions 25 percent by FY2020 compared to the FY2008 baseline.”

- For context, compare the changed “Scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Results” page from [July 7, 2017](#) and [December 6, 2017](#).

(4.1c) Removed bullet point “EPA has far exceeded its target to reduce its Scope 3 GHG emissions 8 percent by FY2020 compared to the FY2008 baseline.”

- For context, compare the changed “Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Results” page from [January 26, 2017](#) and [December 6, 2017](#)

(4.1d) Removed word “new” from the phrase “developed new emission reduction goals.”

The screenshot shows a side-by-side comparison of the EPA website's greenhouse gas emissions page. The left pane shows the version from June 9, 2017, and the right pane shows the version from September 21, 2017. The changes are highlighted in red and green. In the left pane, the text "Scope 2 GHG emissions are are indirect" has two "are"s, and a bullet point states "EPA has far exceeded its target to reduce its Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions 25 percent by FY 2020 compared to the FY 2008 baseline." In the right pane, the text is corrected to "Scope 2 GHG emissions are indirect", and the bullet point is removed. Similarly, the left pane has "Scope 3 GHG emissions are from sources not owned or directly controlled by EPA but related to Agency activities." and a bullet point about "EPA has far exceeded its target to reduce its Scope 3 GHG emissions 8 percent by FY 2020 compared to the FY 2008 baseline." The right pane corrects the text to "Scope 3 GHG emissions are from sources not owned or directly controlled by EPA but related to Agency activities." and removes the bullet point. At the bottom, the phrase "developed new emissions" is highlighted in green in the right pane, indicating the removal of the word "new".

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous version from [August 8, 2017](#) and current version from [September 30, 2017](#)

