



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 Partners](#)

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."

Comparison of www.epa.gov/greeningepa/renewable-energy-epa - History - enable javascript - view as gist

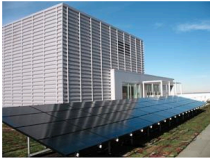
rendered: side-by-side

Jun 9 2017 1:38 PM ↺

Sep 24 2017 11:58 PM ↻

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.”

The screenshot displays a side-by-side comparison of the EPA's Green Power Purchases page. The interface includes a navigation bar at the top with a back arrow, a date range selector (Jun 9 2017 1:59 PM to Sep 21 2017 6:03 PM), and a dropdown menu set to 'rendered: side-by-side'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column represents the version from June 9, 2017, and the right column represents the version from September 21, 2017. Both columns feature the title 'EPA's Blanket Green Power Contracts'. The left column's text states that EPA purchases RECs to account for 100 percent of its electricity use and mentions a contract for 100 percent of use through the end of the fiscal year. The right column's text states that EPA purchases RECs to meet federal requirements for reducing GHG emissions and supporting the clean and renewable energy market, and mentions that EPA currently obtains RECs through blanket purchases coordinated by Defense Logistics Agency Energy. Below the main text, both columns have a section titled 'Delivered Green Power' which explains that green power can be purchased from an off-site provider and lists two examples: the Mid-Continent Ecology Division Laboratory in Duluth, Minnesota, and the Western Ecology Division Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon. At the bottom of each column, there is a 'Greening EPA' section with links to 'Greening EPA Home' and 'EPA Sustainability Plans'. A 'Contact Us' link is also present at the bottom of the left column.

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.”

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

rendered: side-by-side

Jun 9 2017 1:37 PM ↻

Sep 21 2017 10:24 PM ↻

Scope 1 GHG emissions are direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Agency.

- Scope 1 includes on-site fossil fuel combustion and fleet fuel consumption.

Scope 2 GHG emissions are indirect emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Agency.

- Scope 2 includes emissions that result from the generation of electricity, heat or steam purchased by the Agency from a utility provider.
- 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.

Scope 3 GHG emissions are from sources not owned or directly controlled by EPA but related to Agency activities.

- Scope 3 emissions include employee travel and commuting.
- Scope 3 also includes emissions associated with contracted solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment.
- Some Scope 3 emissions can also result from transportation and distribution (T&D) losses associated with purchased electricity.
- EPA has far exceeded its target to reduce its Scope 3 GHG emissions 8 percent by FY 2020 compared to the FY 2008 baseline.

Under Executive Order (EO) 13693, EPA developed new emissions reduction goals to achieve by FY 2025, relative to its existing FY 2008 baseline. The goal is to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions 46 percent by FY 2025 and reduce Scope 3 emissions 35 percent by 2025.

Scope 1 GHG emissions are direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Agency.

- Scope 1 includes on-site fossil fuel combustion and fleet fuel consumption.

Scope 2 GHG emissions are indirect emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Agency.

- Scope 2 includes emissions that result from the generation of electricity, heat or steam purchased by the Agency from a utility provider.

Scope 3 GHG emissions are from sources not owned or directly controlled by EPA but related to Agency activities.

- Scope 3 emissions include employee travel and commuting.
- Scope 3 also includes emissions associated with contracted solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment.
- Some Scope 3 emissions can also result from transportation and distribution (T&D) losses associated with purchased electricity.

Under Executive Order (EO) 13693, EPA developed emissions reduction goals to achieve by FY 2025, relative to its existing FY 2008 baseline. The goal is to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions 46 percent by FY 2025 and reduce Scope 3 emissions 35 percent by 2025.

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

Greening EPA

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

Additional Information on Access to EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plan

While several EPA climate change adaptation documents highlighted in this report are still available on the EPA website, including the Greening EPA website, link and webpage removals have significantly reduced access to each. In addition to the removed link to the "EPA's Climate Change Adaptation Plans" from a webpage on the Greening EPA website detailed on Page 1, the link on another EPA page, titled "Superfund Climate Change Adaptation," currently does not lead to the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. See details below:

Page 5: Superfund Climate Change Adaptation

- URL: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-climate-change-adaptation>
- EPA's Web archive: [January 19 snapshot](#)
- This page has not changed between April 27, 2017 and November 19, 2017
 - This report does not explore changes to this page prior to April 27, 2017

Page 5 Details

- Under the section "Climate Change Adaptation within the Superfund Program", the link "Final OSWER Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan" at the URL <http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/adaptation/programs/Final-EPA-Adaptation-plans.html> currently leads to a notice page stating "This page is being updated" ([November 19, 2017](#)).
 - The redirect to the notice page has been in place since [the EPA removed its climate change subdomain](#), "epa.gov/climatechange" on April 27, 2017.
- This report does not explore access to the "Plan" resource prior to the April 27, 2017 removals.

Climate Change Adaptation within the Superfund Program

EPA's Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation, which manages the Superfund program, is collaborating with other national program offices to implement the Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan released by the Agency's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response in June 2014. Adaptation plans for the Superfund Program involve the following key actions:

1. Develop criteria to identify the types of remedies for which performance may be affected by climate change.
2. Develop a protocol for evaluating and ensuring remedy protectiveness on a site-specific basis.
3. Produce adaptation fact sheets specific to the types of remediation systems most likely to be affected by climate change, to help project decision-makers identify potential system vulnerabilities and adaptation measures.
4. Identify existing Superfund Program processes (such as remedial investigations/feasibility studies, records of decision, remedial designs/remedial actions and five-year reviews) in which climate change adaptation measures may be integrated to ensure continuing protectiveness of current and future remedies.
5. Develop and implement in-person and Web-based training to help EPA regional staff, cleanup contractors and other stakeholders plan and implement remedies that are resilient to weather and climate changes.
6. Exchange updated information and learned lessons with EPA's regional offices to foster application of climate change science as a standard EPA business practice.

• [Final OSWER Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan](#)

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: version from [April 27, 2017](#) and version from [November 6, 2017](#) (versions are identical)