

## **Department of Commerce**

Policy Memorandum

Effective Date – 06/01/2011

### ***Addressing Climate Change Impacts at the Department of Commerce in Operations and Programs***

#### **Section 1. Purpose.**

.01 This memorandum prescribes policies and establishes responsibilities and procedures for the Department of Commerce (Department) to follow for integrating climate change adaptation planning and actions into Departmental operations, policies, and programs.

#### **Section 2. Background.**

Global climate change is both a long-term challenge and a reality today; between short-term variability and long-term trends, it will affect a range of Departmental services, operations, programs, and assets. A changing climate will also result in financial, operational, and regulatory risks and opportunities across diverse industries and sectors at local, regional, national and international levels. The Department must have the capacity and expertise to execute its missions and maintain important services in the face of climate change.

With a substantial portion of the U.S. gross domestic product dependent on weather and climate, supporting economic growth and resiliency and managing risks and opportunities requires reliable, authoritative, and timely environmental information and services and the capacity to apply this information in decision-making. The Department, through its scientific and economic bureaus, is uniquely situated to develop and deliver these services to help the private sector, local, regional, tribal, and state governments, and resource managers sectors plan for and make decisions to adapt to climate change.

The Department is working to promote a more climate resilient economy, society, and environment by --

- Providing climate science and services to the Federal Government and other stakeholders, including the business community, the non-profit sector, and local, state, and tribal governments.
- Assisting other Federal agencies, local governments, regional entities, states, and Indian tribes in integrating climate information and resiliency into their near-term and long-term strategies and actions, including economic development and natural resource stewardship
- Promoting the advancement of green growth to create market opportunities (both domestically and abroad), new businesses, advanced technologies, and quality jobs.
- Working with industry to develop areas of expertise that facilitate climate change management and adaptation services and create economic opportunities.
- Ensuring that Departmental policies, plans, and decisions anticipate and respond to current and projected climate impacts on our society, economies, and ecosystems.
- Strengthening scientific understanding of climate variability and change and developing advanced measurements, tools, and standards for environmental monitoring and decision support.

### **Section 3. Scope.**

.01 This memorandum applies to all Departmental offices and operating units.

### **Section 4. Authorities.**

This memorandum implements the following:

.01 Section 8(i) of Executive Order (EO) 13514, Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance, dated October 5, 2009, which directs agencies to evaluate “climate-change risks and vulnerabilities to manage the effects of climate change on the agency's operations and mission in both the short and long term.”

.02 Implementing Instructions for Federal Climate Change Adaptation Planning, White House Council on Environmental Quality, dated March 4, 2011, which instructs agencies on how to integrate climate change adaptation into their planning, operations, policies, and programs, as recommended by the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force in its October 2010 Progress Report to the President.

### **Section 5. Policy.**

.01 It is the policy of the Department to undertake comprehensive climate change adaptation planning in order to ensure that the Department fulfills its mission and maintains its programs and operations in a changing climate.

.02 The Department shall consider climate change impacts when undertaking planning, setting priorities for scientific research and investigations, and making decisions regarding the Department’s resources, programs, policies, and operations.

.03 The Department shall develop and implement a climate change adaptation plan using the best available science and information.

.04 In carrying out this policy, the Department will apply the guiding principles and planning framework for climate change adaptation found in the October 5, 2010, *Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force: Recommended Actions in Support of a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy*.

### **Section 6. Procedures.**

.01 The Department shall establish and regularly convene a Coordinating Committee to develop and implement an integrated strategy for responding to climate change impacts on the Department’s operations and programs. The Coordinating Committee shall consist of representatives from the Office of the Secretary and the Department’s bureaus as appropriate. The Office of Policy and Strategic Planning and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration will co-chair the Coordinating Committee.

.02 The Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for developing and publishing a Department-wide Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) by June 4, 2012, and for updating it every five years.

.03 The CAP shall provide an analysis of the Department's vulnerability to climate change and identify priority climate change adaptation actions the Department will take to improve resilience to climate change across its programs and trust resources, as well as actions that will help the Nation prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

.04 In completing this task the CAP shall:

- a. Identify the Department's primary missions, programs, and operations.
- b. Identify how climate change may affect the Department's ability to achieve its mission and impact its programs, policies, facilities, and operations.
- c. Recognize and incorporate into the integrated strategy the Department's unique role as the primary Federal source of climate science and services.
- d. Recognize and incorporate into the integrated strategy the Department's unique role and responsibilities for stewardship of the Nation's valuable ocean and coastal resources.
- e. Establish a mechanism to track progress and evaluate the Department's ability to effectively adapt to a changing climate.

.05 In formulating the CAP, each Operating Unit and Departmental office shall, in a manner consistent and compatible with its mission:

- a. Identify its primary missions, programs, and operations.
- b. Analyze how climate change may impact its ability to achieve its mission, policy, programs, and operational objectives by identifying programs, operations, policies, other actions, or managed resources that may be vulnerable to impacts from climate change or otherwise affected by climate change.
- c. Ensure climate science and services meet internal decision-making needs.
- d. Identify priority response actions and mitigative measures for these vulnerabilities and effects.
- e. Work with the Office of Budget in the annual budget process to identify budget adjustments necessary to implement response actions and enhance the development and delivery of climate information and services to inform those actions.
- f. Identify areas where legal consultation is required to effect its response actions and coordinate with the appropriate legal office (i.e., the appropriate Assistant General Counsel or Chief Counsel).
- g. Provide complete and accurate information in a timely manner to the Coordinating Committee.

.06 The Coordinating Committee shall coordinate with other agencies and interagency efforts, including the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, on climate change adaptation issues that cut across agency jurisdictions, including areas where national adaptation plans are being or have been developed, and shall identify a process for sharing climate change adaptation planning information throughout the Department and with the public.

**Section 7. Implementation.**

.01 The Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration and the Office of Policy and Strategic Planning are jointly responsible for ensuring implementation of this memorandum. This responsibility may be delegated as appropriate. This memorandum does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority of any individual bureaus.

.02 This memorandum shall be updated as necessary when new, relevant science or information becomes available.

**Section 8. Effective Date.**

.01 This memorandum is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded by a Departmental Administrative Order, or revoked.