The Climate Crisis is Here, but Is the U.S. Government Ready? Lessons from LA and Florida

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Abstract

The escalating climate disasters in the United States, including the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires and the 2024 Florida hurricanes, have revealed significant deficiencies in the nation's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from environmental catastrophes. This study investigates whether U.S. climate policies adequately safeguard vulnerable communities or if political inaction, misinformation, and partisanship have left the country exposed to climate threats.

This study employs a multi-method approach, including policy analysis, case studies, and international comparisons. It examines federal and state disaster response strategies, evaluates legislative efforts such as the Inflation Reduction Act, and assesses the climate policies of recent presidential administrations, including Obama, Trump, and Biden. Additionally, the research incorporates global climate adaptation strategies, drawing lessons from the Netherlands' flood resilience system and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Findings indicate systemic delays in response, inadequate resource distribution, and insufficient investment in proactive climate adaptation. Federal initiatives like FEMA disaster relief and the Inflation Reduction Act provide short-term assistance but lack long-term cohesion. Comparative analysis highlights that while other nations invest heavily in climate-resilient infrastructure, the U.S. remains fragmented in its approach.

This article argues that the U.S. remains reactive rather than proactive in addressing climate change-induced crises. Without urgent and systemic reforms, the U.S. will continue to face escalating economic, environmental, and human costs from climate disasters, leaving millions unprotected and exacerbating socio-economic inequalities.

Key words: Emergency Management, Climate change, Climate Policy

Background: Do We Care About Climate Disasters? －Climate Disasters in LA and Florida

The increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters in the U.S. demand a closer look at government response and preparedness. The following table summarizes key recent disasters and their impacts:

Disaster	Year	Location	Impact
Los Angeles Wildfires	2025	California	15,000+ structures destroyed, 170,000 displaced
Florida Hurricanes (Helene & Milton)	2024	Florida	Severe flooding, overwhelmed emergency services, billions in damages
Texas Winter Storm	2021	Texas	Power grid failure, over 200 deaths
Hurricane Katrina	2005	Louisiana	1,800+ deaths, massive federal response failures

Table 1. key recent disasters and their impacts:

The 2025 LA wildfire destroyed over 15,000 structures, forcing more than 170,000 people into long-term displacement and exposing them to risks like contaminated water and landslides. The fires occurred outside the usual wildfire season, signaling unprecedented climate shifts (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2025). Similarly, the 2024 Florida hurricanes intensified with alarming speed, overwhelming emergency services and devastating coastal infrastructure (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2025). Compared to other countries with advanced disaster preparedness strategies, the U.S. response was slow, reactive, and inadequate. Nations like the Netherlands and Japan have invested heavily in preemptive climate adaptation (Van der Meer, 2023; Takahashi, 2024), while the U.S. continues to prioritize short-term disaster relief over long-term solutions.

Do We Have Strong Climate Policy? Political Response And Legislative Action

The federal response to climate disasters has been largely fragmented. While the Biden administration has pushed for stronger climate policies, congressional gridlock has stalled major legislative efforts. The following table outlines key legislative actions and their impact:

Bill	Year	Status	Key Provisions
Inflation Reduction Act	2022	Passed	Invests in clean energy but lacks direct emergency response provisions
Resilient America Act	2024	Pending	Proposes $10 billion in FEMA funding for climate adaptation
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	2021	Passed	Funds infrastructure improvements, but implementation is slow
National Climate Adaptation Strategy Act	2025	Proposed	Would require federal and state agencies to implement coordinated climate resilience plans

Table 2. Key legislative actions and their impact

Emergency and Crisis Management: What Is The Government Supposed To Do?

Emergency management involves preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. At the federal level, FEMA is responsible for coordinating response efforts, but its budget constraints and bureaucratic inefficiencies often delay action (Congressional Budget Office, 2025). State governments bear much of the responsibility for disaster response, but their ability to act is limited by funding gaps and inconsistent federal support (Harvard Kennedy School, 2025). Congress has debated multiple bills, including the Resilient America Act, which would allocate additional funds to FEMA, but partisan disagreements have slowed progress (U.S. House of Representatives, 2025). Project 2025, a conservative policy agenda, has even proposed reducing federal climate initiatives, arguing for greater state autonomy despite clear evidence that states lack the resources to manage large-scale disasters alone (Heritage Foundation, 2024).

Are We Prepared? A Stakeholder Policy Analysis of Climate Change In Yhe U.S.

To fully assess the readiness of the U.S. government, we must analyze the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. The following table outlines major climate-related stakeholders and their policy gaps:

Stakeholder	Role in Climate Policy	Key Challenges	Policy Recommendations
Federal Government	Oversees national	Bureaucratic inefficiencies,	Increase FEMA budget, enforce national adaptation strategy

	disaster response, funds FEMA	inconsistent funding	
State Governments	Manage emergency response at state level	Unequal resources, political resistance to federal mandates	Develop state-specific resilience plans, streamline federal-state cooperation
Private Industry	Corporate responsibility for emissions and waste	Lobbying against regulation, prioritizing profits	Implement stricter corporate regulations, incentivize green investments
Affected Communities	Most vulnerable to climate disasters	Limited resources, inadequate relief funds	Expand social safety nets, improve access to disaster insurance

Table 3. Stakeholder Policy Analysis of Climate Change in the U.S

International Comparisons: How Other Countries Prepare

The Netherlands has built one of the world's most sophisticated flood management systems (Van der Meer, 2023). Japan has implemented a robust earthquake and tsunami preparedness system (Takahashi, 2024).

Country	Strategy	Key Policies	Outcome
Netherlands	Flood Management	"Room for the River" program	Prevents flooding, protects economy
Japan	Earthquake Resilience	Nationwide drills, early warning systems	Saves lives, reduces damages
Germany	Climate Adaptation	Public-private resilience projects	Lower disaster recovery costs
Australia	Wildfire Prevention	AI-based detection, controlled burns	Fewer wildfire-related deaths

Table 4. International Comparisons Analysis of Climate Change response

How Have U.S. Presidents Addressed Climate Change?

Climate policy in the United States has shifted significantly across different presidential administrations. Each president has taken a distinct approach, influencing the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to climate disasters. The following sections examine the climate policies of Presidents Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden.

President Barack Obama's Climate Policy

President Obama prioritized climate action through international agreements and domestic regulations. His administration played a key role in the Paris Agreement, which committed the U.S. to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Domestically, he implemented the Clean Power Plan, aimed at cutting emissions from power plants, and increased fuel efficiency standards for vehicles. These policies sought to establish a long-term framework for addressing climate change, but they faced strong opposition from Republican lawmakers and industry groups.

Policy	Year	Key Actions	Impact
Paris Agreement	2015	Committed U.S. to emission reduction targets	Established global climate leadership
Clean Power Plan	2015	Regulated emissions from power plants	Reduced coal dependency but faced legal challenges
Fuel Efficiency Standards	2012	Increased vehicle mileage requirements	Lowered emissions from transportation sector

Table 5. President Barack Obama's Climate Policy

Despite these efforts, many of Obama's policies were challenged in court and ultimately rolled back by the following administration. While his approach was ambitious, its long-term success was limited by political resistance.

President Donald Trump's Climate Policy

The Trump administration reversed many of Obama's climate policies, emphasizing deregulation and energy independence. Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, arguing that it harmed American economic interests. His administration also weakened environmental regulations, rolling back the Clean Power Plan and reducing fuel efficiency standards. The focus shifted towards promoting fossil fuels, with expanded oil drilling and coal production receiving strong federal support.

Policy	Year	Key Actions	Impact
Paris Agreement Withdrawal	2017	Removed U.S. from global climate commitments	Weakened international climate cooperation
Clean Power Plan Repeal	2019	Eliminated emission regulations for power plants	Increased reliance on coal and fossil fuels
Fuel Efficiency Rollbacks	2020	Lowered vehicle mileage standards	Raised emissions in the transportation sector

Table 6. President Donald Trump's Climate Policy

The rollback of climate policies during Trump's presidency significantly slowed progress in reducing carbon emissions. While his administration argued that deregulation promoted economic growth, it also increased vulnerability to climate disasters by limiting mitigation efforts.

President Joe Biden's Climate Policy

President Biden reinstated many of Obama's climate policies and introduced new initiatives to strengthen climate resilience. He rejoined the Paris Agreement on his first day in office and signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which included the largest federal investment in climate initiatives. His administration also focused on transitioning to clean energy, with incentives for electric vehicles and renewable energy development.

Policy	Year	Key Actions	Impact
Paris Agreement Reentry	2021	Restored U.S. commitment to global climate action	Strengthened international cooperation
Inflation Reduction Act	2022	Invested $369 billion in clean energy	Boosted renewable energy adoption
Executive Order on Climate Crisis	2021	Mandated federal agencies to address climate risks	Integrated climate resilience into national policy

Table 7. President Joe Biden's Climate Policy

Biden’s policies mark a return to climate action, but challenges remain in securing long-term commitments. Republican opposition in Congress and ongoing legal battles over regulations have slowed implementation. Additionally, the effectiveness of these policies depends on continued political support in future administrations.

What Is Trump's 47th Presidency Climate Policy?

Donald Trump's return to the presidency has renewed debates over climate policy in the United States. His administration has signaled a shift back toward deregulation, favoring energy independence through increased fossil fuel production. Many environmental regulations established under the Biden administration have been targeted for repeal, including restrictions on drilling and emissions standards. Trump has also proposed withdrawing from international climate agreements, arguing that such commitments harm U.S. economic growth. The following table outlines the key actions of the Trump administration regarding climate change:

Policy	Year	Key Actions
Paris Agreement Exit (Again)	2025	Initiated U.S. withdrawal from global climate commitments
Fossil Fuel Expansion	2025	Approved new drilling and pipeline projects
EPA Budget Cuts	2025	Proposed a 30% funding reduction for environmental programs

Table 8. President Donald Trump’s Climate Policy

What Are Trump's Climate Proposals And Agenda?

Trump's administration has laid out a policy agenda that prioritizes economic growth over environmental regulations. The focus is on rolling back climate-related restrictions and promoting domestic energy production. His administration aims to reverse Biden-era investments in renewable energy while boosting coal, oil, and natural gas industries. The table below outlines Trump's climate policy proposals:

Proposal	Key Objective	Expected Impact
Repeal Clean Energy Incentives	Reduce government subsidies for renewable energy	Slower transition to clean energy, increased fossil fuel reliance
Expand Offshore Drilling	Open federal waters for oil and gas exploration	Higher domestic production but greater environmental risks

Reduce Climate Funding	Cut federal spending on climate research and disaster response	Weakened preparedness for climate-related disasters

Table 9. President Donald Trump's Climate Policy Proposals and Agenda

What Are The United Nations' Climate Recommendations?

The United Nations has consistently emphasized the need for coordinated global action to combat climate change. Through agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN provides a framework for nations to implement climate policies that align with international best practices. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that without immediate reductions in carbon emissions, global temperatures could rise beyond 2°C, leading to irreversible environmental and economic damage (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2024).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth key targets to address climate change, emphasizing sustainable energy, climate resilience, and responsible environmental policies. The following table summarizes relevant SDGs and their implications for U.S. climate policy:

SDG Goal	Description	Relevance to U.S. Policy
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Expanding access to renewable energy sources	Investment in solar, wind, and hydro power initiatives
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Enhancing urban resilience against climate disasters	Strengthening infrastructure and disaster preparedness
SDG 13: Climate Action	Urging national governments to integrate climate risk into policy planning	Establishing mandatory climate adaptation frameworks

Table 10. SDGs and their implications for U.S. climate policy

While the U.S. has made progress in some of these areas, gaps remain in fully implementing policies aligned with UN recommendations. The Inflation Reduction Act represents a significant step toward achieving SDG 7, but more coordinated efforts are needed to ensure resilience planning and sustainable urban development align with SDG 11 and SDG 13.

What Can Be Done To Improve U.S. Climate Resilience?

Policy Area	Action	Expected Outcome

Disaster Response	Increase FEMA funding	Faster response, fewer casualties
Infrastructure	Invest in climate-resilient projects	Protects against future disasters
Regulation	Stricter emissions policies	Reduces environmental damage
Community Support	Expand insurance, relief funds	Helps vulnerable populations recover

Table 11. U.S. climate policy recommendation

Conclusion

The U.S. remains reactive rather than proactive in addressing climate crises. Recent policy developments, including budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and rollbacks of key climate programs, have further weakened the nation's ability to respond to future disasters (Congressional Budget Office, 2025). At the same time, federal investments in climate resilience, such as the Inflation Reduction Act, represent some of the most significant financial commitments in U.S. history to combat climate change. However, these policies face ongoing political opposition, making their long-term impact uncertain.

The future of U.S. climate resilience depends on a coordinated approach among federal and state governments, private industry, and local communities. Policymakers must prioritize funding for emergency management, strengthen environmental regulations, and support innovations in clean energy to mitigate the effects of climate change. If decisive action is not taken, the U.S. will continue to face escalating climate disasters with inadequate preparation, placing millions of lives and billions of dollars at risk. Recent policy developments, including budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and rollbacks of key climate programs, have further weakened the nation's ability to respond to future disasters (Congressional Budget Office, 2025). Without urgent reforms, the U.S. risks falling behind in climate adaptation, leaving millions unprotected.

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