

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals and systems in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals and systems in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Climate Change Health  
5 Protection and Promotion Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CLI-**  
2 **MATE CHANGE.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—The U.S. Global Change Research  
4 Program Climate and Health Assessment states that—

5 (1) the impacts of human-induced climate  
6 change are increasing nationwide;

7 (2) rising greenhouse gas concentrations result  
8 in increases in temperature, changes in precipitation,  
9 increases in the frequency and intensity of some ex-  
10 treme weather events, and rising sea levels;

11 (3) these climate change impacts endanger our  
12 health by affecting our food and water sources, the  
13 air we breathe, the weather we experience, and our  
14 interactions with the built and natural environments;  
15 and

16 (4) as the climate continues to change, the risks  
17 to human health continue to grow.

18 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
19 gress that—

20 (1) climate change poses threats to the United  
21 States and globally through its impacts on society,  
22 the economy, the physical environment, and national  
23 security;

24 (2) climate change health threats are growing  
25 in scale and severity;

1           (3) climate change disproportionately affects  
2 people of the United States who are economically  
3 disadvantaged, belong to communities of color, or  
4 have other social and health vulnerabilities;

5           (4) climate change impacts anywhere in the  
6 world can threaten the health of people of the  
7 United States through such pathways as infectious  
8 disease pandemics, climate-driven migration and dis-  
9 placement, and social, economic, and political disrup-  
10 tion; and

11          (5) the Federal Government, in cooperation  
12 with international, State, Tribal, and local govern-  
13 ments, nongovernmental organizations, businesses,  
14 and individuals, should use all practicable means  
15 and measures—

16           (A) to assist the efforts of public health  
17 and health care professionals, first responders,  
18 health care systems, States, the District of Co-  
19 lumbia, territories, municipalities, and Native  
20 American and local communities to incorporate  
21 measures to prepare public health and health  
22 care systems to respond to the impacts of cli-  
23 mate change;

24           (B) to ensure—

1 (i) that the Nation’s public health and  
2 health care professionals have sufficient in-  
3 formation to prepare for and respond to  
4 the adverse health impacts of climate  
5 change;

6 (ii) the application of scientific re-  
7 search in advancing understanding of—

8 (I) the health impacts of climate  
9 change; and

10 (II) strategies to prepare for and  
11 respond to the health impacts of cli-  
12 mate change;

13 (iii) the identification of communities  
14 and populations vulnerable to the health  
15 impacts of climate change, including in-  
16 fants, children, pregnant women, the elder-  
17 ly, individuals with disabilities or pre-exist-  
18 ing illnesses, low-income populations, com-  
19 munities of color, those who experience en-  
20 vironmental injustices, and unhoused indi-  
21 viduals;

22 (iv) the development of strategic re-  
23 sponse plans to be carried out by public  
24 health and health care professionals for the  
25 communities described in clause (iii);

1 (v) the improvement of health status  
2 and health equity through efforts to pre-  
3 pare for and respond to climate change;  
4 and

5 (vi) the inclusion of health impacts in  
6 the development of climate change re-  
7 sponses;

8 (C) to encourage further research, inter-  
9 disciplinary partnership, and collaboration  
10 among stakeholders in order to—

11 (i) understand and monitor the health  
12 impacts of climate change, including men-  
13 tal health impacts;

14 (ii) improve public health knowledge  
15 and response strategies to climate change;

16 (iii) identify actions and policies that  
17 are beneficial to health and that mitigate  
18 climate health impacts; and

19 (iv) develop strategies to address  
20 water-, food-, and vector-borne infectious  
21 diseases and other public health emer-  
22 gencies;

23 (D) to enhance preparedness activities, and  
24 health care and public health infrastructure, re-  
25 lating to climate change and health;

1 (E) to encourage each and every commu-  
2 nity to learn about the impacts of climate  
3 change on health; and

4 (F) to assist the efforts of developing  
5 countries to incorporate measures to prepare  
6 public health and health care systems to re-  
7 spond to the impacts of climate change.

8 **SEC. 3. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.**

9 Nothing in this Act limits the authority provided to  
10 or responsibility conferred on any Federal department or  
11 agency by any provision of any law (including regulations)  
12 or authorizes any violation of any provision of any law (in-  
13 cluding regulations), including any health, energy, envi-  
14 ronmental, transportation, or any other law or regulation.

15 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND PRO-**  
16 **GRAM.**

17 (a) REQUIREMENT.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
19 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
20 Health and Human Services (referred to in this Act  
21 as the “Secretary”), on the basis of the best avail-  
22 able science, and in consultation pursuant to para-  
23 graph (2), shall publish a national strategic action  
24 plan and establish a climate and health program to  
25 ensure that public health and health care systems

1 are prepared for and can respond to the impacts of  
2 climate change on health in the United States and  
3 other countries.

4 (2) CONSULTATION.—In developing or making  
5 any revision to the national strategic action plan and  
6 program, the Secretary shall—

7 (A) consult with the Director of the Cen-  
8 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, the  
9 Administrator of the Environmental Protection  
10 Agency, the Director of the National Institutes  
11 of Health, the Undersecretary of Commerce for  
12 Oceans & Atmosphere, the Administrator of the  
13 National Aeronautics and Space Administra-  
14 tion, the Director of the Indian Health Service,  
15 the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of  
16 State, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the  
17 National Environmental Justice Advisory Coun-  
18 cil, the heads of other appropriate Federal  
19 agencies, Tribal governments, and State and  
20 local government officials; and

21 (B) provide meaningful opportunity for en-  
22 gagement, comment, and consultation with rel-  
23 evant public stakeholders, particularly rep-  
24 resentatives of at-risk populations, environ-  
25 mental justice communities, Tribal commu-

1           nities, public health organizations, and sci-  
2           entists.

3       (b) ACTIVITIES.—

4           (1) NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN.—

5               (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year  
6           after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
7           retary, acting through the Director of the Cen-  
8           ters for Disease Control and Prevention, and in  
9           collaboration with other Federal agencies as ap-  
10          propriate, shall, on the basis of the best avail-  
11          able science, and in consultation with the enti-  
12          ties described in subsection (a)(2)(A), publish a  
13          national strategic action plan under subsection  
14          (a)(1) to guide the climate and health program  
15          and assist public health and health care profes-  
16          sionals in preparing for and responding to the  
17          impacts of climate change on public health in  
18          the United States and other countries, particu-  
19          larly developing countries.

20               (B) NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN  
21          COMPONENTS.—The national strategic plan  
22          under subsection (a)(1) shall include an assess-  
23          ment of the health system capacity of the  
24          United States to address climate change, in-  
25          cluding—



1 (i) identifying and prioritizing commu-  
2 nities and populations vulnerable to the  
3 health impacts of climate change;

4 (ii) identifying the link between envi-  
5 ronmental injustice and vulnerability to the  
6 impacts of climate change and prioritizing  
7 those who have been harmed by environ-  
8 mental and climate injustice;

9 (iii) providing outreach and commu-  
10 nication aimed at public health and health  
11 care professionals and the public to pro-  
12 mote preparedness and response strategies;

13 (iv) providing for programs across  
14 Federal agencies to advance research re-  
15 lated to the impacts of climate change on  
16 health;

17 (v) identifying and assessing existing  
18 preparedness and response strategies for  
19 the health impacts of climate change;

20 (vi) prioritizing critical public health  
21 and health care infrastructure projects;

22 (vii) providing modeling and fore-  
23 casting tools of climate change health im-  
24 pacts, including local impacts, where fea-  
25 sible;

1 (viii) establishing academic and re-  
2 gional centers of excellence;

3 (ix) providing technical assistance and  
4 support for preparedness and response  
5 plans for the health threats of climate  
6 change in States, municipalities, terri-  
7 tories, Indian Tribes, and developing coun-  
8 tries; and

9 (x) developing, improving, integrating,  
10 and maintaining domestic and inter-  
11 national disease surveillance systems and  
12 monitoring capacity to respond to health-  
13 related impacts of climate change, includ-  
14 ing on topics addressing—

15 (I) water-, food-, and vector-  
16 borne infectious diseases and climate  
17 change;

18 (II) pulmonary effects, including  
19 responses to aeroallergens and toxic  
20 exposures;

21 (III) cardiovascular effects, in-  
22 cluding impacts of temperature ex-  
23 tremes;

- 1 (IV) air pollution health effects,  
2 including heightened sensitivity to air  
3 pollution;
- 4 (V) harmful algal blooms;
- 5 (VI) mental and behavioral  
6 health impacts of climate change;
- 7 (VII) the health of migrants, ref-  
8 ugees, displaced persons, and vulner-  
9 able communities;
- 10 (VIII) the implications for com-  
11 munities and populations vulnerable  
12 to the health effects of climate  
13 change, as well as strategies for re-  
14 sponding to climate change within  
15 such communities;
- 16 (IX) Tribal, local, and commu-  
17 nity-based health interventions for cli-  
18 mate-related health impacts;
- 19 (X) extreme heat and weather  
20 events, including drought;
- 21 (XI) decreased nutritional value  
22 of crops; and
- 23 (XII) disruptions in access to  
24 routine and acute medical care.

1           (2) CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM.—The  
2       Secretary, acting through the Director of the Cen-  
3       ters for Disease Control and Prevention, and in col-  
4       laboration with other Federal agencies, as appro-  
5       priate, shall ensure that the climate and health pro-  
6       gram established under this section addresses pri-  
7       ority health actions, including by doing each of the  
8       following:

9           (A) Serve as a credible source of informa-  
10       tion on the physical, mental, and behavioral  
11       health consequences of climate change for the  
12       United States population and globally.

13          (B) Track data on environmental condi-  
14       tions, disease risks, and disease occurrence re-  
15       lated to climate change.

16          (C) Expand capacity for modeling and  
17       forecasting health effects that may be climate-  
18       related.

19          (D) Enhance the science base to better un-  
20       derstand the relationship between climate  
21       change and health outcomes.

22          (E) Identify locations and population  
23       groups at greatest risk for specific health  
24       threats and effects, such as increased heat-re-  
25       lated illnesses and injuries, degraded air and

1 water quality, food or water-related infections,  
2 vector-borne illnesses, pulmonary and cardio-  
3 vascular effects, mental and behavioral health  
4 effects, and food, water, and nutrient insecu-  
5 rity.

6 (F) Communicate the health-related as-  
7 pects of climate change, including risks and as-  
8 sociated costs and ways to reduce them, to the  
9 public, decision-makers, public health profes-  
10 sionals, and health care providers.

11 (G) Develop partnerships with other gov-  
12 ernment agencies, the private sector, non-  
13 governmental organizations, universities, and  
14 international organizations to more effectively  
15 address domestic and global health aspects of  
16 climate change.

17 (H) Provide leadership to State and local  
18 governments, community leaders, health care  
19 professionals, nongovernmental organizations,  
20 environmental justice networks, faith-based  
21 communities, the private sector and the public,  
22 domestically and internationally, regarding  
23 health protection from climate change effects.

24 (I) Develop and implement preparedness  
25 and response plans for health threats, such as

1 heat waves, severe weather events, and infec-  
2 tious diseases.

3 (J) Provide technical advice and support to  
4 State and local health departments, the private  
5 sector, and others in developing and imple-  
6 menting national and global preparedness meas-  
7 ures related to the health effects of climate  
8 change.

9 (K) Promote workforce development by  
10 helping to ensure the training of a new genera-  
11 tion of competent, experienced public health  
12 and health care professionals to respond to the  
13 health threats posed by climate change.

14 (c) PERIODIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISION.—Not  
15 later than 1 year after the date of first publication of the  
16 national strategic action plan under subsection (a)(1), and  
17 annually thereafter, the Secretary shall periodically assess,  
18 and revise as necessary, the national strategic action plan  
19 under subsection (a)(1) and the climate and health pro-  
20 gram under subsection (a)(1), to reflect new information  
21 collected pursuant to the implementation of the national  
22 strategic action plan and program and otherwise, includ-  
23 ing information on—

1           (1) the status of and trends in critical environ-  
2           mental health indicators and related human health  
3           impacts;

4           (2) the trends in and impacts of climate change  
5           on public health;

6           (3) advances in the development of strategies  
7           for preparing for and responding to the impacts of  
8           climate change on public health; and

9           (4) the effectiveness of the implementation of  
10          the national strategic action plan in protecting  
11          against climate change health threats.

12          (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—

13           (1) IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH HHS.—The  
14          Secretary shall exercise the Secretary's authority  
15          under this Act and other Federal statutes to achieve  
16          the goals and measures of the national strategic ac-  
17          tion plan and climate and health program.

18           (2) OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND  
19          INITIATIVES.—The Secretary and Federal officials of  
20          other relevant Federal agencies shall administer  
21          public health programs and initiatives authorized by  
22          laws other than this Act, subject to the requirements  
23          of such laws, in a manner designed to achieve the  
24          goals of the national strategic action plan and cli-  
25          mate and health program.

1           (3) HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT.—The heads  
2           of all Federal agencies shall, on a regular basis, as-  
3           sess the impacts that proposed and current laws,  
4           policies, and programs in their jurisdiction have or  
5           may have on protection against climate change  
6           health threats and shall assist State, Tribal, local,  
7           and territorial governments to conduct such assess-  
8           ments.

9   **SEC. 5. ADVISORY BOARD.**

10          (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall, pursuant  
11          to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.),  
12          establish a permanent science advisory board to be com-  
13          prised of not less than 10 and not more than 20 members.

14          (b) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—The Secretary  
15          shall appoint the members of the science advisory board  
16          from among individuals who—

17                  (1) are recommended by the President of the  
18                  National Academy of Sciences and the President of  
19                  the National Academy of Medicine; and

20                  (2) have expertise in essential public health and  
21                  health care services, including with respect to vulner-  
22                  able populations, climate change, environmental and  
23                  climate justice, and other relevant disciplines.



1 The Secretary shall ensure that the science advisory board  
2 includes members with practical or lived experience with  
3 relevant issues.

4 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The science advisory board shall—

5 (1) provide scientific and technical advice and  
6 recommendations to the Secretary on the domestic  
7 and international impacts of climate change on pub-  
8 lic health, populations, and regions particularly vul-  
9 nerable to the effects of climate change, and strate-  
10 gies and mechanisms to prepare for and respond to  
11 the impacts of climate change on public health;

12 (2) advise the Secretary regarding the best  
13 science available for purposes of issuing the national  
14 strategic action plan and conducting the climate and  
15 health program; and

16 (3) submit a report to Congress on its activities  
17 and recommendations not later than 1 year after the  
18 date of enactment of this Act and not later than  
19 every year thereafter.

20 (d) SUPPORT.—The Secretary shall provide financial  
21 and administrative support to the board.

22 **SEC. 6. CLIMATE CHANGE HEALTH PROTECTION AND PRO-**  
23 **MOTION REPORTS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall offer to enter  
25 into an agreement, including the provision of such funding

1 as may be necessary, with the National Academies of  
2 Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, under which such  
3 National Academies will prepare periodic reports to aid  
4 public health and health care professionals in preparing  
5 for and responding to the adverse health effects of climate  
6 change that—

7           (1) review scientific developments on health im-  
8           pacts of climate change; and

9           (2) recommend changes to the national stra-  
10          tegic action plan and climate and health program.

11          (b) SUBMISSION.—The agreement under subsection  
12 (a) shall require a report to be submitted to Congress and  
13 the Secretary and made publicly available not later than  
14 1 year after the first publication of the national strategic  
15 action plan, and every 4 years thereafter.