

How Will Climate Change Affect the Midwest?

Climate change means the Midwest is vulnerable to more heat waves, more heavy downpours, and more floods.

In addition to national data, the [Third National Climate Assessment](#) has chapters that explore how climate change will affect different regions of America.

Among the National Climate Assessment's [findings for the Midwest](#):

- Extreme heat, heavy downpours, and flooding will affect infrastructure, health, agriculture, forestry, transportation, air and water quality, and more in the Midwest.
- Increased heat wave intensity and frequency, increased humidity, degraded air quality, and reduced water quality will increase public health risks.
- More than **20 million people** in the Midwest already breathe air that fails to meet national ambient air quality standards.
- Air quality is expected to get worse with higher temperatures, due to both human-induced emissions and **longer pollen seasons**.
- The frequency of major heat waves in the Midwest has increased over the last six decades. Between 1980 and 2010, the rate of warming in the Midwest increased **three times as quickly** as it did from 1900 to 2010.
- Extreme rainfall events and flooding have increased during the last century, and these trends are expected to continue across the entire region. In the Midwest, when it rains, it will – more and more frequently – pour.
- The Great Lakes have recently recorded higher water temperatures and less ice cover as a result of climate change.
- The average annual maximum ice coverage on the Great Lakes during 2003-2013 was **lower than any other decade** since measurements have been recorded.

Among the report's findings on the Midwest and energy:

- The Midwest has a highly energy-intensive economy. Energy use per dollar of gross domestic product is approximately **20 percent above** the national average.
- As temperatures get hotter, the demand for air conditioning in the Midwest is expected to grow.
- By the middle of the century, the increased demand for cooling is projected to exceed 10 gigawatts -- equivalent to at least **five large conventional power plants**, requiring more than **\$6 billion** in infrastructure investments.
- The Midwest also has great potential to produce energy from low-carbon sources. More than **one-quarter of national installed wind energy** capacity is located in the Midwest. Some parts of the Midwest have solar resources that are as good as Florida.

Want even more info? Check out these [state-by-state fact sheets](#) on the White House web site.