

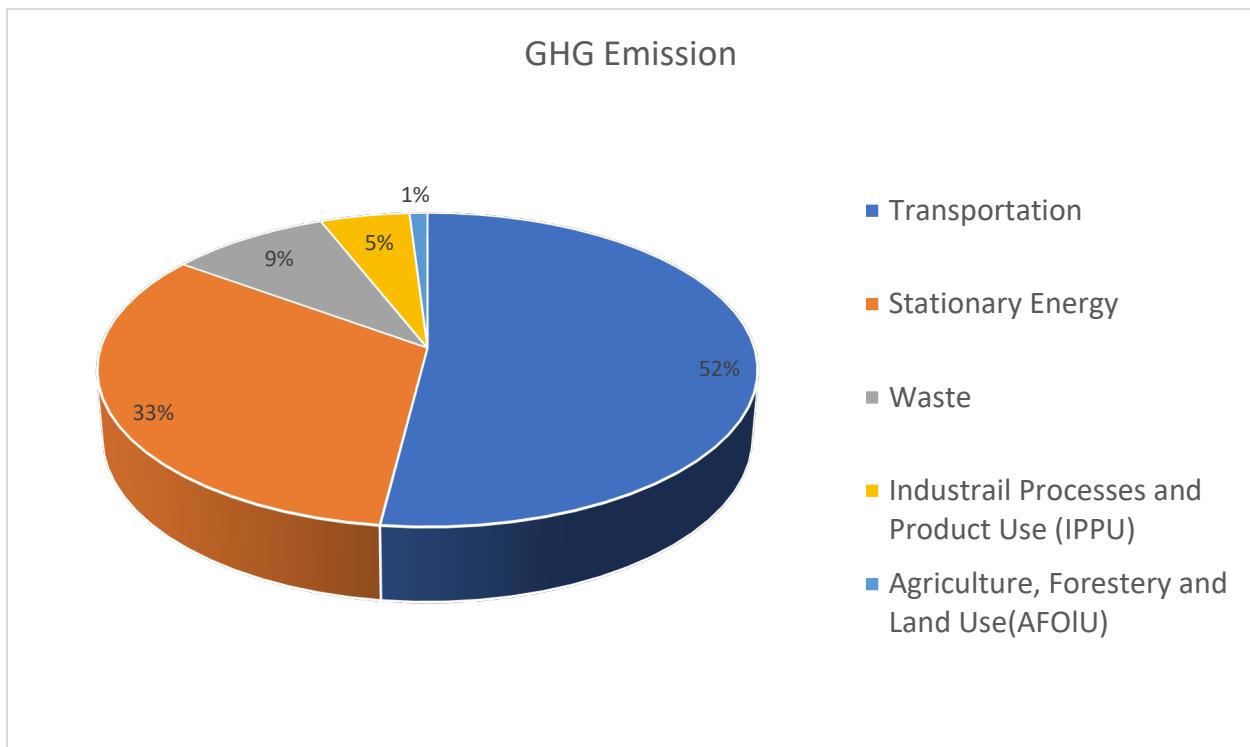


Overview

Climate change refers to the changing effect of the Earth's climate system over time, including changes in temperature, precipitation, and wind patterns. Climate change had significant impacts on Los Angeles County, affecting various aspects of life, environment, infrastructure, and sustainable development, and presents increasing risks from amplified hazards and changing baselines (e.g., sea level) into the future. The rate of climate change has significantly accelerated over the last three decades and trends continues. This plan addresses the effects of climate change related to disasters within the County and strategies to mitigate risks, focusing on preparedness, resilience and equity.

Climate change contributes to more frequent and intense disasters, such as floods, wildfires, drought and excessive heat. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns pose health risks, like heat-related illnesses, respiratory issues, and the spread of diseases. Hazard mitigation efforts aim to reduce the impacts and effects of greater hazards due to climate change. The economic impact of climate change has been substantial, affecting industries such as agriculture, tourism, and insurance with increasing risks due to accelerating climate changes.

Green-house Gas (GHG) emissions are the main driver of climate change, which causes increased frequency, duration, and severity of extreme weather and climate-related disasters. Climate change exacerbates air pollution, leading to poor air quality and health issues. GHG emissions from residential buildings, commercial and institutional facilities, manufacturing industries and construction, energy industries, oil and natural gas systems. transportation, fossil energy, wildfires and other sources contribute to increased particulate matter and other pollutants in the air.



The chart above shows the sources of GHG emissions from within the County. Source: Los Angeles County 2045 climate action plan

Integrating Climate Change into Hazard Profiles

Integrating climate change into hazard profiles involves assessing the current and future impacts of climate change on various hazards and incorporating this information into planning and mitigation strategies. This section highlights how climate change relates to these hazards and how the county is addressing climate change through hazard mitigation efforts which help protect the county's residents and economies from the adverse effects of climate changes and climate-amplified events.

1. Extreme Heat

Increasing temperatures and high heat events is one of the most conspicuous results of and a direct correlation between GHG pollution and climate change. Excessive temperatures in the Los Angeles region are expected to increase significantly more very hot days and warm nights. In addition to increasing baseline temperatures and extreme heat due to climate change, heat islands exacerbate temperatures and high heat events. As development occurs and darker paved surfaces replace open land and vegetation, these areas become warmer forming an "island" of heat. Los Angeles County experiences more frequent and excessive heat due to climate change. This is currently a major risk and with unmitigated GHG emissions increasing heat will lead to even greater health issues, increased energy demand for cooling, and other strains on infrastructure.

2. Flooding

Flooding in Los Angeles County occurs due to extreme rainfall events causing flash floods, riverine flooding, and increased surface water. Coastal areas in Los Angeles County are vulnerable to sea-level rise (SLR), which exacerbates coastal hazards like floods, storm surges, and chronic erosion. Other related hazards include flooding near the mouths of streams and channels, landslides, and seawater well intrusion. SLR exacerbates the impacts of high tides, storm surges, and heavy precipitation flooding, and continued SLR will lead to more life safety concerns and increased damage to property and infrastructure.

3. Drought

Prolonged droughts have become more common, affecting the water supply, agriculture, and ecosystems of Los Angeles County. Dry and wet extremes are projected to increase and are likely to cause drier periods than what the region has historically experienced.

Southern California projected to get drier, while Northern California will increase in temperature. This will result in loss of snowpack within the Sierra Nevada Mountain range, meaning less water for all Californians including farmers, residents, and utilities. The State Water Resource Control Board proclaimed several water conservation emergency regulations due to severe drought conditions that requires commercial, industrial, and residential conservation efforts. Proclamations include:

- **January 4, 2022:** State Water Board adopted the prohibited wasteful water uses emergency regulation
- **May 24, 2022:** the State Water Board adopted the emergency regulation to ban decorative grass watering like non-functional turf irrigation
- **December 7, 2022:** the State Water Board readopted the prohibited wasteful water uses emergency regulation,
- **May 26, 2023:** the State Water Board readopted the emergency regulation to ban decorative grass watering.

4. Wildfires

A wildfire is an unplanned and uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation. These fires can easily spread beyond the natural areas primarily involving and have a potential to cause damages outside of the perimeter. The annual probability of wildfires has escalated due to regional climate change impacts. Prolonged dry seasons and elevated temperatures are increasingly prevalent. Contributing factors for this heightened risk include localized meteorological phenomena such as elevated temperature, diminished humidity, and intensified Santa Ana winds, as well as extended drought periods. Human outdoor activities, antecedent conditions (e.g., substantial rainfall followed by desiccation and potential ignition sources (e.g., lightning strikes,

arson, debris burning, electrical equipment malfunctioning, and vehicle exhaust are also contributing factors for wildfire risks in the county. All these factors collectively contribute to the amplified frequency and intensity of wildfires within the county. Projections indicate potential increase in wildfire events in by over three days annually within the next five years, primarily concentrated in the spring, summer and potentially extending into winter months attributable to regional climate change effects. These events pose a significant threat to human life, property, infrastructure, and the environment exacerbated by historical development patterns. A chronological record of major wildfire events and affected acreage in Los Angeles County is detailed in Section (xxx) of this plan. Wildfire probability depends on local weather conditions, outdoor activities and any preceding conditions (e.g., lots of rain leading to vegetation growth and then drying conditions), and a potential ignition (e.g., lightning strike, arson, debris burning, electrical equipment failure, car tailpipe, etc.). The frequency and intensity of wildfires has increased driven by higher temperatures, lower precipitation, lower relative humidity, and prolonged droughts. These events have caused loss of life, destroy and/or damage to property, infrastructure, the environment and pose greater risks due to historical development patterns. The timeline of major wildfire events and acreage burned in Los Angeles County is listed at Section (xxx) of the plan.

Mitigation Strategies

Los Angeles County is actively addressing climate change and implementing hazard mitigation strategies to reduce its impacts and build long-term resilience. The County faces increasing risks from excessive heat, wildfires, droughts, floods, and sea-level rise, all of which threaten communities, infrastructure, and natural resources.

To address many of these challenges, the County has developed comprehensive climate plans and strategies that integrate climate adaptation, sustainable land use, emergency preparedness, and environmental conservation. By enforcing building codes, investing in green infrastructure, and strengthening community preparedness, Los Angeles County aims to minimize risks and enhance disaster resilience. These efforts align with state and federal climate policies and are designed to protect both current and future generations while encouraging a more sustainable and livable environment for all.

Climate Mitigation and Resilience Plans & Action

- **Los Angeles County 2045 Climate Action Plan (2045 CAP):** Establishes aggressive targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.
- **Water Conservation & Drought Resilience Measures:** Implements mandatory water restrictions, promotes rainwater harvesting, and expands groundwater recharge and water recycling projects.
- **Wildfire Mitigation & Vegetation Management Programs:** Enforces Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) codes, increases forest management techniques, and strengthens fire-resistant building and landscape requirements.

- **Green Infrastructure & Urban Cooling Initiatives:** Expands tree planting, investigates removing hard (paved) surfaces, and planting groundcover, utilizes and promotes public cooling centers and home heat preparedness, and encourages the use of reflective “cool” roofing and surfaces to mitigate the urban heat island (UHI) effect.
- **Heat Action Plan:** Develops strategies to reduce the adverse health impacts of excessive heat through public shade structures, cooling centers, building codes, and increased public awareness campaigns for all susceptible to extreme heat.

These strategic actions reflect Los Angeles County’s commitment to tackling climate change. By integrating proactive policies, community-driven solutions, and resilient infrastructure, Los Angeles County, is not only mitigating current risks but also preparing for a future where communities can thrive in an ever-changing dynamic environment.

Conclusion

Through proactive policies and community engagement, Los Angeles County strives to navigate the complexities of a changing climate and safeguard its people, environment, infrastructure and economies. This approach helps minimize the risks and impacts associated with climate-related hazards. Addressing climate change in hazard mitigation help enhance safer, healthier, and more sustainable communities.