

Executive summary

Since releasing the Oregon Climate and Health Profile Report in 2014, Oregon:

- Recorded its warmest year (2015)
- Saw the lowest snowpack on record (2015)
- Had one of the most severe fire seasons in modern history (2015)
- Declared drought emergencies in 24 counties (2015)
- Was declared a major national disaster area for damage caused by extreme storms, floods and landslides (2016)

These changes in our climate threaten our access to:

clean air

- Air pollution from increased ground-level ozone and wildfire smoke will likely worsen respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses.
- Increased CO2 concentrations and higher temperatures will prolong allergy seasons, complicating respiratory conditions.
- Wildfire smoke and drought are a problem in many Oregon communities, threatening family incomes and quality of life.

clean water,

- Water quality could be compromised by both drought and increased water temperatures, leading to conditions that give rise to harmful algal blooms and waterborne diseases.
- Drinking water sources can become contaminated from flooding.
- Drought conditions affect agricultural production which could lead to an increased use of chemicals, threatening Oregon waterways.

and healthy food

- Drought conditions in Oregon and elsewhere, could increase the cost of food resulting in food insecurity, especially among vulnerable populations.
- Certain food crops will decrease in nutritional value (zinc, iron and protein content) due to the increase in CO2 concentrations, potentially exacerbating malnutrition.
- American Indians risk further loss of First Foods, including the loss of native roots, berries, fish and game.

We are all in this together

... yet some of us are better positioned to weather the storm.

- Communities of color and low-income households already bear a disproportionate burden of disease and have less access to opportunities and resources to cope with emerging challenges.
- Children will likely experience more cumulative health effects as more extreme weather events and climate-related disruptions continue to unfold over the next decades

Oregon is not yet ready

... for the environmental health challenges that lie ahead.

- A recent assessment of Oregon's public health system found we are not currently equipped to handle the complex and emerging environmental risks that climate change will exacerbate in Oregon.
- 98% of health departments report having only partial to minimal ability to identify and prevent environmental health hazards.
- Environmental health programs are not universally implemented across the state. More than a quarter report not having the basic capacity to conduct mandated inspections.

We now have a plan.

It starts with building our workforce capacity to promote long-term changes in:

- The plan includes case studies and videos that highlight how our public health workforce is already taking action to build community resilience.
- Our Climate and Health Program is leading a collaborative of local health departments across the state who are implementing resilience strategies.
- Climate and health strategies in the new Resilience Plan include:

policies,

- Actively engaging with our diverse community partners and elevating the voices of our most vulnerable populations to inform policy priorities.
- Informing policies that affect air quality and reduce air pollution.
- Promoting policies that strengthen our local food systems.

systems,

- Conducting regular monitoring of climate and health indicators, and monitoring the progress made on our resilience strategies.
- Equipping our health care partners with the information they need to protect patients from climate-related health risks.
- Supporting community-driven climate adaptations that contribute to building an evidence base for effective climate and health interventions.

and environments.

- Promoting community improvements that encourage walking, biking and the use of public transit.
- Helping to ensure access to safe places for communities to gather, build community and take refuge.
- Prioritizing public health interventions that address the root causes of health inequities and preventable diseases in Oregon.

Find out more about what YOU can do to build climate resilience:

www.oregonhealth.org/climate