

# Climate Change Information Resources

## New York Metropolitan Region

(CCIR-NYC)



1

## What is being done in other major urban areas to adapt to climate change?

### Key Points

Policymakers in many urban areas have begun to define the role of climate change adaptation within a broad climate change policy. Boston, Toronto, and London are among the leaders in this type of planning.

### Types of Adaptation Research and Policy

Policymakers and public agencies in many urban areas have begun to expand their agendas to include adaptation to climate change and to define its role within a broad climate change policy. Most climate-related policymaking to date has focused on mitigation strategies, such as emissions reductions. As climate adaptation attracts attention, an increasing number of governmental agencies are allocating resources (both capital and human resources) to review adaptation options.

Much of this current activity focuses on general assessment research and risk estimation. Research is an important initial phase of such policy development. The major focus of adaptation policy so far is on accurate predictions of climate change. Future climate impacts must be estimated before it is possible to plan adaptation responses.

Governments at all levels (national, state, county, metropolitan, city) have begun fostering research on climate change adaptation for urban areas. This research deals with a range of adaptation topics including potential impacts and possible adaptations, but most frequently on issues associated with human health, water management, and protection of the physical environment. While some governments have formed their own task forces, like Miami-Dade County, most public agencies have not undertaken research on their own. Instead, agencies usually partner with and/or support universities, research institutes, and other private organizations to conduct climate impact studies and assessments.

### Examples of Adaptation Research

The United Kingdom has been a leader with respect to developing the science of assessing climate change impacts. A number of regional studies have already been undertaken. The ASCCUE Project (Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment) is conducting research in Manchester, England, on the integrity of structures and the vulnerability of communities in flood-prone areas. The project is funded by the UK government through the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the UK Climate Impacts Programme. In Canada, government support through Environment Canada and the city of Toronto, among others, has produced an independent climate impacts-and-options report on human health in the

Toronto area. California's Department of Water Resources is presently drafting its Water Plan, which includes assessment and research on climate effects on the water infrastructure of the state's urban areas. The CLIMB (Climate's Long-Term Impacts on Metro Boston) Project is an ongoing, comprehensive study supported by the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council, involving research at two universities on a range of potential climate impacts on the city.

Finally, the London Climate Change Partnership, with connection to a wide group of organizations led by the Greater London Authority, has produced a study focused on metropolitan London. The study involves a detailed assessment of the potential climate change impacts on this major urban area which is equivalent in size and complexity to the New York metropolitan region. The London Climate Change Partnership is a group of private, voluntary and public organizations, including national, regional and local government and agencies.

### References

- ASCCUE (Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment). (2003) Building Knowledge for a Changing Climate. [http://www.art.man.ac.uk/PLANNING/cure/PDF/ASCCUE\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.art.man.ac.uk/PLANNING/cure/PDF/ASCCUE_brochure.pdf)
- California Department of Water Resources (2004). California Water Plan, Update 2003. <http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/b160/workgroups/chapterreviewgroup.htm>
- CLIMB (2004). Climate's Long-Term Impacts on Metro Boston <http://www.tufts.edu/tie/climb/index.html>
- London Climate Change Partnership (2002a). London's Warming: The Impacts of Climate Change on London, Summary Report. <http://www.ukcip.org.uk/london/london.html>
- London Climate Change Partnership (2002b). London's Warming: The Impacts of Climate Change on London, Technical Report. <http://www.ukcip.org.uk/london/london.html>
- Pielke, Jr., Roger A. (1998). Rethinking the role of adaptation in climate policy. *Global Environmental Change*. 8(2). Pollution Probe Foundation. (2002). Toward an Adaptation Action Plan: Climate Change and Health in the Toronto-Niagara Region. Climate Change Action Fund Project. <http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Reports/adaptation.pdf>
- Ursery, Stephen (2003). Miami-Dade studying climate change. [http://www.americancityandcounty.com/mag/government\\_miamidade\\_studying\\_climate/](http://www.americancityandcounty.com/mag/government_miamidade_studying_climate/)

**Cynthia Rosenzweig**, Goddard Institute for Space Studies (<http://www.giss.nasa.gov/>)

**William Solecki**, Hunter College, City University of New York (<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/>)