

Current events

Climate Change

1. The problem: What we know

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)

2. Standpoints: Public opinion

How not to talk about climate change (video)

Political Polarization & Climate change

3. Important political concerns

(Remember, climate change is a common pool problem, and too much CO₂ is a negative side effect)

Who goes first? (The Tragedy of the Commons)

What's fair? (Environmental Justice)

Cost? Who pays?

4. Solutions

Technology

Cap and Trade

Command and Control: The Clean Air Act

Massachusetts v. EPA

5. Elections matter

The 2008 election allows Cap and Trade to make progress in Congress

The 2010 election shifted the House to oppose action on climate

The 2012 election allowed Obama to push his climate agenda from the White House

The 2014 election shifted the Senate to oppose action on climate

The 2016 gave control of the executive and legislative branches to opponents of action on climate change

But – environmental institutions persist

Example: The U.S. Global Change Research Program

6. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015 (The Paris Climate Agreement)

The parties to the framework agreement developed individual national plans to reach the targets.

The parties agreed to

- A long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels;
- On the need for global emissions to peak as soon as possible, recognizing that this will take longer for developing countries;
- To undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with the best available science.
- Come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science;
- Report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets;
- Track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system.

7. Federalism Matters

“Blue” states like California take the lead against climate change

“Red” (Republican) states fight back bitterly

State Attorneys general in the trenches