

Study: Few states preparing for climate change

By Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

Fewer than half of American states are working to protect themselves from climate change, despite more detailed warnings from scientists that communities are already being damaged, according to a new online clearinghouse of states' efforts compiled by the Georgetown Climate Center.

Fourteen states have plans to prepare for the effects of climate change. California, New York and Maryland are among those that have made the greatest progress toward the dozens of goals their plans set forth, such as cutting statewide greenhouse gas emissions, improving infrastructure, securing water supplies, battling wildfires or coping with rising sea levels. Even those states have much work ahead of them, though.

Another eight states and the District of Columbia are devising similar plans, and some counties and towns have plans in place, too. But more than half of American states have not taken any steps to address the threats posed by climate change, leaving them vulnerable to predicted flooding, drought and wildfire, and leaving taxpayers on the hook for the cleanup.

The online tool is meant to give communities a way to track what their state is doing to adapt to climate change. Lawmakers and regulators could also use the tool to glean ideas from states that are further along.

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