MIKE'S PLAN TO BOLSTER AMERICA'S CLIMATE RESILIENCE
FACT SHEET

The world is seeing the effects of climate change faster than many imagined, from catastrophic wildfires across the West and months-long flooding in the Midwest to extreme storms battering the coasts and heat waves across the country.

Communities that often contribute the least to carbon pollution bear the immense burden of climate disaster first and worst. Low-income as well as underserved communities are often the hardest-hit when disaster strikes, and face marginalization during the disaster recovery process. Also often overlooked are people with disabilities, who are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events and disasters and are 2 to 4 times more likely to die or sustain a critical injury.

Even as we work to avoid the worst impacts by rapidly reducing carbon pollution and investing in a clean energy economy, we have to equip communities to cope with climate impacts and recover when disaster strikes. Communities should be built to minimize flood damage, including by restoring wetlands and floodplains that naturally protect against floods, communities should also be built to mitigate extreme heat, with better tree cover and building materials, and local governments must be ready to protect seniors and others when heat waves strike. Forests can be managed to reduce the severity of fires, and the electrical grid updated to minimize blackouts. Despite these needs, the current administration is failing to adequately prepare and invest. Last year alone, extreme weather events linked to climate change cost the U.S. billions of dollars, yet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) didn’t mention climate change even once in its most recent risk assessment.

Mike’s plan builds on his track record in New York City implementing strategies to protect the community and infrastructure from floods, storm damage and other effects of the climate crisis. As president, Mike will invest heavily not only to lower the emissions that are causing climate change, but also to ensure that Americans across the country, as well as the critical infrastructure they rely upon, are prepared for the impacts of climate change. His policy bolsters investment in climate-smart infrastructure, with a focus on climate justice -- protecting the most vulnerable communities.

Mike’s additional priorities on disaster response and recovery are forthcoming.

At a glance, Mike’s climate change resilience initiatives (linked to sections below):
- Prioritize the most vulnerable communities and invest in community resilience
- Provide cities, states and the private sector with better climate data and practices
- Direct the Department of Defense to invest in resilience for mission-critical facilities
- Implement a cross-agency strategy to protect natural areas and working lands
- Lead by example - ensure the federal government promotes best practices in climate resilience
HOW MIKE WILL GET IT DONE:

PRIORITIZE THE MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND INVEST IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Hundreds of U.S. communities are at risk of damage from extreme storms. As shown by the devastating impact of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, vulnerable communities are less able to cope with natural disasters. Ensuring these communities and their critical infrastructure such as buildings, dams, transportation and the electrical grid are more resilient to storms, sea level rise, and other effects of climate change will require major investment -- but there is currently no dedicated federal program or plan to increase funding.

The only way to prepare our communities is to construct and upgrade our infrastructure and natural systems to reduce flooding, lower heat impacts, and prepare us for drought and a myriad of other extreme weather effects we are experiencing in the country today. And we know that for every $1 spent on hazard mitigation, $6 is saved on future disaster-related costs. Mike will create a program to address this and ensure that vulnerable communities receive the resources they need.

- **Mike will create a federal Climate-Safe Communities program to help states, cities, territories, tribes, and the private sector invest in resilience, giving priority to underserved communities.** The program will include funding for community leaders and community-based organizations to develop plans, with community input, for investments in resilience that prioritize projects that offer multiple benefits to address community needs. The program will:
  - Include a **Cooler Communities program** to mitigate the effects of extreme heat events, using proven strategies such as expanding tree canopy and reflective roofs and pavement to reduce urban temperatures, in addition to having plans in place for when heat waves strike.
  - Prioritize smart, sustainable infrastructure, including protecting and restoring natural resilience systems, such as wetlands and floodplains, that help protect communities against extreme weather.
  - Prioritize green infrastructure like landscaping that channels stormwater runoff into groundwater, augmenting water systems’ ability to handle storms.
  - Include support for public health systems to be ready to support communities dealing with health hazards like mosquito-borne disease and extreme heat.

- **Mike will prioritize critical infrastructure and coordinate public and private investment in making critical infrastructure resilient.** Ramp up federal efforts with the private sector to coordinate and invest in making resilient critical infrastructure and innovation to develop and design climate-safe solutions -- including in energy, telecommunications, public safety and transportation.

- **Mike will create an Infrastructure Resilience Finance Corporation** to provide loans, loan guarantees, credit enhancement and grants to help cities, states and the private sector make the necessary investments in making communities, critical infrastructure, and natural and working lands resilient to climate change impacts.

PROVIDE CITIES, STATES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WITH BEST-IN-CLASS DATA AND PRACTICES
Poor access to data on climate change, limited technical knowledge and local resources can be barriers to community planning. For example, FEMA flood maps have not been updated to reflect projections from the latest climate forecasts, leaving communities to rely on outdated information in their planning. Mike’s plan will ensure that the federal government empowers local leaders with the data they need.

- **Mike will foster collaboration between the public and private sectors to improve access to climate data.** Through a new public-private sector hub for climate data, up-to-date data and maps (including FEMA’s flood maps) and other tools that communities can use in planning and decision-making will be made available to state and local decision makers. Provide technical assistance to states, cities, territories and tribes to augment their ability to generate and use data on the effects of climate change. This technical assistance will also help engage the public to understand climate change’s potential impacts and the effectiveness of resilience strategies.

- **Mike will leverage federal research capacity** to advance innovation and cutting-edge strategies for making communities resilient to climate impacts.

**DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO INVEST IN RESILIENCE FOR MISSION-CRITICAL FACILITIES**

Climate change threatens the safety and reliability of critical infrastructure systems. The Department of Defense has found that two-thirds of its mission-critical military facilities face threats from climate change, including flooding, wind, drought, desertification, wildfires and thawing permafrost. President Trump rescinded presidential directives to plan for climate change.

- **Mike will prioritize resilience of defense infrastructure.** Reinstate the presidential directive on military preparedness for climate change, direct the Department of Defense to include critical climate resilience investments in its annual budgets, and prioritize strategies that enhance both resilience to climate change impacts and energy self-sufficiency.

**IMPLEMENT A CROSS-AGENCY STRATEGY TO PROTECT NATURAL AREAS AND WORKING LANDS**

Natural lands are critical to maintaining clean air, clean water and resilience in the face of flooding, hurricanes, wildfires, drought and other effects of climate change. Farms, forests and other working lands can also mitigate climate impacts by contributing to carbon sequestration.

- **Mike will direct the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, the USDA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers to work with local communities to develop resilience strategies for natural areas and working lands, aimed to maximize protection against climate hazards and protect communities.**
  - Create block grants to help states and cities acquire and otherwise protect floodplains, wetlands, coastal salt marshes and other natural areas that are critical to protecting communities from extreme weather.
  - Expand Farm Bill conservation programs to help farmers make their land more resilient, reduce carbon emissions and improve carbon sequestration.
  - Make fire resilience a priority for the Forest Service, develop far-reaching forest resilience and forest health plans, and double funding (to $10 billion) for wildfire
management, with half of that dedicated to resilience efforts (see Mike’s Wildfire Resilience Plan).

LEAD BY EXAMPLE - ENSURE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROMOTES BEST PRACTICES IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has identified significant flood risks to federal property, including $83 billion worth of federal assets located in the 100-year floodplain, and $23 billion in assets in the 500-year floodplain. Yet the Trump administration revoked a 2015 Executive Order establishing a federal flood risk management standard, and has proposed to no longer require federal agencies to consider the climate implications of new infrastructure. Mike will:

- **Require that all new federal infrastructure be made resilient to climate change, and develop a plan to retrofit existing infrastructure.** He will direct agencies to evaluate and address government-wide climate risks to prepare infrastructure to withstand 500-year disasters.

- **Re-establish the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard** to require that federally-funded structures account for future changes in flood elevation, building 2-3 feet above the 100-year flood elevation or building to the 500-year flood elevation.

- **Mike will update the use of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure** that climate risks, climate impacts, environmental impacts, and equity concerns are considered in environmental reviews, and separately in the budget development process.

MIKE’S RECORD

As Mayor of New York City, Mike navigated extreme weather events and invested in climate resilience – making the city safer from the inevitable effects of climate change. He also:

- Invested $2 billion in green infrastructure programs.
- Convened 20 public and private infrastructure operators to work together to strengthen the city’s resilience.
- Updated building codes to account for climate-change threats, including flooding and extreme heat.
- Convened the New York City Panel on Climate Change to develop the city’s first official climate change projections to ensure all climate and planning efforts were using the best available science.
- Updated the city’s flood maps with help from FEMA and created the city’s first forward-looking flood maps that incorporated future expected sea level rise to guide infrastructure planning.
- Convened a Task Force of more than 20 public and private infrastructure operators to collaboratively work together to harden the city’s critical infrastructure against climate risks.
- Implemented a multi-billion program to reinforce utilities, liquid fuel supplies, telecommunications systems, roads, tunnels and other critical infrastructure.
- Launched a $2 billion green infrastructure program that minimized flood risks and saved money while greening neighborhoods.

THE ISSUE
Studies show that climate change could cost the United States economy 10.5% of its GDP, displace millions of residents, and render whole communities uninhabitable by 2100 if no action is taken to reduce emissions and strengthen resilience. In 2019 alone, extreme weather events linked to climate change cost the U.S. billions of dollars.

- The U.S. has seen a historic high of billion-dollar disasters since 2015, with all five years seeing 10 or more billion-dollar climate disaster events.
- 13 million Americans are projected to lose their homes by the end of the century due to rising sea levels.
- The poorest communities in the U.S. are disproportionately affected by these events and face a higher economic cost from storm damage. Wealthy white residents are more likely to accumulate wealth in the wake of a disaster when compared with their black neighbors.
- The U.S. has no climate disaster recovery plan, and climate-related natural disasters stand to cost the federal government $28 billion annually within 40 years.
- Flood maps compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine where flood insurance is required have not been updated to account for shifting climate forecasts.
- President Trump has rescinded all existing presidential directives to plan for climate change.
- For every $1 spent on disaster preparation, we see a return of $6.

**Trump**

Despite the devastating floods, wildfires, storms, and droughts that have occurred during Trump’s term in office, his administration has taken no steps to foster long-term resilience planning or empower states or regions to do the same. In fact, his suppression and censorship of climate science within federal agencies has undermined any efforts to plan for the coming risks or fund proactive, resilient infrastructure.

Specific actions under his administration include:

- **FEMA refusing to plan for, or even mention, sea-level rise and drought in its most recent risk assessment.**
- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture quashing the release of a sweeping plan on how to respond to climate change.**
- **Weakening the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) history,** eliminating the rules governing environmental assessments of infrastructure projects and easing regulations on environmental impact projections.
- **Rescinding the Department of Defense’s 2014 Climate Change Roadmap,** which launched a defense-wide review of U.S. installations to identify vulnerabilities and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- **Rolling back flood standards for federal infrastructure projects,** like roads and bridges, that required the government to account for sea-level rise and other climate change effects.
- **Revoking an Obama executive order promoting “climate resilience” in the northern Bering Sea region of Alaska,** which withdrew local waters from oil and gas leasing and established a tribal advisory council to consult on local environmental issues.