

FOREWORD

A Message from the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change

As the task force met over the course of 2020, the U.S. experienced another unprecedented year of extreme heat, wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding. The devastation of these disasters impacted the lives and livelihoods of Americans already struggling to cope during a world-wide pandemic.

While the climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic are distinct, the known systemic impacts are not. Like COVID-19, climate change is a global phenomenon requiring massive structural transformations of economic and social institutions.¹

The effects of climate change transect all sectors, geographies, and people. And while we all experience these changes, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted, bearing the most severe consequences.

Failing to act swiftly and leaving the climate crisis to manifest unchecked will continue to wreak havoc across the nation and in the great state of Wisconsin. Conceptualizing the magnitude of the problem is challenging. However,

we know that this global phenomenon is experienced locally.

Wisconsin's climate is changing. Climate challenges include more hot, humid weather with more intense and more frequent heavy rainfalls, as well as freezing winter rain instead of snow, followed by deep winter freezes (such as those from a polar vortex). These changes affect the stability of Wisconsin's economic sectors as well as human health and safety.² Immediate action is necessary.

- We must develop opportunities to mitigate carbon emissions and increase renewable energy;
- We must enhance our infrastructure's adaptive capacity and strengthen overall environmental, economic, and social resilience;
- We must educate and train our workforce with the skills needed for a transition to a low-carbon economy; and
- We must ensure all actions are equitable and intentionally minimize unintended and disproportionate impacts.

This is the first step in bold and courageous action. Developed collaboratively by appointees

from all sectors, institutions, and communities across the state—and under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes—it is with great pleasure and responsibility that the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change presents the following recommendations for consideration by Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin State Legislature.



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