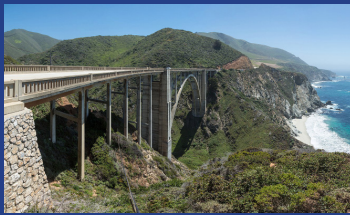


# Paying it Forward:

## The Path Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure in California



A Report of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group to the California State Legislature and the Strategic Growth Council

September 2018



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# Preface

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*“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking.  
It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”  
— Albert Einstein*

The science is clear: our climate is changing. Our traditional ways of thinking, of doing business, of building things – including the processes we have devised to design, finance, construct and operate our infrastructure – must change as well. With change, however, always comes opportunity and resistance. People can agree on the need for change, but reasonably disagree on how to move forward in the face of it. We – the AB 2800 Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group – encountered many tensions around viable ways forward. This report lays them out and offers our answers.

We wrestled with irreducible uncertainties about the future and the familiar, seemingly stable averages and patterns of variability of the past.

We struggled with the need to build to one number – common in traditional engineering and building practice – versus the need to plan for a range of future states.

We grappled with focusing not just on one bridge, one building, one transmission pole or one levee, but rather on infrastructure as a system, including the interdependencies and the interconnections among them all.

We worked to find a way to balance the needs of all – especially those traditionally underserved, neglected, or forgotten – with those who have the resources, finances and already a seat at the table.

We tried to stay focused on forward-looking climate science but recognized that more than the climate is changing, thus requiring additional forward-looking science.

We vacillated between what is and what is not “state infrastructure” and thus with how narrowly or widely applicable this report should be.

In all these ways, we lived in the tension between a narrow interpretation of AB 2800 and a broader one – more adequate to the task, and more adequate to the challenge that is not just faced by California State agencies, but by local jurisdictions, other states, federal agencies, and engineers and architects the world over.

Through months of discussions, deepening of our understanding, and the input we received from others, we have come to this resolution: California can and should lead the nation in – in the same way that it leads on greenhouse gas mitigation – building climate-safe infrastructure for the benefit of all. Given observed climate extremes and the science of climate change, doing nothing is simply not part of our State’s future that we envision.

The late Stephen Hawking once said, “Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.” Through the work we have done and compiled in this report, we have found that we need the collective contributions of physical and social scientists, engineers and architects, as well as well a multitude of others – planners, legal experts, financial advisors, community leaders, unions, elected officials and advocates – to build the California we want. All hold pieces of information – and often wisdom – without which we would not get to a safe, reliable, resilient and sustainably functioning infrastructure that supports society. We offer this report as a down payment on the debt we owe not just the forward-thinking leaders of the past, but that we owe to our future.



# Acknowledgements

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The members of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group and the Project Team would like to extend their gratitude to all who have contributed to the deliberations of the Working Group.

First are all the webinar speakers who offered their expertise, experience and wisdom on the many aspects involved in making climate-safe infrastructure a reality: Mike Sanio, Kathryn Wright, Peter Adams, Dan Cayan, Patrick Barnard, Nicolas Luco, Morgan Page, Gurdeep Bhattal, James Deane, Cris Liban, Kate White, Amir AghaKouchak, Andrew Schwarz, Maya Hayden, Jeff Odefey, Tina Hodges, J. Alfredo Gomez, Stephen A. Cauffman, Ira Feldman, Nancy Ander, Tom Wells, Guido Franco, Martha Brook, Kristin Heinemeier, Chester Widom, Jennifer Goldsmith-Grinspoon, Leslie Chapman-Henderson, Andreas Georgoulas, Shalini Vajjhala, David Dodd, John Cleveland, Vladimir Antikarov, Karl Schultz, Deborah Moore, Chione Flegel, Katie Grace Deane, Richard Moss, Susi Moser, Alex Wilson, David Groves, Wes Sullens, Kristin Baja, Jennifer Jurado, Peter Murdoch, Andreas Georgoulas, Caitlin MacLean, Brad Benson, Joyce Coffee, Cara Pike, Edward Maibach and Colin Wellenkamp (see Appendix 3 for affiliations and topics). Your contributions have served as an invaluable resource to us. Thank you also to the California Energy Commission and University of Southern California's Sea Grant Program for lending us their webinar platforms to host these important and informative events. We also appreciate the many webinar attendees who gave of their time and offered valuable questions to the speakers.

Next, we similarly would like to acknowledge and thank the experts who joined our meetings and who provided detailed insights into the various challenges we all face in building climate-safe infrastructure: Secretary John Laird, Hon. Bill Quirk, Jamesine Rogers Gibson, Bruce Blanning, Deputy Secretary for Climate and Energy Keali'i Bright, Sabrina Bornstein, Matt Barnard, Steve Reel, John Thomas, Kit Batten, Bob Battalio, Nate Kaufman, Jim Thorne, Nicole Meyer-Morse, Millie Levin, Louise Bedsworth, Phil Gibbons, Cody Hooven, Ralph Redman, Andrew Martin, Beverly Scott and Bilal Ayyub (see Chapter 1, Table 1.1 for affiliations and topics). Your example and expertise pushed us to think harder and bigger about what is needed to integrate forward-looking science into infrastructure planning, design, construction and operation. In addition, thank you to the invited experts and interested individuals – too many to mention – who joined the Working Group meetings and contributed during public comment periods or actively joined interactive exercises. This bolstered the collective expertise and we benefited greatly.

Our appreciation also goes to the many researchers who contributed to Fourth and prior California Climate Change Assessments – too numerous to mention individually, but greatly appreciated for all their work to help us better understand the risks California is facing from climate change.

Many others have contributed in various ways to this project and report, and we are thankful to all even if we cannot name them all individually: those who have helped us find or grant permission to use photos and illustrations; pointed us to important sources of information, tools, platforms and reports; helped us secure venues for meetings; and provided us insight into related efforts happening across the country, in local, state and federal governments, professional societies, cross-agency working groups, and even in other countries. A special thanks goes to Susan Fischer Wilhelm, Tom Wells, Elisa Ragno, Farshid Vahedifard, Charlotte Stevenson and Carol Berzonsky.






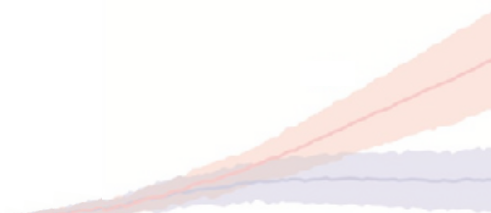
# Abbreviations

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AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
AB 2800	Assembly Bill 2800 (Quirk, 2016)
AGU	American Geophysical Union
APG	Adaptation Planning Guide
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
BCA	Benefit-cost analysis
CAAP	Clean Air Action Plan
CalEMA	California Emergency Management Agency
CalOES	California Office of Emergency Services
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
Cal-MOP	California-centric Manual of Practice (see MOP)
CAS	Climate Adaptation Strategy
CAT	Climate Action Team
CC	Climate change
CCC	California Coastal Commission
CCTAG	Climate Change Technical Advisory Group (DWR)
CEC	California Energy Commission
CNRA	California Natural Resources Agency
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
CoSMoS	Coastal Storm Modeling System (USGS)
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CSIWG	Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group
DGS	Department of General Services (California)
DMDU	Decision Making Under Deep Uncertainty
DMUU	Decision Making Under Uncertainty
DOF	Department of Finance (California)
DWR	Department of Water Resources (California)
EIFD	Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District
EO	Executive Order
ESCO	Energy Service Company
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance factors important to investors
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAO	General Accounting Office
GSA	General Service Administration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G/NBI	Green/Nature-based infrastructure
GRC	General Rate Case



HSRA	High Speed Rail Authority
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
IOU	Investor-owned utility
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LAO	Legislative Analyst's Office (California)
LID	Low-impact development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOP	Manual of Practice (ASCE)
MWDBEs	Minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged business entities
NCA4	Fourth National Climate Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Science and the Environment
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NSRDB	National Solar Radiation Database
OPC	Ocean Protection Council (California)
OPR	Office of Planning and Research (California)
PA	Public Assistance (FEMA)
PACCLIM	Pacific Climate conference
PNPs	Private nonprofit
RAMP	Risk Assessment Mitigation Phase (related to natural gas risk mitigation)
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway
RDM	Robust Decision-Making
ROI	Return on Investment
SDG&E	San Diego Gas & Electric Company
SPFC	State Plan of Flood Control (DWR, California)
TMY	Typical Meteorological Year
USGCRP	United States Global Change Research Program
USGS	United States Geological Survey





# Paying It Forward: Executive Summary

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## Introduction

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During the fall and winter of 2017-18, California residents lived through a devastating series of disasters. After years of drought, devastating wildfires ravaged hundreds of homes from Northern to Southern California; deluge rain events after the fires led to catastrophic floods, mudslides and debris flows that washed away bare soil, houses and cars and closed stretches of Highway 101, crippling transportation routes. Over this time, the state received five Major Disaster Declarations, three Emergency Declarations and 23 Fire Management Assistance Declarations – a combination never experienced before. Sixty-five Californians lost their lives and thousands of homes, numerous roads, communication towers, phone and electricity distribution lines, fleet vehicles, parks and so on either were destroyed or sustained damages that are still being tallied and remedied. Against a backdrop of infrastructure that some describe as “crumbling,” these extreme events offer a first-row seat to the fragility of our infrastructure systems and give us a glimpse of the future in a changing climate. For people to be safe, our communities must be prepared. Our infrastructure must be resilient and sustainable to withstand these growing threats, particularly from worsening extreme events. Yet California’s infrastructure is not.

The state’s infrastructure is aging and deteriorating and – despite recent increases in investment – still requires better upkeep and modernization. Lack of emergency action plans for high-hazard infrastructure, a long backlog of deferred maintenance projects and billion-dollar gaps in spending on infrastructure upkeep plague the state of infrastructure in the fifth largest economy in the world. These truths provide a stark backdrop to the rapidly growing need of investing in new infrastructure and preparing for the accelerating negative impacts of climate change.

Through the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Bill, AB 2800 (Quirk), and with State leadership and foresight in climate

change adaptation planning, California is seeking to understand how it can better prepare its existing and new infrastructure for climate conditions that will be increasingly different from the current ones. The State is seeking to ensure a climate-safe future.

California is already experiencing the impacts of climate change as well as more extreme events that exceed the standards (and the environmental conditions underlying them) to which the state’s infrastructure was built. This – together with existing infrastructure modernization needs – places urgency on State policy-makers to determine how to spend infrastructure dollars wisely. Through various propositions, the State has nearly \$62 billion dollars available in voter-approved bond sales to invest in built and nature-based infrastructure. Billions of dollars in recovery funding after recent disasters, a good portion of which can be used toward rebuilding infrastructure, provide additional resources for a new generation of infrastructure.

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*Our infrastructure must be  
resilient and sustainable to  
withstand these growing threats,  
particularly from worsening  
extreme events.*

---

While these billions of dollars may seem like a windfall, they are only a down-payment on the statewide infrastructure investment needed. These available funds could easily be squandered on maladaptive projects if climate-safe infrastructure policies and guidelines are not put in place today. The State thus has a crucial opportunity to be a national and even international leader on modernizing and building critical infrastructure that is fit not just for today, but for a climate-change impacted tomorrow.

## Mandate and Goals of this Report

AB 2800 mandated that a panel of scientists, registered engineers and architects be convened to help the State of California understand how it can best incorporate forward-looking climate information into the state's infrastructure design, planning and implementation ([Chapter 1](#), Box 1.2). This Executive Summary highlights the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group's (CSIWG) major findings and recommendations.

This report summarizes the CSIWG's deliberations in response to the mandate of AB 2800 and offers recommendations to the California State Legislature and the Strategic Growth Council. Together, these recommendations chart a path toward helping California invest in climate-safe infrastructure. The report addresses the infrastructure that was built decades, even a century, ago – from historical bridges, to major dams, highways and buildings – and the infrastructure that will be built in the coming years and is meant to last for many decades to come (Figure ES.1).

While this effort initially sought to solve the as-yet-unresolved challenge of incorporating forward-looking climate information into infrastructure design (something engineers and architects have struggled with for years), the Working Group discovered that the science challenge in moving toward climate-safe infrastructure is significant, but not intractable. Equally, if not more, difficult are those challenges that require profound shifts in values, thinking, priority setting and policy commitments.

This report responds to the legislative intent for AB 2800, which is to make California communities safer and to save lives. While saving lives is more likely if decisions are informed by the best available knowledge, science alone will not guarantee our safety. Saving lives is a matter of what and who we value as a society. It requires reckoning with what we believe deserves our dedicated investment and is ultimately dependent upon the decisions we make and actions we take. Investing in a climate-safe future for all is a way of creating a positive legacy. It is *paying it forward*.

The recommendations in this report aim to incentivize and inspire legislators, public agency leaders, engineers, architects, scientists, consultants and contractors, planners and residents to commit to creating a climate-safe future for California.

### Box 1: The Mandate of AB 2800

As mandated in the AB 2800 legislation, the Working Group has a very specific charge, at a minimum, to consider and investigate:

1. The current informational and institutional barriers to integrating projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design;
2. The critical information that engineers [and architects] responsible for infrastructure design and construction need to address climate change impacts; and
3. How to select an appropriate engineering design for a range of future climate scenarios as related to infrastructure planning and investment.

It further mandates that, in a report to the State Legislature and the Strategic Growth Council, the Working Group shall make recommendations to the Legislature that address:

1. Integrating scientific knowledge of projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design;
2. Addressing critical information gaps identified by the working group; and
3. A platform or process to facilitate communication between climate scientists and infrastructure engineers [and architects].



Figure ES.1: Developing climate-safe infrastructure requires the establishment of a strong bridge between science and the engineering community, as well as supportive public policy aligned with the goals of resiliency. (Photo: Bixby Bridge near Big Sur, CA; Russell Mondy, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## Box 2: What Do We Mean by “Climate-Safe” Infrastructure?

We define **climate-safe infrastructure** as infrastructure that is sustainable, adaptive and that meets design criteria that aim for resilience in the face of shocks and stresses caused by the current and future climate. Climate-safe infrastructure should be robust across a range of plausible climate and related socio-economic futures, as determined by the best available knowledge at the time the criteria (standards, codes and guidelines) are set. To remain “climate-safe,” these criteria must be monitored and updated over time to account for changing conditions and the performance of resilience measures taken. Climate-safe infrastructure also reduces heat-trapping emissions to the maximum extent possible to not add to the climate change problem. (Mitigating climate change in this way also complies with California emissions reduction targets.) Furthermore, climate-safe infrastructure addresses socio-economic inequities so that all groups in society increasingly benefit from safe, reliable and sustainable infrastructure.

In short, “climate safety” is not a world free from change and disruption, but a world in which California has committed to seeking the greatest possible safety for all of its residents through the best available knowledge, the best technology and engineering design, a strong workforce, equitably distributed resources and sustained political will.

## The Challenge

California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Fourth Assessment) has confirmed the consensus of the climate change science community:

- Past climate is no longer a reliable guide to future conditions;
- Science has established beyond doubt that the global climate and California’s are changing rapidly;
- The dominant contribution to the observed climate change during recent decades have been greenhouse gas emissions from human activities; and
- Many trends in observed climate change are accelerating and impacts over the next several decades are unavoidable, even if human-caused emissions came to a halt today.

A growing body of studies, including those within the Fourth Assessment, offer detailed projections for, and assessments of, the vulnerability of various infrastructure sectors. Some of these are presented in the full report ([Chapter 2](#)). With this, infrastructure decisions that are made today have the benefit of considerably greater data and understanding of climate processes than decisions that were made in previous decades.

Specific localized projections of climate changes and extremes are of greatest interest to infrastructure planners, yet these will always remain uncertain. Despite the apparent perception to the contrary, the spatial and temporal variability experienced in the past is no more predictable than future spatial and temporal variability. Given the pace, intensity and makeup of California’s changing climate, infrastructure planners now must contend with the uncertainties and potentially new patterns of variability that this rapid change entails.

*The science challenge in moving toward climate-safe infrastructure is significant, but not intractable. Equally difficult are those challenges that require profound shifts in values, thinking, priority setting and policy commitments.*

Fortunately, engineers and architects have considerable experience with building infrastructure to withstand variable conditions. It is clear now, however, that in addition to this variability, engineers and architects must also account for shifting trends in averages and for extremes around those changing averages.

Through its deliberations, the CSIWG describes an adaptive process by which infrastructure planning can proceed with the information that is currently available. It also identifies climate information gaps and needs that – if filled – would be useful moving forward. The action-oriented process entails:

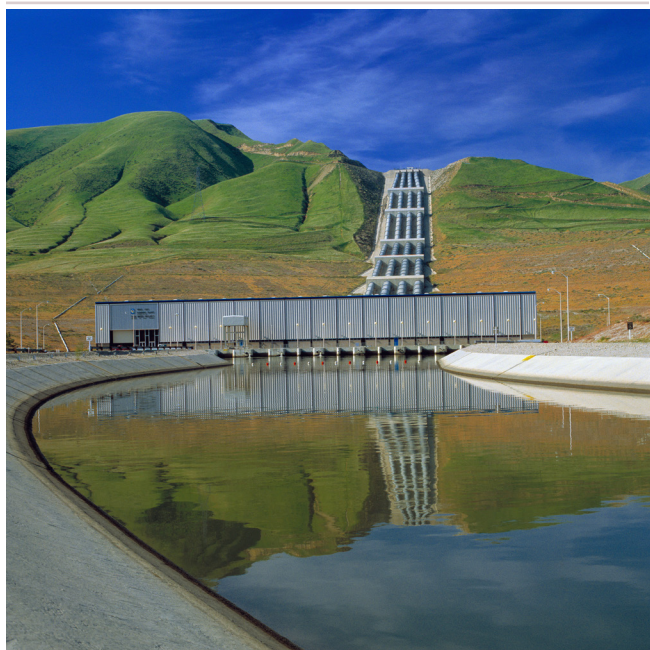
- Using the information that is currently available, while allowing for more refined information to be incorporated in the future;
- Using adaptive designs for planning infrastructure; and
- Developing sustained funding source to advance climate and social science as well as adaptive engineering research to fill identified gaps.

The added threats from climate change will impact state infrastructure that is already in need of improved

maintenance and modernization ([Chapter 3](#)). As recent extreme events and disasters or near-disasters illustrate – some of California’s infrastructure, across all sectors, is already at risk and vulnerable to the impacts of weather and climate extremes. As we rebuild our infrastructure, we can simultaneously seize the opportunity to make our systems more sustainable in a changing climate.

In light of existing infrastructure challenges and the climate outlook, engineers and architects will need a range of new approaches to ensure that infrastructure safety and functionality remain attainable goals. To do so, infrastructure planners and designers must confront old paradigms of stationarity (i.e., assuming statistics of climate averages and extremes remain unchanged over time), and view infrastructure not as individual structures but as whole systems embedded in a more complex and interconnected world (Figure ES.2). They must also deal with the greater constraints on, and new opportunities for, infrastructure systems. Finally, they must also address the present and coming workforce crisis.

California faces a pivotal moment at which the state’s political leaders – at all levels – need to become serious about sustained leadership on infrastructure and commit to making a sustained, “climate-safe” investment in the very foundation of its economy and its communities’ safety and well-being as if California’s future depended on it. It does.



**Figure ES.2:** The interconnected components of California’s water infrastructure illustrate why infrastructure should not be understood as singular physical assets but instead as systems that provide multiple functions to many different users. (Photo: Chrisman Pumping Plant; DWR, used with permission)

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*California faces a pivotal moment at which the state’s political leaders – at all levels – need to commit to making a sustained, “climate-safe” investment in the very foundation of its economy and its communities’ safety and well-being as if California’s future depended on it. It does.*

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## **A Vision of Climate-Safe Infrastructure for All: The Climate-Safe Path**

### **Climate Safety Through Mitigation and Adaptation: The Climate-Safe Path**

Through high-level policies, executive orders and laws, California has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by mid-century. This level of commitment puts the state on a responsible path toward helping the global community achieve the targets of the Paris Accord, namely to limit global average warming to 2°C (3.6°F) or less (1.5°C or 2.7°F) by the end of this century.

As the nearly two decades of international climate negotiations make clear, and as California’s own path to increasingly stricter emissions reduction targets illustrates, stringent mitigation targets are not just a rational choice in light of potentially severe risks; they are a political choice. However difficult it may be to achieve, aiming for 2°C or less is the choice that focuses the compass needle toward greater safety from some of the harmful climate impacts that would occur if emissions were allowed to further destabilize the Earth’s climate system. However, the great difficulty involved in compelling the international community to make this commitment suggests that California must be prepared to contend with much greater climate impacts.

Thus, there is a parallel political choice to be made in setting adaptation targets. Over the past few years, California’s political leaders and state lawmakers have laid some policy foundations for adaptation and now have an opportunity to strengthen adaptation as a political priority. They can send the same directional signal as they did with mitigation, namely, that the safety of communities and the infrastructure on which they and the state’s economy vitally depend is of utmost importance. That choice, consistent with guidance from the Office of Planning and Research, is

to ensure that long-lived infrastructure is planned, and may eventually need to be built, operated and maintained, to withstand future impacts from climate change associated with the “business-as-usual” or high-emissions pathway (currently the RCP 8.5 emissions scenario) (Figure ES.3).

Should it become apparent over time that – globally – society has safely averted a high-emissions future, the adaptive approach promoted in this report should allow for an “off ramp” to adapt to the impacts associated with a lower-emissions pathway. However, determining the point in time when such a transition to a lower-safety threshold is indicated, is both scientifically and politically complex and requires dedicated research and public debate.

By reducing the causes of climate change through mitigation and simultaneously implementing preparedness and adaptation measures, California would pursue the safest of possible climate action pathways any state can take (Figure ES.4). We call this comprehensive strategy “the Climate-Safe Path for All” ([Chapter 4](#)).



Figure ES.3: Stringent emissions reduction targets are not just a rational choice in light of potentially severe risks; they are a political choice. California now has the opportunity to take a similarly strong political stance on adaptation. (Photo: Kevin Dooley, [flickr](#), licenses under Creative Commons License 2.0).

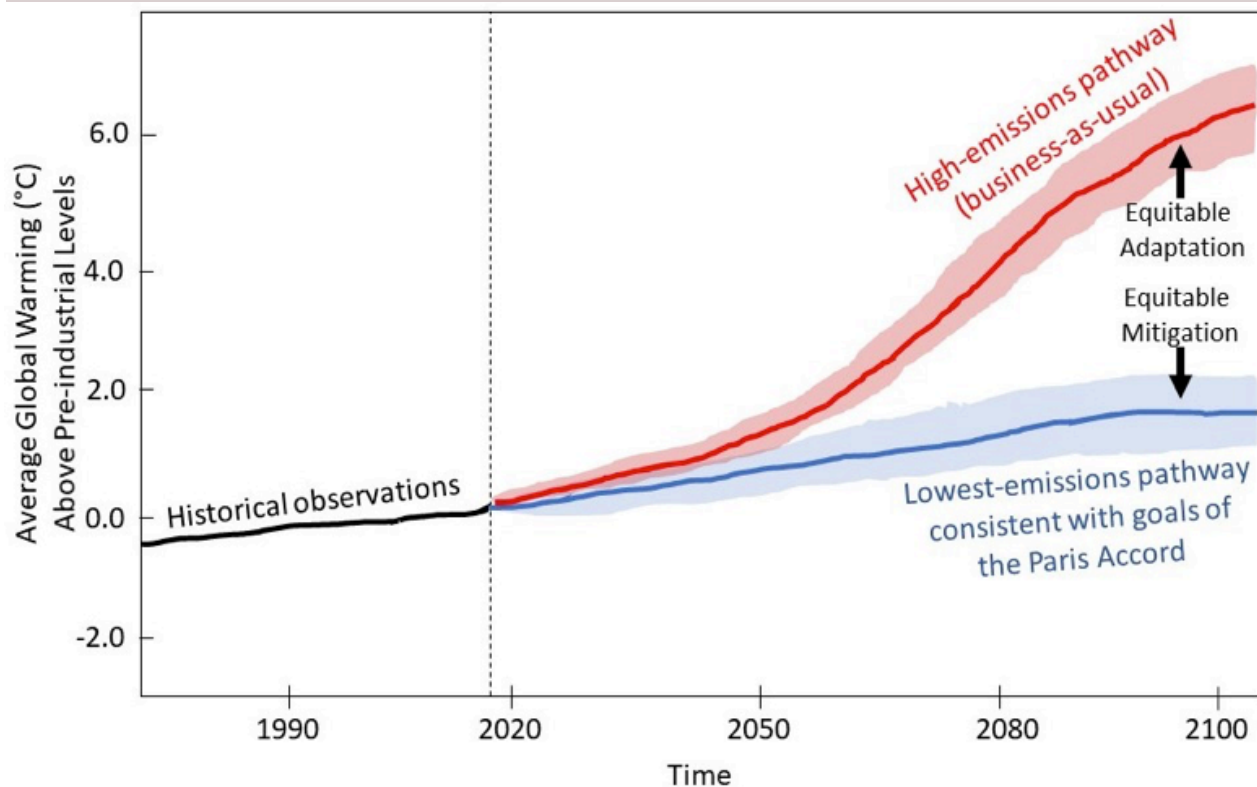


Figure ES.4: The Climate-Safe Path describes the simultaneous pursuit of stringent greenhouse gas mitigation that aims to meet the goals of the Paris Accord while charting an adaptive pathway to protect Californians against the impacts of a high-emissions scenario, both implemented with a central focus on social equity.

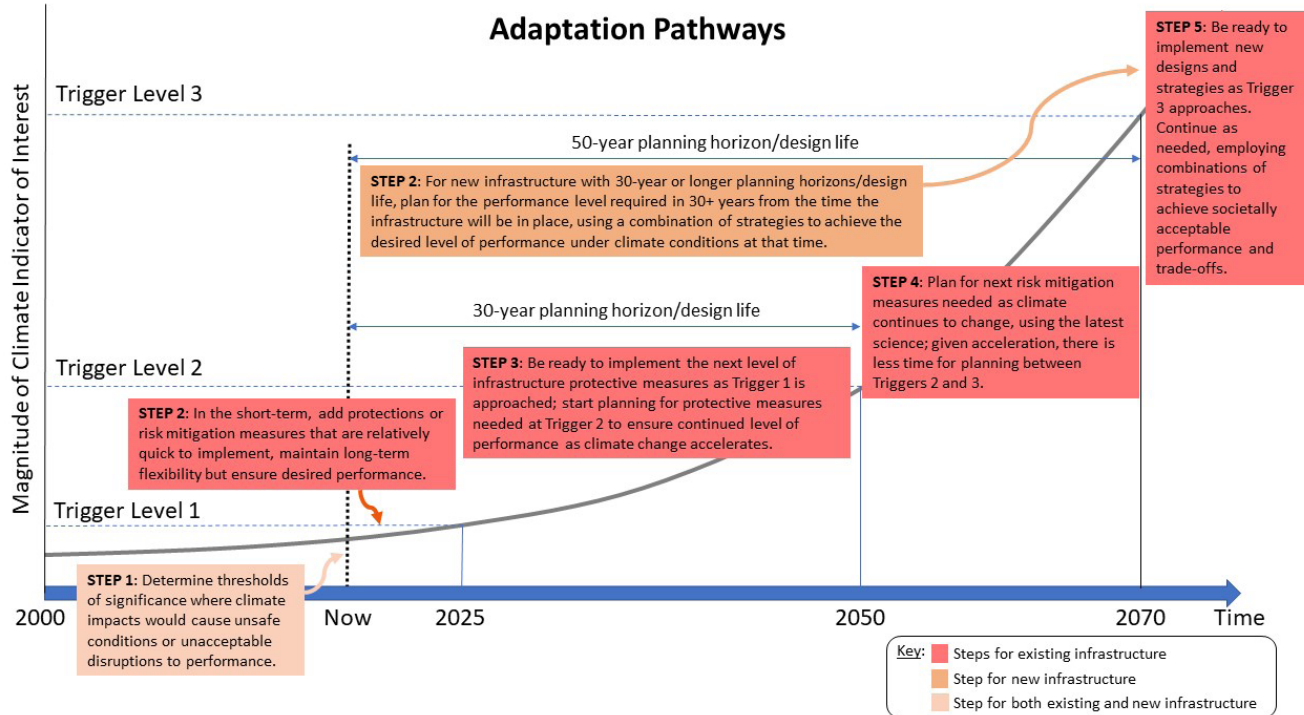


## Realizing the Climate-Safe Path One Step at a Time: Adaptation Pathways

Preparing for the climate change impacts associated with the high-emissions pathway is an ambitious undertaking that has different implications for different types of infrastructure, for existing and newly built infrastructure, and for short- and long-term climate impacts. It does not imply that every infrastructure investment made today must build immediately to the protective level that would be required when the impacts associated with the high-emissions pathway are beginning to unfold. Realizing the Climate-Safe Path does not mean a once-and-for-all step change, but a change in many steps. This is similar to how emission reductions are achieved: not turning off all emissions at once, but successively and steadily moving toward the ultimate goal. Realizing the Climate-Safe Path

means following an adaptation pathway that keeps an eye on a long-term goal but is realized through a variety of strategies in multiple stages over the course of decades (Figure ES.5).

*Political leaders have laid some policy foundations for adaptation and now have an opportunity to strengthen adaptation as a political priority. They can send a directional signal that the safety of communities and the infrastructure on which they, and the state's economy vitally depend, is of utmost importance.*



**Figure ES.5 A flexible adaptation pathway begins with an agreement among relevant stakeholders as to the desired performance/ service level of infrastructure. As climate change continues, thresholds will be crossed where the performance of the existing infrastructure as it is currently built no longer fulfills societal expectations and new adaptation measures must be implemented, taking into account the best available climate science, societal trends, desired performance levels and the resources society is willing to make available for adaptive infrastructure investment. (Source: Adapted from Moser 2016, used with permission)**



## Realizing the Climate-Safe Path: The Tactical Level

Five different, but complementary strategies can be combined to obtain desired risk aversion levels and ensure infrastructure functionality over the changing conditions that can be expected over its lifetime. They vary in how they are being applied to existing vs. new infrastructure:

- **Robustness** – building to the protective level needed to ensure acceptable functionality and reliability over the design life of the infrastructure;
- **Resilience** – developing and practicing plans for the possibility of a situation when an extreme event exceeds the protective level and infrastructure fails, so as to improve and speed up the response and adaptive recovery;
- **Adaptability** – developing plans and integrating features into the design now that would allow structures to be adapted to a higher level of protection if necessary over time;
- **Redundancy** – developing plans now and implementing them over time to help infrastructure maintain functionality when it or parts of it fail; and
- **Avoidance (new) or Retreat/Decommissioning and Removal (existing)** – avoiding or removing infrastructure development from high-risk areas when the physical defense of infrastructure is no longer viable and the functionality of the infrastructure can no longer be assured.

## A Climate-Safe Path for All

The vision of the Climate-Safe Path outlined here is not a path just for the privileged. Instead, it is envisioned to be a path for all. Following the Climate-Safe Path must include an integral commitment to remedying past injustice in infrastructure investment so as to ensure the safety, health, well-being and opportunities of those who have borne insecurity, public health burdens and lack of economic opportunity the most and the longest.

The state's most outdated and dilapidated infrastructure is not evenly distributed, neither geographically, nor socio-economically. It is not affecting Californians equally. Due to decades of underinvestment and redlining (i.e., the systematic denial of various services to residents of specific, often racially associated, neighborhoods or communities), low-income communities and communities of color often confront the largest potholes, the most outdated school buildings, the leakiest pipes and the worst connectivity to modern transportation, communication and other community infrastructure. The added risks arising from climate change are not going to be equally distributed either. These same communities often have the fewest resources to deal with the risks from climate change. As such, these communities are those where the State has the greatest opportunity to make a difference.

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*The Climate-Safe Path must include an integral commitment to remedying past injustice in infrastructure investment so as to ensure the safety, health, well-being and opportunities of those who have borne insecurity, public health burdens, and lack of economic opportunity the most and the longest.*

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Inadequate engagement during the infrastructure planning and decision-making processes, systemic ways of putting low-income communities at a disadvantage through decision criteria and cost-benefit requirements, long-standing institutionalized racism and narrow thinking about the role of infrastructure across multiple sectors and within a region or community are at the root of this inequitable investment in infrastructure.

The following principles should guide equitable infrastructure planning, policy and investment:

1. Include residents in decision-making;
2. Serve underinvested communities without pushing out existing residents;
3. Improve the environmental health and quality of life for residents of disinvested communities;
4. Be equitably owned, financed and funded;
5. Create good jobs and business opportunities for local residents; and
6. Invest in workforce training.

Holding paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public is central to the code of ethics of the engineering profession. The Working Group's strong conviction is that social equity in infrastructure development should not be a last-minute adjustment of an already-decided plan, nor merely one among many criteria to guide infrastructure decisions. If the protection of lives is the goal, social equity must be considered in the beginning, middle and end of infrastructure planning and decision-making. It is the outcome that is planned for from the start, and that means a different process must prevail. Procedurally, this means, infrastructure must be planned *with* communities, not *for* them.

Ultimately, the Climate-Safe Path for All results in climate-safe infrastructure that is designed to be resilient to a changing climate and extreme events, both now and across a wide range of uncertain future conditions.

## Recommendation 1

*The State Legislature should establish as official State policy “The Climate-Safe Path for All”, which is a flexible adaptation pathway realized through a variety of strategies, in multiple stages over the course of decades. The Climate-Safe Path for All accounts for the full life-cycle costs of infrastructure and uses a multi-sectoral, systems approach. It prioritizes infrastructure investments based upon the greatest risks and investment gaps, as well as where investment can most reduce inequality and increase opportunity. For highly vulnerable, long-lived infrastructure, State agencies should consider climate change impacts associated with a high-emissions scenario while continuing to implement all applicable State laws related to stringent greenhouse gas emissions reductions.*

### From Vision to Action: A Framework for Action

In order for this vision of climate-safe infrastructure for all to be realized, integrating the best available forward-looking science will not ensure that climate-safe infrastructure is actually built. Providing actionable data and analytics constitutes one part of an action-oriented framework that will result in the ultimate intent of AB 2800: that infrastructure investments get made and that climate-safe infrastructure is built. We place the provision of forward-looking science into a comprehensive framework for action (Figure ES.6 and ES.7).

- **Data and Analytics** – Infrastructure planning and design requires many types of data, model simulations and forward-looking science – appropriately used and interpreted (for detailed discussion see [Chapter 5](#)).
- **Project Pipeline** – Infrastructure projects are often years to even decades in the making. Where and what to prioritize, to what standards of performance climate-safe infrastructure should be built, and planning and deciding about them in a transparent and inclusive fashion requires effective project management and coordination. A well-developed and prioritized project pipeline is a necessary pre-condition to attract infrastructure finance and involves successful stakeholder engagement, efficient progress through the permitting process, multi-sectoral alignment and other processes ([Chapter 6](#)).
- **Governance Structures** – Many types of infrastructure involve engagement of multiple levels and different kinds of jurisdictions and can include multiple state

agencies or sectors for funding and financing, review and permitting, oversight, operation and maintenance. Appropriate and effective governance structures and processes are required for complex partnerships and financing but may be lacking or need clarification and streamlining for efficient functioning. Governance also involves the rules, codes, standards and guidelines that govern where and how infrastructure is built ([Chapter 7](#)).

- **Financing Tools** – Federal and state funding sources alone are widely seen as insufficient to catch up on past inadequate infrastructure investment, resulting in a call for private sector involvement and innovative partnerships and financial tools to generate the necessary funds ([Chapter 8](#)).
- **Implementation Aids** – Engineers, architects, planners, procurement officers and operations personnel must have the necessary professional training and know-how to appropriately use available scientific data and tools. They must also be able to understand different planning or financing options and be capable of navigating complex governance challenges. Relevant staff require professional development opportunities and accountability mechanisms. They also must embrace a cyclical, iterative approach in their work, informed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the performance of infrastructure. This will allow them to periodically reassess climate risks and adjust infrastructure planning and design approaches over time ([Chapter 9](#)).



**Figure ES.6:** To ensure that climate-safe infrastructure actually gets built on the ground, California needs a support system that addresses all aspects of infrastructure planning, design and construction. (Photo: Construction workers; Elvert Barnes, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

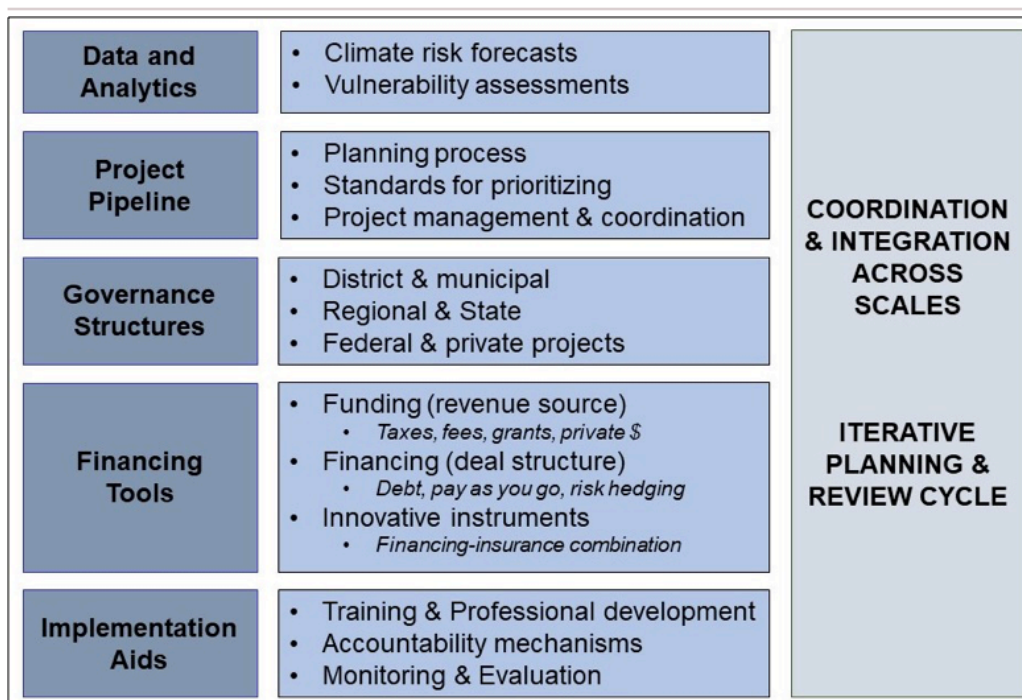


Figure ES.7: A strategic, integrated framework for action is needed to ensure that the vision of climate-safe infrastructure for all gets realized. It includes data and analytics which inform infrastructure planning and design to generate a prioritized list of projects that can be implemented with the help of appropriate governance structures, financing tools and implementation aids. (Source: Adapted from Cleveland 2018, used with permission)

## Realizing the Climate-Safe Path for All

### Overcoming Barriers to Building Climate-Safe Infrastructure

AB 2800 asked to identify the informational, institutional and other barriers that stand in the way of integrating forward-looking climate science into all aspects of infrastructure planning and decision-making. Through the deliberations of the Working Group, a great number of barriers were uncovered, which fall into the following categories:

- Informational and knowledge barriers;
- Capacity/skills barriers;
- Attitudinal barriers;
- Political barriers;
- Financial barriers;
- Legal/regulatory barriers;
- Institutional barriers; and
- Other barriers.

We synthesize and discuss these barriers by type in the full report (for a summary, see [Chapter 10](#)), but caution against seeing any one of these barriers in an isolated manner. Indeed, barriers of all types are encountered across the entire life cycle of infrastructure design and operation or

– differently put – across every stage of the adaptation process. As barriers in the early stages of adaptation are successfully overcome, other (not yet recognized) barriers may emerge as adaptation progresses to implementation, while yet others may fade.

The remaining recommendations – each accompanied in the full report by various immediate steps to operationalize them (for a synthesis of these next steps, see [Chapter 10](#)) – either directly address or aim to help overcome these barriers.

### “It Takes a System” to Realize Climate-Safe Infrastructure for All

Following the framework for action, the remaining recommendations discuss how best to bolster the state’s collection of existing and needed data and analytics (Recommendations 2 and 3), develop a prioritized project pipeline (Recommendation 4 and 5), enhance existing and develop needed governance structures (Recommendation 6), create and make more accessible needed financing tools (Recommendation 7) and foster implementation through a variety of means necessary for building climate-safe infrastructure (Recommendations 8, 9 and 10).



Most recommendations point to the need for adequate funding to implement the recommendation. Agency managers have a variety of ways to meet those needs, but the Working Group feels strongly that if adaptation is a State priority, it should be adequately supported. One of the most restrictive and most frequently mentioned barriers throughout the CSIWG's deliberations is the lack of funding. Thus, the Working Group feels strongly that making climate-safe infrastructure a policy priority should be reinforced by making it a funding priority.

## Recommendation 2

*In the past, the State's financial support for its various climate science efforts and decision-support tools has been uneven and insufficient. At a minimum, the State Legislature should provide a permanent source of funding for the State's mandated Climate Change Assessment process, the State's ongoing Climate Change Research Program, and decision-support tools and other assistance that disseminate their findings, so as to meet the needs for improved understanding and forward-looking science information.*

Building on the pioneering work of several state agencies, the state must expand its research portfolio to meet infrastructure planners' needs, and to expand state agencies' capacities to engage the climate change science community, broadly writ (Figure ES.8).



Figure ES.8: Coincident with the release of this report, the State also released its [Fourth Climate Change Assessment](#). Through 44 technical reports and 13 summary reports on climate change, the Fourth Assessment translates global models into scaled-down, regionally relevant reports that fill information gaps and support decisions at the local, regional and state levels. Despite legislation mandating it, funding to conduct the next assessment is not assured. The Working Group believes sustained and adequate funding is an important first step to ensuring a strong foundation in research to achieve a climate-safe future.



Figure ES.9: Clockwise from left; Marty Ralph, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Michael Anderson, State Climatologist with DWR, Jay Jasperse, Sonoma County Water Agency, and Jeanine Jones, Interstate Resources Manager at DWR, in conversation during a break at an October 2016 workshop on drought vulnerability in southern California. (Photo: Kelly M. Grow, DWR, used with permission)

## Recommendation 3

*Because of the diversity of State agencies, types of infrastructure and their vulnerabilities, and the specific needs for climate science, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all recipe for State agencies to engage with the climate change science community. That said, the State budget should provide full funding to State infrastructure agencies so they can dedicate time and support to their engineers and architects to substantively and collaboratively interact with climate scientists and other relevant experts in the creation of useful advice, guidance and tools on a regular and ongoing basis, in a way and at a level appropriate to their needs.*

Whether it is through a national scale connection to the Sustained Climate Assessment, or through augmentation of the State's Adaptation Clearinghouse, including its Technical Advisory Group that falls under the umbrella of the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program, or through better use of gatherings such as the California Adaptation Forum (CAF), formalized processes should be developed in which state engineers and architects have deliberate and sustained interaction with physical and social climate change scientists from diverse research institutions and professional organizations (Figure ES.9).



## Recommendation 4

*During the all-important pre-development phase, projects are conceptualized, planned and designed. The State budget should improve this process by building staff capacity and greatly increasing project funding to better account for a changing and uncertain climate, by addressing social inequity, and by assessing and accounting for the true costs and benefits of integrated projects across their full life-cycle.*

Critical elements of successful pre-development planning and a range of tools to assist it include:

- Effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement from the start;
- Developing a climate-screening process to help identify the level of analysis needed and prioritize projects to include in the “project pipeline;”
- Calculating the cost effectiveness of climate-safe infrastructure;
- Employing a probabilistic risk management and robust decision-making approach, in combination with other techniques, appropriate for adaptation decision-making and adaptive design in the face of uncertainty;
- Effective communication; and
- Training on adaptation principles and strategies to ensure appropriate use of these approaches.

## Recommendation 5

*Difficult decisions will have to be made and the impacts of potential policies or decisions on different stakeholder groups are complex and challenging to assess. It is critical therefore to engage all affected stakeholders in a meaningful way, from early on and throughout any decision-making process, using the seven principles of equitable planning and decision-making.<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Growth Council is well positioned to take a range of steps to encourage, improve and provide guidance on effective stakeholder engagement in the context of infrastructure development.*

Stakeholder engagement is essential at every step of the process of crafting climate-safe infrastructure, from initial stages of discussion, to implementation, to maintenance and decommissioning. Decision-making at any stage should always consider whether decisions are being made *with* communities, rather than *for* communities.

*Decision-making at any stage should always consider whether decisions are being made **with** communities, rather than **for** communities.*



Figure ES.10: At "The Longest Table" event in Howard County, Maryland, 320 residents sat at a 320-foot long table and shared their respective vision for their community. This type of socially inclusive engagement ensures equitable representation; everyone had a seat at "the table." (Photo: Howard County (Md.) Library System, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 6, p. 2 for a list of the principles.

## Recommendation 6

*Consistent with Executive Order B-30-15 and AB 1482, State agencies should update all relevant (i.e., climate-sensitive) infrastructure standards and guidelines that they can directly affect. Alternatively, or in addition, they should develop new state-specific guidelines where there are gaps to address climate resiliency by incorporating forward-looking climate information in those standards and codes. Where State agencies rely on standards developed by standard-setting organizations, state engineers and architects should work through the relevant professional organizations to advance development of climate-cognizant standards. Until new standards and codes are in place, State agencies should develop guidelines that go above and beyond minimum standards and codes to meet the goals of the Climate-Safe Path for All. Where agencies don't have resources to fulfill this workload, they should be fully funded in the State budget.*

State agencies differ in their technical capacity to make needed updates to existing standards and codes. Some can do so (and/or are developing new ones where needed) while others must await standard-setting organizations to provide those updated standards, which the State would then adopt. While policy guidance should be unambiguous, the manner in which it is implemented at the level of standards and codes would need to be flexible to reflect this range of in-house capacities.

Among the most important barriers are questions around liability, which constitute a large and complicated enough challenge that a separate panel should be convened

to address all the nuances and complexities and to provide guidance and recommendations to infrastructure agencies.

New types of standards and procedural mechanisms (such as performance standards, standards of professional practice, standards of care, various procurement approaches and manuals of practice) provide opportunities for increased climate resiliency.

## Recommendation 7

*Because improving resilience is not a zero-sum activity, adding resilience in one area cannot be balanced by relaxing resilience requirements somewhere else. Adding requirements for resilience will come at a cost, so unfunded mandates are not feasible. The true costs over the full life-cycle of infrastructure projects should be assessed broadly, and the State should make efforts to help policy-makers and the public better understand the necessity of bearing these costs. Educational, promotional and other outreach should be conducted to generate support for the expenditures.*

A follow-on activity to the work of the Working Group should explore the complex questions that arise about how to take climate change into account from a fiscal perspective. Moreover, the state needs comprehensive or reliable estimates of what climate change impacts and adaptation would cost at the state or local level. In addition, the Strategic Growth Council and other state agencies should launch serious engagement efforts to help Californians more fully understand why investment in climate-safe infrastructure is necessary.



**Figure ES.11:** Along an urbanized coast like California's, there are many complex jurisdictional and governance challenges, which also come with financial trade-offs. The recommendations in this report are aimed at helping the State make equitable decisions about infrastructure moving forward. (Photo: San Francisco skyline and Port of Oakland, Tony Webster, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## Recommendation 8

*The Strategic Growth Council should coordinate with the Government Operations Agency, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and other relevant agencies to develop a work plan on how to address the training and professional development gaps of its infrastructure-related workforce as identified in this report, and begin to implement that work plan as soon as feasible. Because the Strategic Growth Council does not currently have the staff capacity and funding to implement this task, it would require adequate funding to do so.*

California needs to have the skilled workforce to get climate-safe infrastructure appropriately designed, built, operated and maintained. In addition to proper training in all the “hard” and professional skills needed by today’s engineers and architects, this workforce development must address climate skepticism; lack of understanding of climate science; lack of familiarity with sophisticated risk and uncertainty assessment and decision-making approaches; sophisticated economic analysis methodologies and related tools and platforms; lack of knowledge of and disconnect from the adaptation literature and field; lack of comfort with performance standards; lack of familiarity with adaptive design approaches and techniques; resistance to integrative and systems thinking that crosses silos; lack of skill in effective stakeholder engagement and communication; and lack of cultural competency in working with diverse stakeholders on infrastructure projects.



Figure ES.12: The “climate-ready” workforce of the future must be trained in both the traditional “hard” engineering skills and in the professional skills needed to navigate complex science, governance, finance and stakeholder engagement issues. (Photo: Folsom Lake water purification; USACE)

*California needs to have the skilled workforce to get climate-safe infrastructure appropriately designed, built, operated and maintained.*

## Recommendation 9

*The State should establish a Standing CSIWG to devise and implement a process for coordinating and prioritizing Climate-Safe Path related resilience policies and actions at the highest level. This panel would provide a needed forum for agencies to coordinate their policies, take advantage of synergies, address potential conflicts and learn from one another. As AB 2800 is slated to sunset in 2020, the work of a standing CSIWG would require an extension of AB 2800 and adequate financial support to conduct its business.*

The CSIWG proposes the development of a standing CSIWG, which would have the following roles:

- Coordination;
- Central point of contact for infrastructure across the state;
- Forum to advance climate-safe infrastructure questions; and
- Leadership in incorporating forward-looking information in engineering standards.

Some of the immediate tasks this standing CSIWG could address include prioritization of identified research needs, exploration of liability issues, assessment of the pros and cons of different procurement approaches for different types of climate-safe infrastructure and development of guidance on effective stakeholder engagement for infrastructure agencies.



## Recommendation 10

*The State budget should provide full funding to State agencies to make deliberate efforts in reducing or eliminating the barriers that hinder or slow down adoption of State-level climate-safe infrastructure policy into practice. Key focus areas include the translation of Climate-Safe Path policy into practice manuals and contracting language, providing incentives to account for climate change in infrastructure projects, identifying metrics of success for monitoring and evaluation and developing a best-practices compendium.*

Ultimately, for all of these recommendations to be used by on-the-ground contractors (those who implement the plans developed by state architects and engineers), they must be translated and made accessible to all those working

on infrastructure. This includes creating guidance on how to translate State-level climate-safe policy into contracting language, building capacity to assess and manage bids, developing model contract language, incorporating inclusive procurement procedures and other enabling steps.

## In Closing

Through all of its climate-focused activities, the State of California has been laying the foundation for the work of the CSIWG. AB 2800 allowed the Working Group to propose new paths for infrastructure planning in the state (Figure ES.10). In using the systemic, action-oriented approach offered here to move from vision to implementation, and in following the recommendations that provide the bricks for the Climate-Safe Path for All, California has the opportunity to *Pay it Forward*. It must make these investments today to ensure the safety, well-being and prosperity of all Californians tomorrow.



Figure ES.13: California has the opportunity to “pay it forward.” It must make sustained investments in climate-safe infrastructure investments today to ensure the safety, well-being and prosperity of all Californians tomorrow. (Photo: Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; Paul Hames, DWR, used with permission)



# 1 Introduction

During the fall and winter of 2017-18, California residents lived through a devastating series of disasters. After years of drought, devastating wildfires ravaged thousands of homes from Northern to Southern California; deluge rain events after the fires led to catastrophic floods, mudslides and debris flows that washed away bare soil, houses and cars and closed stretches of Highway 101, crippling transportation routes. Over this time, the state received five Major Disaster Declarations, three Emergency Declarations and 23 Fire Management Assistance Declarations – a combination never experienced before.<sup>1</sup> Sixty-five Californians lost their lives and thousands of homes, numerous roads, communication towers, phone and electricity distribution lines, fleet vehicles and parks either were destroyed or sustained damages that are still being tallied and remedied. Against a backdrop of aging infrastructure that some describe as “crumbling”<sup>[1,2]</sup> these extreme events offer a first-row seat to the fragility of our infrastructure systems and they give us a glimpse of the future in a changing climate. For people to be safe, our communities must be prepared. Our infrastructure must be resilient and sustainable to withstand these growing threats, particularly worsening extreme events.

Yet, as noted in the 2017 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists – *Built to Last: Challenges and Opportunities for Climate-Smart Infrastructure in California*<sup>[3]</sup> – California’s infrastructure is not. Our infrastructure is aging and deteriorating and, despite recently increasing investment, still requires better upkeep and modernization. Lack of emergency action plans for high-hazard infrastructure, a long backlog of deferred maintenance projects and billion-dollar gaps in spending on infrastructure upkeep plague the state of infrastructure in the fifth largest economy in

the world. These truths provide a stark backdrop to the rapidly growing need of investing in new infrastructure and preparing for the accelerating impacts of climate change. Through the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Bill, AB 2800 (Quirk)<sup>2</sup>, and with its leadership and foresight in climate change adaptation planning, the State of California is seeking to understand how it can better prepare its existing and new infrastructure for increasingly unpredictable climate conditions that will be significantly different from the current ones. The State is seeking to understand how it can ensure a climate-safe future.

AB 2800 builds on a strong legislative and planning record in California that has sought to lead the nation in global greenhouse gas emission reductions, energy and automotive mileage efficiency and more recently adaptation planning (Box 1.1).

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*Our infrastructure must be resilient and sustainable to withstand the growing threats from climate change, particularly worsening extreme events.*

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The Climate-Safe Infrastructure bill seeks to build on this impressive legacy and push it forward in critical ways. AB 2800 mandated that a panel of scientists, registered engineers and architects be convened to help the State of California understand how it can best incorporate forward-looking climate information

into the state’s infrastructure design, planning and implementation. To develop recommendations to the State legislature and the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and in response to the mandate from AB 2800, the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG) was appointed in July 2017 and convened in January 2018. It is comprised of expert engineers and architect from State agencies and special jurisdictions, bolstered by some of California’s leading scientists specializing in climate science, transportation and economics (Box 1.2, [Appendix 2](#)).

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/state-tribal-government/0/CA>.

<sup>2</sup> See: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB2800](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2800), as well as [Appendix 1](#).



### Box 1.1: Selective Legislation, Mandates and Adaptation Planning Efforts Influencing AB 2800

- Executive Order S-13-08, 2008
- Safeguarding California, 2009 (and subsequent updates and implementation plans)
- Executive Order B-30-15, 2015
- AB 1482 (Gordon), codifying regular updates to state adaptation plans, 2015
- Annual Five-Year Infrastructure Plans
- State Hazard Mitigation Plan
- California/Regional Transportation Plans, California Water Plan, Central Valley Flood Plan
- Office of Planning and Research's *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies*, 2018

## The Urgency and Opportunity to Invest in a Climate-Safe Future

AB 2800 does not come a moment too soon. From a national perspective, California has an opportunity to take a strong leadership position in the nationwide debate on modernizing and building critical infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) regularly assesses the status of infrastructure across the United States, and has found the nation's infrastructure – on average, across infrastructure types – to deserve no more than a D+ grade<sup>[4]</sup>. “D” stands for “poor, at risk.” AB 2800, building on past infrastructure efforts by State agencies, the Legislature, outside experts and deeply concerned stakeholders, offers an opportunity to show the country how infrastructure can be rebuilt and created with a forward-looking, climate-aware perspective.

In fact, through existing State bonds (e.g., SB 1 for transportation and \$5.8 billion in State school bonds for modernization and \$39 billion in local school district bonds) as well as recently voter-approved propositions (Prop 1 and Prop 68 for water and natural resources), the State has nearly \$62 billion dollars available to invest in built and nature-based infrastructure. In 2018 alone, the Cap and Trade revenues provide another \$8.4 billion that are being directed towards climate mitigation and adaptation planning; this is expected to quadruple in 2018. In addition, given the recently elevated national debate on infrastructure, federal infrastructure funds may increase above historical levels.

### Box 1.2: Members of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (in alphabetical order)

- Dr. Amir AghaKouchak, P.E., University of California, Irvine
- Nancy Ander, P.E., California Department of General Services
- John Andrew, P.E., ENV SP, California Department of Water Resources
- Gurdeep Bhattal, P.E., California Department of Transportation (alt)
- Martha Brook, P.E., California Energy Commission
- Dr. Dan Cayan, University of California, San Diego: Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- James Deane AIA, CDT, LEED AP, PMP, California High Speed Rail Authority/WSP
- Dr. Noah Diffenbaugh, Stanford University
- Dr. David Groves, RAND Water and Climate Resilience Center, Pardee RAND Graduate School
- Dr. Kristin Heinemeier, P.E., University of California, Davis: Energy Efficiency Center
- Dr. Robert Lempert, RAND Corporation, Frederick S. Pardee Center for Longer Range Global Policy and the Future Human Condition (alt)
- Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E., ENV SP, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Dr. Kyle Meng, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Dr. Deb Niemeier, P.E, NAE, University of California, Davis
- Bruce Swanger, P.E., California Department of Transportation
- Chester Widom, FAIA, California Department of General Services, Division of State Architect

In the meantime, however, 52 of California's 58 counties declared a state of emergency at least once during the floods and fires of 2017/18 and received approximately \$3.5 billion in disaster funding<sup>3</sup>, a substantial portion of which can be used to rebuild infrastructure, and – where local codes allow – make this infrastructure stronger for a climate-changed future<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, California is utilizing disaster funding to create resilience to future disasters exacerbated by climate change by using hazard mitigation post-disaster funds to target drought, wildfire and sea-level rise. To date, \$38 million in federal cost share grants for

<sup>3</sup>\$1 billion of that was for the debris cleanup after the Northern California fires alone. The final loss total may still change.



managed aquifer recharge projects – some of the first in the nation – have been submitted to FEMA for final review and approval, and additional sea-level rise and wildfire mitigation projects are soon to follow<sup>[5]</sup>. While these billions of dollars may seem like a windfall, they are only a down-payment on the statewide infrastructure investment needed as we will show in this report. Importantly, these available funds could easily be squandered on maladaptive projects if climate-safe infrastructure policies and guidelines are not put in place today.

## Scope and Charge

As mandated in the AB 2800 legislation, the working group has a very specific charge, namely, at a minimum, to consider and investigate:

1. The current informational and institutional barriers to integrating projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design;
2. The critical information that engineers [and architects] responsible for infrastructure design and construction need to address climate change impacts; and
3. How to select an appropriate engineering design for a range of future climate scenarios as related to infrastructure planning and investment.

It further mandates that, in a report to the State Legislature and the SGC, the working group shall make recommendations to the Legislature that address:

1. Integrating scientific knowledge of projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design;
2. Addressing critical information gaps identified by the Working Group; and
3. A platform or process to facilitate communication between climate scientists and infrastructure engineers [and architects].

During the first CSIWG meeting, the Working Group developed a process to address the mandated requirements (Figure 1.1). In addition, members identified broader goals that both meet the legislative mandates, but also help further the intended goals of the legislation. As a result, the CSIWG identified a set of outcomes that address these goals. They aimed to identify:

- The **range of infrastructure to be considered** in the work of the WG;
- **Opportunities for State of California to affect how and where infrastructure is built;**
- **Opportunities for integrating forward-looking science** (about a non-static future into infrastructure design);
- **Critical information needs of infrastructure engineers and architects** to address climate change impacts;
- **Critical information gaps;**
- **Informational and institutional barriers** to integrating

projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design; and

- **Ways to select an appropriate engineering design for a range of future climate scenarios** as related to infrastructure planning and investment.



**Figure 1.1** At the first meeting, Working Group members co-identify and rank their goals and priorities for how to guide the State in developing climate-safe infrastructure. (Photo: Susanne Moser)

To achieve these outcomes, at the outset, the CSIWG identified what they determined to be an important set of corresponding recommendations that should emerge from the working group deliberations:

- **Policy recommendations** of how to encourage forward-looking infrastructure planning and design;
- **Procedural recommendations** to affect climate-safe infrastructure development process (from planning, design, approval, construction to monitoring);
- **Principles** to guide infrastructure development, maintenance, repair to build equitable and climate-resilient infrastructure;
- **Identification of available tools and information sources** to use;
- **Recommendations on how to lower/overcome barriers** to information use;
- **Research recommendations** to fill information gaps; and
- **Recommendations on capacity building/professional development.**

This report summarizes the CSIWG's deliberations in response to the mandate of AB 2800 and offers recommendations to the California State Legislature and the SGC. Together, these recommendations chart a path toward helping California invest in climate-safe infrastructure. It addresses both the infrastructure that was built decades, even more than a century ago – from

historical bridges, to major dams, highways and buildings – and the infrastructure that will be built in coming years and is meant to last and be used for many decades to come. While this effort initially sought to solve the challenge of incorporating climate information into infrastructure design (something engineers and architects have struggled with for years), the Working Group discovered that the science challenge in moving toward climate-safe infrastructure is significant, but not intractable. Equally difficult, if not more, are those additional challenges that require profound shifts in values, thinking, priority setting and policy commitments.

This report launches from the legislative intent for AB 2800, namely to make California communities safer, to save lives. While saving lives is more likely if decisions are informed by the best available knowledge, science alone will not guarantee our safety. Saving lives is a matter of what and who we as a society value, what we believe deserves our dedicated investment, and thus what decisions we make and actions we take. Investing in a climate-safe future for all is a way of creating a positive legacy for the future. It is *paying it forward*.

Thus, the recommendations in this report have the lofty, yet achievable goal, of incentivizing and inspiring legislators, agency leads, engineers, architects, scientists, consultants and contractors, planners and residents to commit to joining hands in creating a climate-safe future for California.

## Key Concepts and Definitions

To ensure that the CSIWG would be able to efficiently address the legislative mandate, it was critical to identify, from the outset, the scope of the infrastructure for the deliberations and discussions, as well as agree upon definitions of the key terminology that would be used throughout the Working Group meetings.

In defining the scope of the infrastructure to be discussed and deliberated on during this process, the CSIWG also thought it important to not only consider individual infrastructure assets but to consider these individual assets as part of a broader system of assets that serve the public good. Infrastructure supports the functioning of society, and its operation and maintenance are necessary for the public's health, safety, and welfare. Infrastructure assets can cross jurisdictional boundaries, be held publicly or privately, and the benefits from these assets are generally available to a large portion of the population. They are held in public trust or their adoption is so widespread that social processes have become reliant on them. Some infrastructure is considered critical, i.e.,

so vital that its destruction or incapacitation would have a debilitating impact on the economy, security, public health, safety and welfare of society on a local, regional or statewide scale. The CSIWG's short definition of infrastructure encapsulates all of these points:

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**Infrastructure** is defined as the system of interconnected natural or human-made assets, as well as physical and virtual structures and facilities embedded in built and/or natural environments, that is put to social/economic uses, operated by humans, and governed by institutions, rules, social norms and expectations of their service.

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Tangible examples of such infrastructure include (but are not limited to):

- **Transportation:** state highways (and connected transportation and transit systems, including rail lines and train stations) as well as all associated on- and off-ramps, signage, bridges, rest areas, office spaces and maintenance facilities;
- **Energy:** power generation plants, transmission lines, distribution lines and related equipment;
- **Criminal Justice:** correctional facilities, judicial branch facilities and crime laboratories;
- **Water:** water storage facilities such as dams, lakes and reservoirs, canals, pumping stations, hydroelectric powerplants, pipelines, levees and flood protection structures;
- **Natural Resources:** State parks and park-related facilities, fish hatcheries, constructed habitat, buildings and parking areas, CalFire facilities, and agricultural inspection stations;
- **Higher Education:** UC and CSU higher education campuses and community college campuses;
- **Health Services:** mental health hospitals and developmental centers; and
- **State Office Space:** State-owned or leased office structures used for governmental services<sup>[6]</sup>.

Recognizing that the intent of the legislation was to provide recommendations to the State Legislature on how California could retrofit existing and create new climate-safe infrastructure, the CSIWG decided to limit their recommendations to only state infrastructure. "State infrastructure" was understood broadly, however, to include infrastructure that is:

- **State-owned:** State wholly or partially funds design and construction, operate, and maintains facility as State property;
- **State-funded:** State provides full or partial funding to another governmental body or utility; and

- **State-regulated:** State has regulatory oversight of non-government owned infrastructure elements that functions for the public good and are essential services, e.g., utilities.

The CSIWG also felt that their work and this report should serve as a model for how regional and local jurisdictions within California – as well as other communities and states across the nation and globe – could implement these recommendations for their own infrastructure design, planning, operation and maintenance. Thus, while many of the report recommendations are geared specifically to the California State Legislature and the State’s SGC, they were also developed to be applicable to other interested communities. Overall, while the scope of this report is limited to state infrastructure and the impacts that state stakeholders can have on it, all the concepts discussed have relevance to the entire range of ownership and operation situations.

Disruptions from climate extremes are already commonplace now and will be an inevitable part of a climate-changed future. Thus, an important aspect of the CSIWG’s conversations was agreeing on definitions of “resilience” and “climate-safe” infrastructure as these ultimately drive the CSIWG’s recommendations.

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**Resilience** is defined broadly as the capacity of an individual, community, organization, structure or environment and their associated human-made and natural systems to assess, prepare for, absorb, cope with, rapidly recover and learn from, effectively adapt to, or take advantage of, risks associated with shocks of adverse disruptive events and the stresses of continually changing conditions, including those associated with a changing climate.<sup>4</sup>

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We have chosen this broad definition of “climate-safe” infrastructure and retained that label over potential alternative phrases common in current parlance (such as “sustainable” or “climate-smart”) because of the ambition it conveys and because it is consistent with AB 2800.<sup>5</sup> Every scientific and infrastructure discipline has its own language, and debates over appropriate terminology are important and necessary. They should not detract, however, from the ultimate work at hand, which is to build a future that allows society, the economy and the natural

<sup>4</sup>We recognize that resilience has many different meanings to many different stakeholders. Even in the CSIWG, uses of this term differed. In this report, when specific types of strategies or interventions are discussed, the term resilience is used more narrowly but in conjunction with other strategies that together echo this comprehensive understanding delineated in this definition.

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**Climate-safe infrastructure** is defined as infrastructure that is sustainable, adaptive and that meets design criteria that aim for resilience in the face of shocks and stresses caused by current and future climate. In addition, climate-safe infrastructure should be robust across a range of plausible climate and related socio-economic futures, as determined by the best available knowledge at the time the criteria (standards, codes and guidelines) are set. To remain “climate-safe,” these criteria must be monitored and updated over time to account for changing conditions and the performance of resilience measures taken. Climate-safe infrastructure also reduces heat-trapping emissions to the maximum extent possible to not add to the climate change problem. (Mitigating climate change in this way also complies with California’s emissions reduction targets.) Furthermore, climate-safe infrastructure addresses socio-economic inequities so that all groups in society increasingly benefit from safe, reliable and sustainable infrastructure.

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environment on which we all depend to thrive, even in the face of change and disruption. As we will show throughout the report, “climate safety” is not a world free from change and disruption, but a world in which California has committed to seek the greatest possible safety for all of its residents through the best available knowledge, the best technology and engineering design, a strong workforce, and sustained political will and resources.

## Developing this Report: The Working Group’s Process

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With the very tight timeline following passage of AB 2800 that resulted in the appointment of the CSIWG, the State project team and co-facilitators established a formal process for:

- Engaging the CSIWG in the deliberations mandated by the legislation;
- Bringing in external expert voices to the discussion; and
- Developing a comprehensive webinar series to broaden discussion and provide an opportunity for public outreach about the legislation and the CSIWG’s deliberations.

Below, we describe each in more detail to illustrate how much was accomplished in a very short time.

<sup>5</sup>Our definition of “climate-safe” infrastructure is close to what the ASCE defines as “sustainable” infrastructure.



**Table 1.1: Overview of CSIWG Meetings**

Meeting #	Dates	Locations	Primary Topics and Tasks	Subject Matter Experts Invited to Meetings
1	1/18/18	Sacramento	Launch of project; determine project goals; WG structure and process	<b>Secretary John Laird</b> , Natural Resources Agency <b>Hon. Bill Quirk</b> , California State Assembly <b>Jamesine Rogers Gibson</b> , Union of Concerned Scientists <b>Bruce Blanning, P.E.</b> , Professional Engineers in California Government <b>Deputy Secretary for Climate and Energy Keali'i Bright</b> , Natural Resources Agency
2	2/12/18	Los Angeles	Identify relevant infrastructure, sector-specific infrastructure standards, climate-sensitivity, information needs	<b>Sabrina Bornstein</b> , Deputy Chief Resilience Officer in the Mayor's Office, City of Los Angeles <b>Matt Barnard</b> , Principal Degenkolb Engineers
3	3/13/18	Bay Area	Linking forward-looking climate science and impacts information with standards, codes, certifications throughout infrastructure design/implementation/maintenance cycle	<b>Steve Reel, M.Eng.</b> , Project Manager, Port of San Francisco <b>John Thomas, P.E.</b> , City Engineer, City of San Francisco <b>Kit Batten, Ph.D.</b> , Climate Resilience Chief, PG&E <b>Bob Battalio, P.E.</b> , Chief Engineer, ESA Associates <b>Nate Kaufman, M.A.</b> , Landscape Architect, Living Edge Adaptation Project
4	4/11/18	Sacramento / Davis	Sector-specific design standards and cross-sector interdependencies	<b>James (Jim) Thorne, Ph.D.</b> , UC-Davis <b>Nicole Meyer-Morse</b> , Science and Technology Advisor, California Office of Emergency Services <b>Emily (Millie) Levin</b> , Policy Analyst, California Office of Emergency Services <b>Louise Bedsworth, Ph.D.</b> , Deputy Director, California Office of Planning and Research
5	5/9/18	San Diego	Governance of setting/changing design standards; non-standard strategies to ensure climate-safe infrastructure; deliberation of draft report; agree on refinement needs	<b>Philip (Phil) Gibbons</b> , Program Manager Energy & Sustainability, Port of San Diego <b>Cody Hooven</b> , Chief Sustainability Officer, City of San Diego <b>Ralph Redman</b> , Manager of Airport Planning, San Diego Airport <b>Andrew Martin</b> , Senior Regional Planner, San Diego Association of Governments
6	6/20/18	Sacramento / Davis	Agree on final report revisions; delivery and outreach/promotion; project debrief and closure	<b>Beverly Scott, Ph.D.</b> , CEO, Beverly Scott Associates & Senior Partner, Parker Infrastructure Partners <b>Bilal Ayyub, Ph.D.</b> , Director, Center for Technology & Systems Management, University of Maryland

## Working Group Meetings

Six Working Group meetings were held over the course of six months commencing on January 18, 2018 and ending on June 20, 2018. These were structured conversations that focused on a specific set of topics at each gathering. Meetings were highly interactive with the goal of eliciting as much knowledge, input and discussion among working group members as possible. The initial meeting was intended to focus and bound the CSIWG's discussions and goals. Meetings 2-4 focused on deliberation of topics determined through the goal and scope-setting accomplished in the first meeting. Meetings 5 and 6 focused on refining incomplete work areas and on the development of the report and its recommendations.

Meetings were open to the public and held in different locations across the state in order to provide opportunity for local engagement. To supplement the working group's discussions, each meeting involved local speakers who had subject matter expertise in the topics of each meeting (Table 1.1).

## Webinar Series

To bolster the information included in the Working Group's deliberations, a webinar series at a frequency of 1-4 webinars per month was organized to run in parallel to the CSIWG meetings. The goal of these webinars was threefold:

- **Showcase CSIWG expertise** – to provide an opportunity for each CSIWG member to highlight their work and expertise;
- **Elicit input from outside experts** – to bring in outside expertise to address issues that were of interest to the CSIWG and its deliberations; and
- **Engage stakeholders** – to provide information to the interested AB 2800 stakeholders and to provide continuous updates of the work of the Group.

The webinars thus were by and for the Working Group but open to the public and usually had attendance rates of between 20-30 stakeholders in addition to the presenters. Most attendees were from within California, but some attended from federal agencies and outside California. The webinars were recorded and materials posted online. These webinars will remain on the [CSIWG website](#) and thus remain a resource to interested stakeholders in the future. Throughout this report, when relevant, we draw on and highlight webinar content that focused on relevant topics (Box 3, [Appendix 2](#)).

## Box 3: The Climate-Safe Infrastructure Webinar Series (see also [Appendix 3](#))

- **January 25, 2018 - Setting the Standards and Context: Federal to Local Roles**
- February 22, 2018 - Forward-Looking Climate Science for Use in Infrastructure Engineering: Possibilities and Limits
- **March 21, 2018 - Mobilizing the Future: Infrastructure Challenges and Opportunities in the Transportation Sector**
- March 22, 2018 - Rushing Toward the Future: Infrastructure Challenges and Opportunities in the Water Sector
- **April 6, 2018 - Green Infrastructure: Design and Integration for Climate-Safe Communities**
- April 10, 2018 - Governing Infrastructure: How Regulations, Standards, Codes and Guidelines Are Set and Changed
- **April 18, 2018 - Energizing the Future: Challenges & Opportunities in the Building/Energy Sector**
- May 15, 2018 - Building the Future: Challenges & Opportunities in the Building Sector
- **May 17, 2018 - Financing Climate-Safe Infrastructure I**
- May 29, 2018 - Financing Climate-Safe Infrastructure II
- **May 30, 2018 - Building a Climate-Safe Future for All: Social Equity and Inclusion in Infrastructure Planning**
- June 6, 2018 - Enabling Scientists and Engineers to Work Together Effectively
- **June 8, 2018 - Tools Supporting Climate-Safe Infrastructure Design**
- June 11, 2018 - Monitoring Infrastructure Performance
- **June 28, 2018 - Financing Climate-Safe Infrastructure III**
- July 12, 2018 - Communicating Climate Change – Reaching Skeptical Audiences
- **September 5, 2018 - The Findings and Recommendations of the CSIWG**

**Table 1.2: Outreach During and After the AB 2800 Project**

Date	Occasion / Audience
February 2018	Ann Kosmal, General Service Administration (GSA), on the CSIWG's purpose and process and relevant federal work on adaptation and resilience within the GSA
March 2018	Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup (per invitation of an AB 2800 webinar speaker, Dr. Kate White, US Army Corps of Engineers)
May 2018	ASCE Committee on Sustainability (per invitation by CSIWG Member, Dr. Cris Liban)
May 2018	Alicia Pegan, Climate Ready Boston Coordinator of the City of Boston, to share lessons about the CSIWG's process as Boston seeks to develop its own science-engineering working group
May/June 2018	Dr. Richard Moss, Columbia University, Sustained National Climate Assessment, to explore possible connections between the sustained assessment and California's efforts to improve science-application opportunities
June 2018	Dr. Kathy Jacobs, University of Arizona, regarding the panel of architects developing principles for climate-safe/resilient building design at the Global Climate Action Summit, San Francisco, in September 2018
July 2018	François Levesque, Infrastructure Canada, concerning communication challenges related to climate change and adaptation
August 2018	Presentation about AB 2800 and the CSIWG's process at a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) workshop on initiating a rulemaking proceeding on adaptation for electric and natural gas investor-owned utilities
August 2018	Presentation about AB 2800 and the CSIWG's process at a National Academy of Sciences workshop, "Making Climate Assessments Work: Learning from California and Other Subnational Climate Assessments"
August 2018	Presentation on AB 2800 and the CSIWG's report at the Third California Adaptation Forum, Sacramento, CA
September 2018	Report release via agency websites, AB 2800 webinar and news media
<b>Post-Release (anticipated or confirmed outreach opportunities)</b>	
October 2018	Briefing to the Strategic Growth Council
October 2018	Briefing to the California Legislature
Fall 2018	Dr. Doug Mason, Millennium Challenge Corporation, regarding the integration of climate considerations in federal international development work
Fall 2018	Briefing to Canada's Adaptation Platform Infrastructure and Buildings Working Group
Fall 2018	Presentation on the CSIWG's process, findings and recommendations to the Department of Homeland Security's National Infrastructure Advisory Council (NIAC), per invitation of NIAC Co-chair, Dr. Beverly Scott
December 2018	2018 Annual Meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), paper proposed
January 2019	2019 Annual Meeting of the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), session proposed, featuring CSIWG members
Spring 2019	2019 AGU Climate Solutions Conference, session proposed, featuring CSIWG members
Spring 2019	2019 National Adaptation Forum, session on infrastructure and social equity proposed



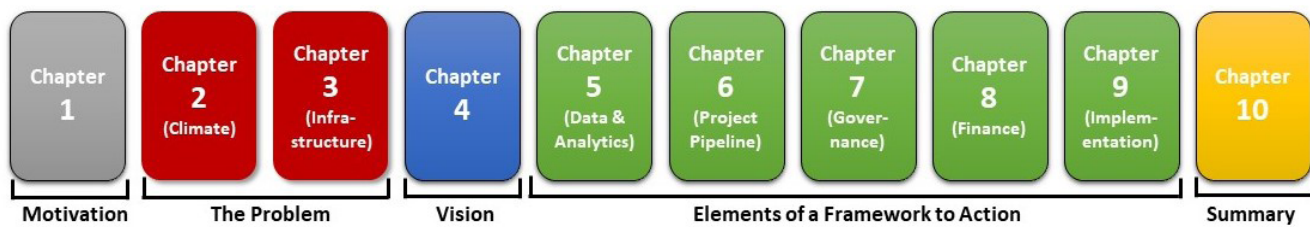


Figure 1.2 Report overview by chapter

## Literature Review

Even though the incorporation of forward-looking climate science in engineering and architecture is a relatively new area of work, there is a growing body of literature that provides invaluable insight and best practices that will be relevant to California state engineers and architects as the state moves toward resilient and climate-safe infrastructure. In addition, there is a long history of state-wide and national efforts to design, improve, upgrade and modernize infrastructure across many different sectors. Working Group members also provided critical resources to inform the deliberations and the development of this report.<sup>6</sup>

## Public Outreach

Early on in the process of the Working Group members urged to engage interested stakeholders to both educate the public about AB 2800, the necessity of building climate-safe infrastructure, and to provide an avenue for input into the Working Group's deliberations. We have accomplished this in a number of ways.

Through the AB 2800 Climate-Safe Infrastructure Webinar Series, the CSIWG was able to highlight some of their own work and expertise, as well as throughout the group's deliberations. In addition, the Co-facilitators gave a variety of presentations to various infrastructure and adaptation-interested audiences over the course of the project period (Table 1.2).

In collaboration with AB 2800 sponsors, CSIWG members, and interested stakeholder groups, outreach opportunities within and far beyond California (nationally and internationally) are continually sought and realized to ensure widespread awareness of the CSIWG's work and this report.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The reference list at the end of this report provides links to those accessible and/or free online.

<sup>7</sup> The co-facilitators in collaboration with the State agency project team and the Working Group developed an outreach plan. It is continually being updated to reflect opportunities. A summary of outreach will be prepared at the end of 2018.

## Report Organization

Without even the complications of a changing and uncertain climatic future, California's infrastructure today is inadequately maintained and – in many instances – outdated<sup>[7]</sup>. With AB 2800 directing the formation of a Working Group of experts to inform its path forward, California has again proven its national leadership. It is taking stock of current infrastructure today, understanding how it may be impacted by climate change in the future and working to identify solutions and policies for planning for that future, starting today.

The goal of this report is to paint a vision and chart a path toward climate-safe infrastructure for all Californians – starting from where we are – and provide a set of strategic recommendations for how the State can realize this vision. We do so in nine chapters following this introduction, as described below (Figure 1.2).

*Infrastructure design for the future must accommodate uncertainty to a greater extent than in the past. Dealing with this greater uncertainty in engineering will require some changes in engineering practice.*

**Chapter 2: Climate Change – The Challenge.** California's climate is indisputably changing. This chapter describes the observed and projected changes in California's climate, provides a primer on the uncertainties associated with this information and how to interpret and assess those. It makes clear what is known with considerable scientific confidence and what is less well known, illustrating why infrastructure design for the future must accommodate uncertainty to a greater extent than in the past. Dealing with this greater uncertainty in engineering will require some changes in engineering practice.

**Chapter 3: Infrastructure – The Starting Place.** Chapter 3 provides an overview of California’s infrastructure, sector by sector, including its current status, threats from climate change and opportunities to upgrade and modernize it. This baseline assessment sets the context for the discussion in subsequent chapters of how to retrofit and modernize the state’s infrastructure systems.

**Chapter 4: A Vision for Climate-Safe Infrastructure.** Chapter 4 paints a vision for how California can develop climate-safe infrastructure. This vision entails continuing on the path of stringent emission reductions to minimize future climate change (mitigation) while planning the necessary adaptive pathways (adaptation) in case the global community fails to similarly reduce emissions. Such a failure would result in potentially grave risks to California, but the state can use a range of levers (policy, guidance, standards, funding, incentives etc.) to enact strategies that are flexible in practice but are targeted toward safety and infrastructure reliability. The vision outlined in this chapter makes equitable infrastructure investment a central motivation so that climate safety is realized for all Californians. The chapter also lays out an action-oriented framework of how to realize this vision; the elements of each are taken up in Chapters 5-9.

**Chapter 5: Data and Analytics: Meeting Forward-Looking Science Needs.** This chapter addresses one of the core mandates of AB 2800, namely the information needs engineers and architects have if they were to incorporate forward-looking climate science into infrastructure planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance. Because climate is not the only variable changing, the chapter also addresses non-climatic information needs to adequately plan for the future. Finally, the chapter addresses the question – asked in the legislation – what tools, platforms and processes are available or needed to facilitate interaction between scientists, engineers and architects.

**Chapter 6: Project Pipeline: Pre-Development and Prioritization.** Chapter 6 focuses on the all-important pre-development phase during which infrastructure projects go from concept to being ready for construction. We discuss the importance of effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement and introduce a number of tools and approaches that help with effective project design in the face of an uncertain climate future and other factors that project owners need to take into account. As the engineering and architecture community move into a new paradigm, novel design options are being introduced.

**Chapter 7: Governance: Changing the Rules to Enable Climate-Safe Infrastructure.** The traditional approaches to designing infrastructure are built according to prevailing standards, codes, guidelines and various non-standards-based approaches. In this chapter, we review how these standards and guidelines are set and identify which ones in California need to be updated to account for a changing climate. We introduce standards that are better suited to accommodate climate, describe efforts to translating these into practice and offer suggestions on how California can move forward in an era of changing standards and practices. We close with a discussion of institutional mechanisms needed to support the implementation of the systems-oriented, forward-looking and social equity-focused vision promoted in this report.

**Chapter 8: Financing Climate-Safe Infrastructure.** Chapter 8 reviews infrastructure funding trends, challenges, and the needs and opportunities to put in place finance systems that can make further progress on improving infrastructure finance in the state and address the potentially growing cost of infrastructure in the face of climate change. The analysis shows that in addition to climate science, demographic, land use and economic projections regarding future infrastructure needs, a variety of metrics of the environmental, social and governance performance of funding mechanisms and additional metrics to measure adequate progress and success of adaptive infrastructure projects are required to secure the necessary funding.

**Chapter 9: Implementing Climate-Safe Infrastructure.** In the final step in the framework to action, we explore some of the critical steps necessary for climate-safe infrastructure to be realized on the ground, including the need for: training, capacity building and workforce development, statewide coordination to support an integrated way forward with realizing the vision of climate safe infrastructure and concrete mechanisms for better linking state policy and guidance to project-level action or overcoming barriers that impeded it.

**Chapter 10: Summary: Barriers and Recommendations.** We close the report in this final chapter by summarizing the barriers to moving toward climate-safe infrastructure and then summarize the recommendations that address them. Recommendations are grouped together under the headings of Chapters 3-8, thus mirroring the overarching vision and the core elements of the action-oriented framework. Together, the implementation of these recommendations will push California significantly forward on the path to realizing the compelling vision for climate-safe infrastructure across the state.



**Figure 1.3** Developing climate-safe infrastructure requires the establishment of a strong bridge between science and the engineering community, as well as supportive public policy aligned with the goals of resiliency. (Photo: Bixby Bridge near Big Sur, CA; Russell Mondy, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

## Clarion Call

At its core, AB 2800 hones in on the critical need to establish the scientific foundation for wise infrastructure investment and planning. We fully support the commitment to evidence-based decision-making and forward-looking planning that this bill affirms.

But while developing climate-safe infrastructure will require the establishment of a strong bridge between climate science and high-quality design/construction/operation/maintenance of both physical and virtual infrastructure assets and facilities (Figure 1.3), a third – and overarching – pillar to realize the vision we lay out in this report is public policy aligned with the goals of resiliency and climate safety. This implies the need for reconsidering traditional stances and approaches to thinking about cost vs. investment.

Traditional thinking has it that building sustainable, climate-safe infrastructure costs more than traditional construction, designed typically to address only today's needs. Yet, in the second decade of the 21st century,

when climate science is well established, failing to invest to protect those assets from climate change costs even more in the long run. Given the existing backlog and the need for new infrastructure, California cannot afford this added cost.

At most levels of government, as well as in the private sector, the general tendency is to put more emphasis on the initial outlay than on the long-term investment in the future of our state and the safety and well-being of our communities. It is understandable that – with limited budgets – decision-makers focus on building the most for the least. Yet we know that the initial construction cost is often only a fraction of the actual cost for maintenance, repairs and utilities. And that does not even consider the damages and losses – to structures and lives – when structures are built inadequately for the risks they will face over their lifetimes. And still, the pressure is to build at the lowest initial cost. Resilient and sustainable infrastructure do not come free, but costs can be minimized if relevant measures are built into projects from the start. Public policy must change if we are to build a sustainable future.





# 2 Climate Change – The Challenge

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## California's Climate Is Changing

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At the heart of the challenge that AB 2800 aims to address is the fact that infrastructure is built to last while the climate is changing. Central to any engineer's professional goal is to build and adequately maintain infrastructure in such a way that it remains reliably functional and safe for public use at the same level over its design life, often many decades. A changing climate means that infrastructure now must be built to withstand conditions in 10, 20, 30, 50 or 100 years from now that are not perfectly predictable but certainly different from those prevalent now. Climate averages will be different, as will be the range and severity of extreme events such as storms, floods and extreme heat, which pose the greatest short-term stresses on the bridges, levees, roads, dams and so on that California's residents, visitors and the economy depend on.

Historically, infrastructure designers, architects and engineers have taken past conditions as reliable guides to the future because the climate could be assumed to be stable within a known range of year-to-year or seasonal variability. This most foundational assumption to all engineering is no longer valid. Engineers and architects must adapt the way they approach engineering design.

Moreover, not only is the climate changing, but many other factors that affect infrastructure use and reliability, ranging from climate-influenced environmental conditions to the number of people that the infrastructure is designed to serve as a result of urbanization and population growth and migration, to the economic conditions, policy priorities and changing cultural norms and expectations that affect what society values, prioritizes and does.

This is why infrastructure engineers and architects want to know what is understood with confidence by climate scientists, and how this scientific understanding can be translated into clear policy, guidance, standards, codes, useful manuals of practice and tools. This section of the report summarizes what we know about climate change, how well we know it, and how these changes may interact with the state's existing and future infrastructure.

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*Historically, infrastructure designers, architects and engineers have taken past conditions as reliable guides to the future. This most foundational assumption to all engineering is no longer valid.*

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## Significant Scientific Confidence in Global Climate Change

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Science has established beyond doubt that the global climate – including California's climate – are changing. Scientific understanding of why these changes are occurring – mostly due to human activities – and how they may unfold in the future has grown significantly more confident over the past four decades or more. The conclusions of the most recent Fourth U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA4) are telling in the strength of its conclusions<sup>[8]</sup> (Box 2.1).

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### Box 2.1: Key Findings from the Fourth U.S. National Climate Assessment

- **Global annually averaged surface air temperature has increased** by about 1.8°F (1.0°C) over the last 115 years (1901–2016). This period is now **the warmest in the history of modern civilization**.
- **It is extremely [95%–100%] likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming** since the mid-20th century. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence.
- **Thousands of studies conducted by researchers around the world have documented changes** in surface, atmospheric and oceanic temperatures; melting glaciers; diminishing snow cover; shrinking sea ice; rising sea levels; ocean acidification; and increasing atmospheric water vapor.
- **Global average sea level has risen by about 7-8 inches since 1900**, with almost half (about 3 inches) of that rise occurring since 1993. [...] Global average sea levels are expected to continue to rise - by at least several inches in the next 15 years and by 1–4 feet by 2100. A rise of as much as 8 feet by 2100 cannot be ruled out.
- **Heavy rainfall is increasing in intensity and frequency** across the United States and globally and is expected to continue to increase [due to the ability of warmer air holding greater amounts of moisture].
- **Heatwaves have become more frequent** in the United States since the 1960s, while extreme cold temperatures and cold waves are less frequent.
- **Over the next few decades (2021-2050), annual average temperatures are expected to rise by about 2.5°F [1.4°C]** for the United States, relative to the recent past (average from 1976–2005), under all plausible future climate scenarios.
- **The magnitude of climate change beyond [2050] will depend primarily on the amount of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) emitted globally.** Without major reductions in emissions, the increase in annual average global temperature relative to pre-industrial times could reach 9°F (5°C) or more by the end of this century. With significant reductions in emissions, the increase in annual average global temperature could be limited to 3.6°F (2°C) or less.
- **The global atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration has now passed 400 parts per million (ppm), a level that last occurred about 3 million years ago** [i.e., well before the appearance of the human species], when both global average temperature and sea level were significantly higher than today.

(Source: Excerpted from USGCRP 2017<sup>[9]</sup>, pp. 10-11)

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The basic findings and conclusions confirm what many now experience: the climate has become more volatile and some extreme events are more intense or occur more often. Even if the science is clear that the climate is changing, building for a continually changing and more volatile future is another challenge altogether.

### Observed and Projected Changes in California's Climate

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As this report was completed, so was California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, which we rely on in this chapter and which informed the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group's (CSIWG) deliberations throughout<sup>[9]</sup>. Its findings are striking in their importance to the state's economy and the well-being of Californians, and they are similarly confident in tone as those from the NCA4. However, they provide greater regional specificity and thus offer important first-order insights for the state's engineers and architects.

### California's Mediterranean Climate

California has a Mediterranean climate, which is characterized by warm to hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters<sup>[10]</sup>. In addition to being strongly seasonal, California's climate is also highly variable across space. For example, there is a stark climatic gradient from the cool, often foggy coastal areas to hot inland areas, and big climatic differences between the Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada<sup>[10,11]</sup>. Moreover, California precipitation and other elements of its weather and climate varies greatly from year to year<sup>[12,13]</sup>, in part due to its sensitivity to large-scale ocean-atmosphere oscillations<sup>[14]</sup>. In fact, California has the greatest precipitation variability among all states in the US<sup>[9]</sup>. Thus, it is not unusual to find dry years or multi-year droughts where winter storms have avoided California, followed by a year or years with ample moisture from serial North Pacific storms<sup>[15]</sup>, sometimes the mark of "atmospheric rivers"<sup>[16-19]</sup>. In the past, California has adapted to this variability by, for example, building large reservoirs and dams to store water and control floods<sup>[20]</sup>,

by plumbing the entire state to move water from thinly populated areas where most of the precipitation falls to highly populated areas where it is needed most<sup>[21]</sup> and by pumping groundwater from aquifers to satisfy irrigation needs<sup>[22]</sup>. But increasingly, as the climate warms and societal demands for water evolve, drought risk will very likely increase<sup>[23]</sup> and there is a need for better collaboration across agencies and other water users to work out water-related trade-offs<sup>[24]</sup> and to diversify water resource portfolios<sup>[25]</sup>.

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*The climate has become more volatile  
and some extreme events are more  
intense or occur more often.*

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### The Big Picture of What We Know

From several decades of global, regional and local observations of myriad elements of the climate system, along with a growing production of future projections from numerous climate models, scientists have gained high confidence that climate warming is underway<sup>[26]</sup>. Furthermore, warming will very likely continue for many decades, along with those climate variables that have a similarly strong thermodynamic response to increasing greenhouse gases<sup>[27-29]</sup>. For other climate variables, such as rain- and snowfall (precipitation), wind and other variables that are more strongly governed by dynamic interaction of the atmosphere, oceans, land surfaces, ice and the biosphere, changes produced by different climate model projections are not as consistent and confidence is not as high.

Observed and expected changes can be grouped into two basic categories:

- (A) **Changes in multi-year averages, resulting in long-term trends** (e.g., average temperatures going up, rising sea level and changes in the length of seasons);
- (B) **Changes in some types of weather and climate extremes** (e.g., increases in the frequency, intensity and duration of high temperature extremes or more intense downpours).

In addition to human-driven climate change, the atmosphere, ocean and other parts of the climate system undergo natural variations across the time spectrum from day-to-day to multi-decadal time scales. For forecasts a week or more out, there are inherent limits to the predictability of the details of these fluctuations. As a result, researchers cannot provide precisely certain climate outlooks at time scales pertinent to short-term planning or infrastructure operation, although it is possible to quantify changes in the probability of some relevant conditions.



**Figure 2.1** From several decades of global, regional and local observations of myriad elements of the climate system, scientists have gained high confidence that climate warming is underway. (Photo: King Tide in Pacifica, CA; Dave Rauenbuehler, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

Spatially, there is also a limit to the predictability owing to geographic differences that result in many small-scale variations (micro-climates)<sup>[30,31]</sup>. These limits notwithstanding, there are predictable components of future climate because the relatively stable topography bears a strong influence on most meteorological and hydrological variables at or near the Earth's surface. Examples of such stable influences include California's complex topography, the long ocean-land boundary or the stark rain shadow created by the Sierra Nevada mountain range<sup>[32,33]</sup>.

In summary, some elements of future climate are predictable and fairly well understood at the global and at large regional scales and on multi-decadal timescales, while other variables – governed by complex dynamics – are less well understood. Inherently, information at high spatial and temporal resolution is quite uncertain. This has always been the case: the spatial and temporal variability experienced in the past was no more predictable than it is now. In fact, infrastructure decisions that are made now have the benefit of considerably greater data and understanding of climate processes than decisions that were made in previous decades. And engineers and architects also have considerable experience with building infrastructure to withstand variable conditions. It is clear now that in addition to this variability, engineers and architects must account for trends in averages and shifts in the occurrence of extremes around those means, while natural variability will always remain an overlay over these two fundamental changes to our climate.



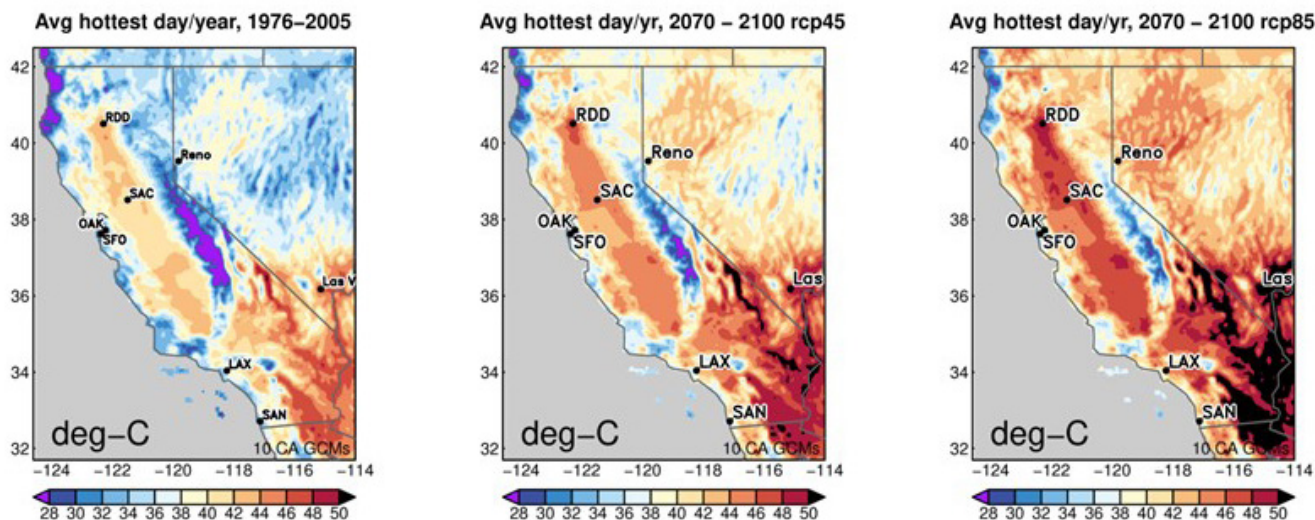


Figure 2.2 Average hottest day of the year (in °C), averaged over 10 Global Climate Models, for the historical period (left) and late-21st Century for RCP 4.5 (middle) and RCP 8.5 (right) emissions scenarios. (Source: Pierce et al. 2018<sup>[29]</sup>, used with permission)

## California's Climate Is Changing in Fundamental Ways

Observed climate changes in California over the past five decades are consistent with overall changes observed nationally and globally<sup>[9]</sup>. The best available climate science for California suggests there will be further changes in the state's climate, which in a number of cases will extend many already-observed trends<sup>[29,34]</sup>.

### Continuing warming trend and more heat extremes

- Average annual temperature in California has already increased by 1-2°F compared to the average in the early decades of the 20th century<sup>[35]</sup>, updated data provided by NOAA to G. Franco). The amount of future warming depends mainly on the emissions pathway society will follow. Under any plausible greenhouse gas emissions scenario, the state will see warming of about 4°F (2.4°C) by 2050<sup>[9,29]</sup>. After mid-century, the higher greenhouse gas emissions pathway (RCP 8.5) – which does not reflect any substantial emissions reduction policies implemented from now onward – yields considerably higher greenhouse gas concentrations, and thus greater additional warming than lower emissions scenarios. The high-emissions scenario would result in warming projections of another 2.7-9°F (1.5-5°C) by 2100 (Figure 2.2).
- Under all emissions scenarios, but particularly under the high emissions scenario, extremely warm years become statistically commonplace<sup>[23]</sup> and heat waves become more intense and more frequent, last longer and occur over a longer warm season<sup>[29,36]</sup>.
- Simultaneously, cold extremes will occur less frequently<sup>[37-39]</sup>.

- Interior regions of California will experience greater amounts of warming than coastal margins because the latter remain under the cooling influence of marine air<sup>[40]</sup>.
- Due to warming alone, California will see less of its precipitation fall as snow, which will result in diminished mountain snow packs, more rain and less snow in lower and intermediate elevations (which have historically generated spring snow accumulations). Together, these changes will result in earlier run-off and less “natural water storage” in the form of snow, demanding that California adjust its water management approaches<sup>[41-45]</sup>.

### Accelerated sea-level rise, worsening coastal storm impacts

- Sea level has already risen by 7 inches between 1900 and 2000, and the pace of rise has been increasing since the early 1990s<sup>[46]</sup>. In the future, sea level will be rising at a further accelerating rate, with the amount depending on emissions pathways and resulting global warming trends, as well as the consequences of this warming for the large ice sheets of the world (Antarctica and Greenland).
- The main sources of this rise include 1) the expansion of ocean water as it warms and 2) additions to the amount of water in the ocean basins from melting of land-based ice. The latter is expected to become an increasingly important factor. In fact, the rate of ice loss from the Earth's largest ice sheets – the Greenland and Antarctic Ice Sheets – is already observed to be increasing<sup>[47,48]</sup>.

- Sea-level rise projections for California vary by location, which is available for all California tide gauges<sup>[49]</sup>. For San Francisco, for example, the median projection of sea-level rise by 2050 is 0.9 ft and could range from 2.54 ft (0.77 m) to ~4.5 ft (1.37 m) over 2000 levels by the end of the century, depending on the underlying assumptions about society's emissions pathway<sup>[29,46]</sup>. However, recent scientific studies point to the (as yet unquantifiable) possibility of extreme sea-level rise, resulting in a possible rise of ~10 ft. (3 m) by 2100<sup>[46,50-52]</sup>.
- Over the near term, the greatest impact on coastal infrastructure will be felt from the coincidence of large winter storms with high astronomical tides and El Niño, each of which temporarily elevates sea levels, albeit by different amounts and for varying duration. But as sea level rises further, these common events and processes will unfold on an ever-higher baseline of local sea level<sup>[46]</sup>.
- The greatest damages in coastal areas arise from wind-driven waves which are generated as storms move toward shore from remote North Pacific regions and build up in near-shore areas<sup>[53-55]</sup>.
- Most coastal storms involve the effects of flooding from the ocean side superimposed on flooding from inland run-off sources<sup>[56]</sup>. The result is a growing compound flooding risk, resulting in greater exposure and greater loading on coastal infrastructure and buildings<sup>[57]</sup>. The ability to project these compound flooding risks for California locations has been shown but is not yet available for all locations<sup>[58,59]</sup>.
- In addition, sea-level rise causes saltwater intrusion in low-lying areas such as San Francisco Bay and the Delta, as well as into coastal groundwater aquifers

along many parts of the California coast. Saltwater intrusion – to date mostly driven by over-pumping of coastal aquifers – will be exacerbated in the future by rising sea level, affecting agricultural areas, underground infrastructure, and the stability of levees<sup>[60-63]</sup>. Moreover, higher sea level in low-lying areas means higher sub-surface groundwater levels and less capacity of the soil to absorb large amounts of rainfall, runoff or overland flood waters, thus altering the soil conditions in nearshore areas that are just beginning to be understood and modeled<sup>[62, 63]</sup>.

- Finally, increased wave activity in concert with rising seas leads to increased coastal erosion impacting the coast's beaches, bluffs and cliffs<sup>[64,65]</sup>.

### Changing precipitation regime toward greater volatility

- While California's climate has always been variable in terms of daily, monthly and interannual precipitation totals<sup>[12]</sup>, over the past several decades, California has already observed changes in its rain- and snowfall<sup>[66, 67]</sup>, with a tendency toward greater dryness<sup>[19,67,68]</sup>.
- Different causes have been implicated for recent dryness in California including Pacific Ocean-atmosphere effects<sup>[69]</sup> and effects of human-caused warming<sup>[23,70,71]</sup>. Some studies also suggest that these already observed shifts (and more in the future) could be linked to Arctic sea ice loss<sup>[72-78]</sup>.
- Going forward, one of the more difficult-to-project changes in climate are those related to changes in precipitation. Studies point to more dry days and more dry years in the future<sup>[23,33,79,80]</sup>, but also occasionally to more intense rainfall events<sup>[81-83]</sup> (Figure 2.3).
- Geographically, scientists expect to see drier parts of the state (southern and inland) to get even drier,

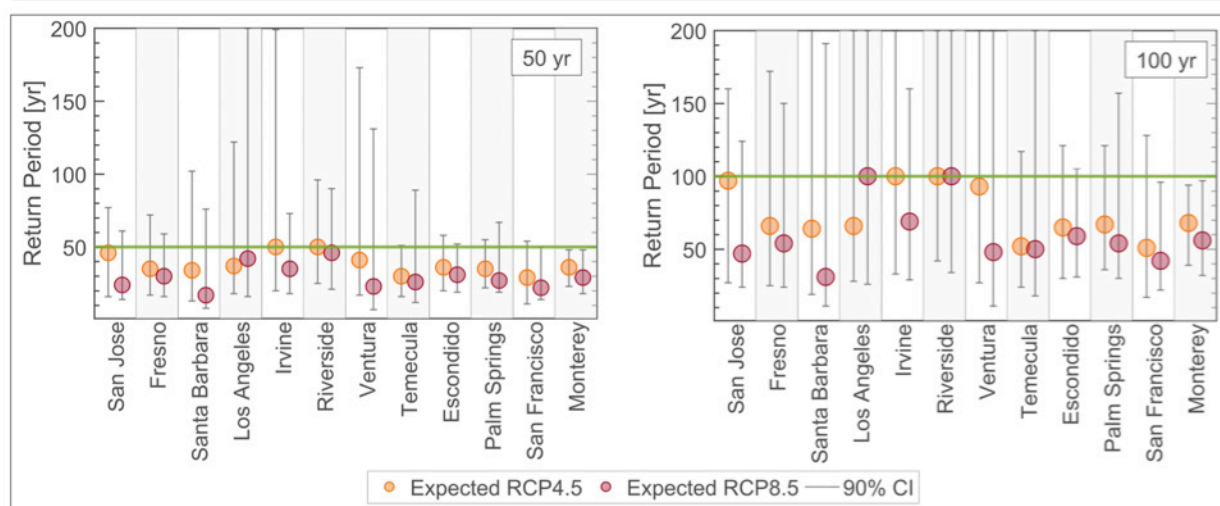


Figure 2.3 Return periods of events historically associated with return periods of 50-, and 100-year in California under climate change. The dots show the expected projected return periods and the gray lines display the 90% confidence intervals (Source: Ragno et al., 2018<sup>[58]</sup>, used with permission).

while wetter (mainly northern) parts get wetter<sup>[29,34]</sup>. Thus, overall, there may not be a large statewide shift in average precipitation, but regionally specific shifts and a climate marked overall by greater precipitation extremes<sup>[29,79]</sup>.

- Seasonally, models indicate that core winter months (DJF) remain wet or become even slightly wetter, but shoulder spring (MAM) and fall (SON) seasons become drier than they were on average over the historical period<sup>[23,29,81]</sup>. This would result in a “peakier” wet season separated by a longer warm dry season<sup>[33,39,79,83]</sup>. A longer warm dry season would heighten some important climate impacts including fire risk, water and energy demand and ecosystem stress<sup>[84-86]</sup>.
- As temperatures increase, the rain/snow line will move to higher elevations, and more of each storm will fall as rain than as snow, resulting in greater immediate storm runoff, especially in historically snow-affected catchments<sup>[87,88]</sup>. This increased run-off poses increasing problems for dam operators as they must manage for flood protection and water storage under increasingly volatile conditions<sup>[89-91]</sup>.
- At the same time, less precipitation is stored in the snowpack and thus not available for slow release over the dry warm summer season. This is particularly challenging as dry spells in the future will also be warmer, thereby intensifying water loss from soils, water surfaces and vegetation while demand for water and energy will be heightened<sup>[89]</sup>.

### Other changes and extremes

- The impact of climate change on high-wind events is not well understood, in part because high winds are rare, often localized, and caused by multiple factors and in the context of different large-scale patterns. Globally, average near-surface wind speeds have been reported to have declined in recent decades<sup>[92]</sup>, but regionally, Santa Ana winds have not exhibited significant trends<sup>[93]</sup>.
- Dry coastal winds (Santa Ana, Sundowner, Diablo) aggravate the risk of wildfires<sup>[94,95]</sup>. Observation does not suggest any weakening of these wind systems, but future projections remain contested, although most research points to hotter dry winds and the continued importance of Santa Ana winds in the future<sup>[93,96]</sup>.
- The observed changes in California’s climate have already contributed to more frequent and more severe wildfires<sup>[97-99]</sup>. Depending on the assumptions about climate and land use change in the underlying scenarios, future projections point to modest to large increases in wildfire risks in many parts of California, placing more buildings, infrastructure and a growing population at risk<sup>[97,98,100,101]</sup>.



**Figure 2.4** Observed changes in California’s climate have already contributed to more frequent and more severe wildfires, and future projections point to modest to large increases in wildfire risks. (Photo: Department of Defense).

- Future changes in cloudiness over California are not well understood, in part because clouds are driven by multiple factors, some of which occur at scales smaller than represented in global climate models. Relatively low-altitude coastal stratus clouds and fog – the pre-dominant cloud type along the California coastal margin – occurs throughout the year but more frequently in spring and summer<sup>[102]</sup>. Historically, periods of anomalous cloud cover are driven by anomalous ocean and atmospheric patterns<sup>[103,104]</sup>, with substantial variations over decades<sup>[103,105]</sup>.
- Urban heat island effects have diminished coastal cloud cover in developed coastal areas such as Los Angeles<sup>[86,106]</sup>. As cloud cover decreases, particularly late-afternoon temperatures increase, posing growing public health risk and increasing demand for improved building envelopes and/or more air conditioning. The latter would increase energy demand to run air conditioners to mitigate those heat-related health risks<sup>[107]</sup>.

## Uncertainties in Climate Projections: The Plain English Digest

Climate scientists have gained significant confidence in historical (i.e., observed) and future (i.e., projected) climate changes, but uncertainties will always be an inherent part of the future<sup>[108,109]</sup>. What is certain – given the global climate changes now underway and accelerating – is that continuing to rely solely on historical data and the assumption of stasis as a basis for infrastructure-related decisions from now on would ignore empirical reality and the best science available to inform planning for the future.



These uncertainties are described below to make an emphatic case for why engineers and architects must build for change and volatility if the goal is to build the climate-safe infrastructure of the future.

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*Natural climate variability is the type of uncertainty already familiar to engineers. It is present in the climate now.*

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### Natural Climate Variability

High-resolution global climate models have much improved in their ability to capture and reproduce natural climate variability, such as decadal swings in climate, periodic events such as El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and even interannual variability. Research has vastly improved our understanding of the underlying dynamics and thus in improving the ability to forecast such interannual- and interdecadal variability. These forecasts have become increasingly important for emergency planning and for infrastructure operation and maintenance planning. That said, regardless of the future trajectory of global warming, there will always remain a stochastic, or randomly determined, element to the actual climate that unfolds in any place and time. This can be statistically analyzed for patterns but can never be predicted with absolute certainty. Natural climate variability is the type of uncertainty already familiar to engineers. It is present in the climate now.

### Emissions Trajectories

One of the largest uncertainties in predicting future climate is the course human society chooses in terms of energy and land use, resulting in different greenhouse gas emissions pathways. Ultimately only one such path will be realized, but we will only know which path by hindsight. Because it is very difficult to predict which pathway society will take, scientists use a range of plausible emissions scenarios, resulting not in a single projection, but in an envelope of possible rates of warming, sea-level rise and other measures of climate change.

While California – now the fifth largest economy in the world – is continuing on its course of stringent emission reductions, the federal government is currently in the process of rolling back previously made emission reduction commitments. At the same time, many subnational actors and virtually all nations around the globe have formally committed to achieving the goals of the 2016 Paris Agreement<sup>[110-112]</sup>. This agreement aims to limit global

average temperature increases to 3.6°F (2°C) above the pre-industrial average, and ideally to less than that. Emission reduction pledges made to date, however, would result in a global temperature increase of 4.7-5.8°F (2.6-3.2°C), and actual emission reduction achievements and policies in place so far point to an even larger temperature increase of 5.6-6.7°F (3.1-3.7°C) above pre-industrial levels by 2100. Many nations that have committed to the Paris targets are finding it extremely difficult to make the necessary changes (see assessment by country, especially of highly developed nations, at the [Climate Action Tracker](#)), while many others, especially least developed countries, insist on their right to development, which, still often, is energy-intensive<sup>[113,114]</sup>. These kinds of challenges are faced, in fact, at all levels and across the world, namely to decouple the economy and human well-being from high consumptions of fossil fuels. Until this succeeds and the greenhouse gas emissions stabilize, it is thus prudent to plan for a more dangerous future despite California's stringent mitigation goals.

Researchers and policy observers have concluded that it is technically feasible to achieve the lower warming targets of the Paris Accord by deploying stringent policies, market signals, available energy technologies and other technologies that draw carbon out of the atmosphere (so-called “negative emissions technologies”), perhaps after a period of overshooting that target<sup>[115-120]</sup>. However, any delays result in greater future cost<sup>[121]</sup> and increase the likelihood of creating severe impacts and passing irreversible tipping points in the climate system<sup>[122,123]</sup>. Feedback mechanisms may also result in difficult-to-impossible to predict responses of the climate system given the rapid pace at which it is being altered by greenhouse gas emissions<sup>[124,125]</sup>. Thus, the ultimate warming trajectory, particularly beyond the middle of the century, remains uncertain. Projections of future climate changes, even probabilistic projections as provided in California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment<sup>[29]</sup> or the Ocean Science Trust's recent sea-level rise report<sup>[46]</sup>, will remain contingent on assumptions about the course of global emissions (Box 2.2).

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*Projections of future climate changes, even probabilistic projections will remain contingent on assumptions about the course of global emissions*

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## Box 2.2: “A 90% Chance that Sea-Level Rise Will Be No More Than ...” – A Word on Probabilistic Projections of Future Climate Change

One of the key advances in climate science over the past decade – aided by increasingly powerful computer models – has been the ability to provide probabilistic climate change projections. To say that “there is a 30% chance of rain in the San Francisco Bay area tomorrow” or “a 50% chance that a particular storm will come onshore on the Mendocino Coast” is fundamentally different, however, from saying, “there is a 66% chance that average warming in 2050 will be within a certain temperature range.” Why is that?

Weather predictions for the next few days use high-resolution meteorological models (i.e., mathematical equations representing the changing state of the atmosphere built from past observations and adhering to the laws of physics) that receive current observations of atmospheric and surface conditions as initial conditions and then are run forward to produce tomorrow’s weather. Tomorrow, we will know whether the prediction hit the mark. Their skill can be measured and subsequently forecasting models can be improved with yet another observation.

Climate projections 50 or 100 years out rely on global climate models that use essentially the same types of equations as weather forecasting models. These equations account for the conditions of the land, ocean, ice and atmosphere and integrate across time and space. They are run with historical data to validate them, for example, by starting a model in 1750 with the greenhouse gas concentrations known to have existed at that time, and then run forward to 2018 with the greenhouse gas concentrations increasing as they were observed in each year. But the key difference is the basic input into these equations. Rather than current weather conditions, climate models start out from the amount of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, along with whatever else is known about natural climate variability and its causes, and the simulated outcome are climate variables, such as the surface temperature over land at a particular point in time.

Assuming known natural variability will continue into the future, superimposed on the basic state of the climate at any one time, the critical question then becomes: how much is the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere going to be changed from its current (or pre-industrial) state? No climate scientist, economist, or policy maker in the world is in a position to foresee what the exact concentration will be in 2100. Why? Because the concentration will depend on a suite of policy choices and economic incentives created by humans, as well the individual and societal responses to those policy choices and incentives. These individual and collective decisions involve countless factors – including free will – and while we all may speculate what humanity will do, no one can say for sure. This is why scientists have developed a set of internally consistent, plausible scenarios of how global emissions might unfold. These emissions scenarios (also sometimes called trajectories or pathways) are the basis for running their models.

How do we get to probabilities then, if we cannot say how likely a particular scenario is? We get to probabilities by running climate models with the same scenario often enough that we can develop probability distributions for a given emissions pathway. More specifically, scientists can run selected



Climate projections start out from the amount of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere and what is known about natural factors affecting the climate. The balance of policies and incentives for either renewable energy and fossil fuel sources will shape the future climate. (Photo: Kevin Dooley, [flickr](#), licenses under Creative Commons License 2.0).

emission scenarios many times on a particular model; they can also run the same scenario on many different models; and they have done this now for all basic scenarios considered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Pooling the results of multiple model runs for a particular emissions scenario together, scientists are able to say what the average of all these model runs is, or the distribution of projections for a given climate variable within a particular confidence interval. So, when scientists say, “there is a 66% chance that warming by 2050 will be in a particular temperature range”, that statement reflects the statistical result of many model runs for a particular emissions scenario. Alternatively, scientists may run sea-level rise projections on one or multiple climate models for a lower and higher-emissions scenario, combine all outputs, and thus be able to say that “there is a 90% chance sea-level rise by 2050 will be no more than...”

The resulting probabilities reflect the best available scientific understanding of relevant factors influencing a particular climate outcome (as reflected in the climate models used) but are conditional on the underlying emissions scenario. Such probabilities are useful to infrastructure designers only after they have made up their minds about how risk averse or risk tolerant they choose to be. Once the risk tolerance is determined, infrastructure planners can use these probabilities in a risk management process that considers sensitivity to future changes in the probability estimates. For example, if the infrastructure being considered is long-lived and of high value, and damage to it would cause very high or irreversible damages, an infrastructure owner might choose to build it so that it can withstand the climate conditions associated with a fossil-fuel heavy/high-emissions scenario. Designers can then use probabilistic climate projections for that high-emissions scenario to evaluate their design choices.

This type of probabilistic projection is the best science there is, which is considerably better than assuming that there will be no change, or simply extrapolating historical trends into the future.<sup>4</sup> But in the end, only one climate future out of all of these projections will unfold in reality. Infrastructure designers, along with their stakeholders and ultimate decision-makers, are thus faced with the need to become clear about how willing they are to take on the risk to be unsafe or how willing they are to pay for greater safety. The result of this values-based choice and professional judgment will manifest in the contingencies they will or will not build into their plans and designs so as to deal with the one inherently unpredictable reality that will unfold in time.

## Model Uncertainties

Climate models are another source of uncertainty in climate projections. To project future climate, scientists select one or more plausible greenhouse gas emissions scenarios (as discussed above) and use them as inputs into global climate models. Climate models are linked sets of mathematical equations derived from the laws of physics, such as Newton’s equations of motion and the Ideal Gas Law. They are based on the same mathematical equations as the models that are used to make weather forecasts but are run over much longer time horizons and represent physical processes in the atmosphere, ocean, ice and land surface. In some cases, models also account for important processes in chemical, biological and human systems<sup>[126]</sup>. In recent decades, research groups around the world have developed more than 50 such global climate models of varying complexity. They vary in the degree of sophistication in representing these physical, chemical, biological and human-driven processes, as well as in the spatial and temporal detail that they can provide. Climate models also vary in how well each is capable of reproducing the natural variability that has been observed over different regions of the world in the past. Research

groups continually improve models, validate them against past climate observations, and learn from thousands of analyses by the much larger group of international scientists that are not involved in the climate model development through a global inter-model comparison project (now in its sixth round of inter-model comparisons<sup>[127,128]</sup>).<sup>5</sup>

With growing computational speed and data storage capacities, models can now be run many times with multiple emissions scenarios, or many times with the same emissions scenario. These enhanced computational resources have significantly improved modeling approaches; enabled insights into the relationship between observed trends, extreme events, and underlying causal mechanisms (e.g., attribution of individual extreme events to natural variability vs. human-caused climate change); and give scientists the ability to develop probabilistic climate projections.

One of the most important findings from this inter-model comparison over the past few years has

<sup>4</sup> Scenario planning can be a viable alternative to understand the sensitivity of systems to different climate (or other) conditions.

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.wcrp-climate.org/wgcm-cmip>.



been the insight that, at the regional scale, differences between models are often neither smaller nor greater than the normal variability in climate. Put another way: when analyzing the trajectory of climate in a given region, running one emissions scenario ~40 times in one climate model often produces a range of climate outcomes that is similar in size to the range obtained when running that same emissions scenario once in each of the ~40 global climate models available<sup>[36,129,130]</sup>. In practice, however, decision-makers do not rely on 40 models to capture this full range of possible outcomes; rather, they typically only have a small number of model results available. Thus, for planning purposes and to guard against possibly missing important information, a divergent range of model outputs should be used. This range of outcomes in a single climate model run in a single emissions scenario arises from the natural climate variability described above. The resulting range of projected variables reflects the irreducible uncertainty that is inherent to all climate futures.

As a result, a general “rule of thumb” is that future climate will never be more predictable or more certain than the past or current climate: day to day, season to season, year to year, there is variability in the climate and that fact remains. However, in general, climate variables that are strongly dependent on temperature exhibit the least irreducible uncertainty, while variables that are

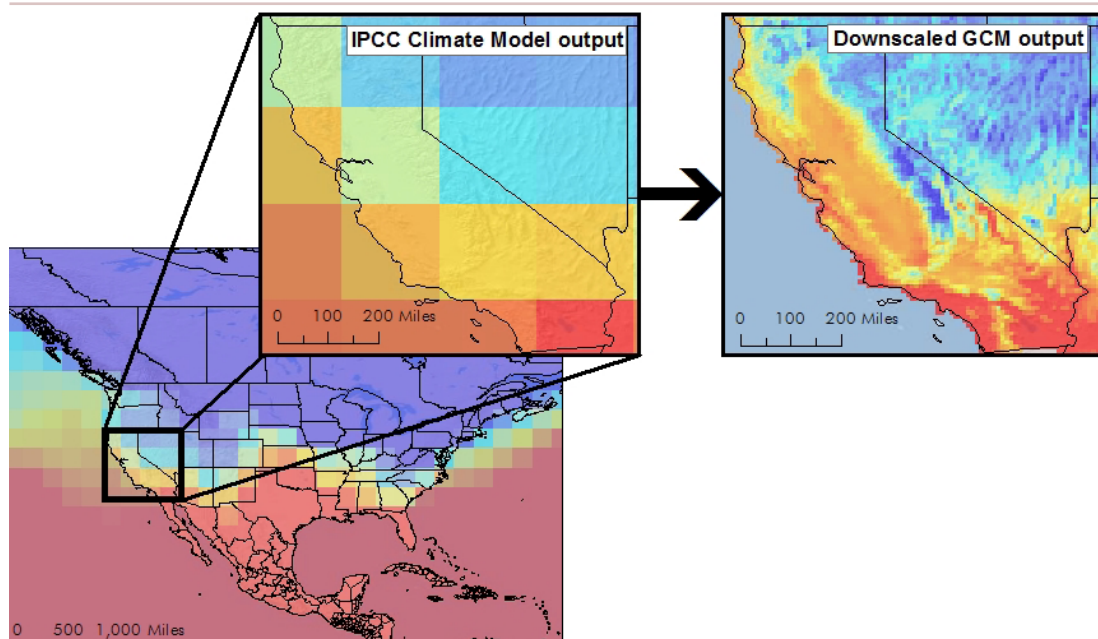
dependent on precipitation exhibit the greatest irreducible uncertainty<sup>[34]</sup>. For example, for California, the irreducible uncertainty lies only in the magnitude of warming, but not in whether warming will occur if greenhouse gas concentrations continue to increase<sup>[129]</sup>. Likewise, although there is substantial irreducible uncertainty in the sign of precipitation over California and the broader western United States over the next few decades, the definitive likelihood of continued warming overcomes that precipitation uncertainty to create an unambiguous trend towards diminished snowpack and earlier snowmelt timing<sup>[42]</sup>.

*Future climate will never be more predictable or more certain than the past or current climate.*

### Uncertainties in Downscaling

Global climate models are – as the name denotes, global in scale – and thus use a global grid to map their outputs onto the Earth’s surface. Each grid cell can be tens to hundreds of miles on one side, thereby covering large areas of

different types of terrain, land cover and land use. Over the past decade or more, scientists have made significant progress in increasing the spatial (and temporal) resolution of their models (Figure 2.5), but any increase in the resolution of grid cells results in a corresponding multifold increase in the number of equations that need to be solved to obtain results, and thus in a dramatic increase in computational demand (for example, resolving the processes that produce Santa Ana winds and associated wildland fires<sup>[95]</sup>, or atmospheric rivers<sup>[131]</sup>, thus further increasing the need for computational capacity.)



**Figure 2.5** Scientists have made significant progress in increasing the spatial and temporal resolution of their models. But just because data are more highly resolved and provide a more localized picture does not mean they are more reliable or accurate. (Source: Cal-Adapt).

Scientists have developed two ways to relate global climate changes to regional and sub-regional changes, (e.g., on the scale of the Western United States, or within California): the first, called dynamical downscaling, links climate dynamics observed at larger scales to those witnessed at smaller scales through equations that represent how these processes interact across scales. The second, called statistical downscaling, mathematically relates (i.e., correlates) climate variables projected at larger scales to corresponding variables observed at smaller scales. Dynamical downscaling offers a more comprehensive representation of the finer-scale physical processes that govern the regional and local response to global warming, but is slower and more computationally demanding, and is subject to uncertainty arising from the physical representation of those processes<sup>[132]</sup>. Statistical downscaling is quicker and less computationally demanding, but it ignores the finer-scale physical processes, meaning that it can underestimate the magnitude of local and regional change<sup>[41]</sup>.

Many planners and infrastructure designers wish for ever higher-resolution data and the scientific community, including in California, is rapidly advancing to produce the desired level and types of outputs (Box 2.3). Research shows that higher-resolution data are much preferred by practitioners because they illustrate locally familiar situations and lend themselves more easily to local planning and decision-making<sup>[133]</sup>. But just because data are more highly resolved and provide a more localized picture does not mean they are more reliable or accurate. Put another way, higher resolution data create the illusion of greater reliability, but this may not always be the case.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we have synthesized the state of knowledge on observed and projected climate change with particular emphasis on California. The scientific community is unequivocal on the existence of global climate change, and there is very high confidence that it is mostly human caused. A large number and wide variety of independent observations as well as detailed studies to rule out alternative explanations have created this solid scientific understanding.

What we know with considerable confidence includes the following:

- Climate is no longer stationary and the past is no longer a reliable guide to future conditions;
- Climate warming will continue, likely at an accelerating rate;
- Sea level will continue to rise, also at an accelerating rate;
- Extreme weather and climate events will continue to

occur amidst an envelope of these changing average conditions. Many will occur more frequently and/or be more intense than historically, a finding of particular significance to infrastructure planners;

- The most likely times of heightened risk of coastal flooding will be those when naturally-occurring events such as astronomically high tides coincide with coastal storms on an ever-higher baseline of rising sea level;
- Compounded extremes (e.g., coastal storms coinciding with freshwater floods; or Santa Ana winds coinciding with a heat wave and drought, leading to wildfires) need to be considered in planning for future climate impacts, including combinations of conditions that have not occurred historically; and
- Sequences of events also need to be considered (e.g., a wet fall that saturates soils, followed by a series of winter storms typically leads to flooding). This includes sequences of events that have been rare historically, and so are not well informed by extensive historical records, meaning that models must be called into play in order to assess the likelihood and better understand mechanisms.

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*Just because data are more highly resolved and provide a more localized picture does not mean they are more reliable or accurate.*

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This chapter also detailed in what ways future projections of climate change are uncertain. Some of these uncertainties are familiar to infrastructure planners already, such as natural climate variability. Patterns of this variability can be established, but it cannot be reduced or eliminated. Other uncertainties can be quantified, such as model uncertainty, but models will always only be approximations of reality, thus, they cannot fully be eliminated. The possibility of surprises (i.e., unforeseen changes in the climate system) remains. Finally, some uncertainties are extremely difficult to reduce, if at all, such as knowing the emissions pathway society will choose to take over the coming decades. Climate projections, even probabilistic ones, will therefore always be contingent on the emissions scenario selected to make those projections.

Guarding against inevitable, and in many instances worsening, extremes as the climate changes and accommodating these uncertainties thus requires particular attention from infrastructure designers. Global climate impacts that occur under global warming levels

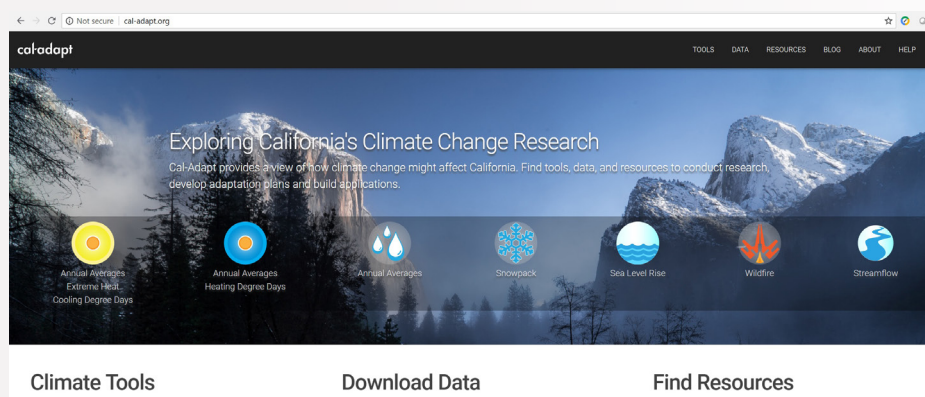
### Box 2.3: Use of Climate Scenarios in California for Research and Long-Term Planning

Since 2003 California has supported the development of climate scenarios designed not only for scientific research on climate impacts and adaptation, but also to support long-term planning by State agencies<sup>[134]</sup>. California research efforts are aimed to complement federal climate research initiatives to provide insights that are more specific to California. Under direction and funding from the California Energy Commission (CEC), researchers in California tested multiple ways to translate (downscale) the outputs from global climate models to the California region at adequate temporal and geographical resolutions for practical applications<sup>[39,135]</sup>. The geographical resolution of the global climate models is roughly 100 miles, while information is needed at resolutions of 7 miles or less. Researchers used the downscaling techniques to bring the latest outputs of the global climate model runs produced for the IPCC Assessments to the California region. Under support from CEC, Scripps Institution of Oceanography developed the more recent and most advanced downscaling techniques known as Localized Constructed Analogs (LOCA)<sup>[43]</sup>. LOCA was used to develop the climate scenarios for California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment<sup>[29]</sup>. Outputs from LOCA drove a statewide hydrologic model to obtain information such as water flows and soil moisture. Recently, federal agencies adopted LOCA at the national scale and funded the application of LOCA for the nation as a whole for the 2018 (Fourth) National Climate Assessment.

The climate scenarios used in California's Fourth Climate Assessment<sup>[29]</sup> include daily maximum and minimum temperature, daily precipitation, relative humidity, wind speed, solar radiation, soil moisture, runoff and other variables. The level of geographical resolution is about 3.6 miles with daily time steps from 1950 to the end of the 21st century. The information is in the public domain and available from [Cal-Adapt](#) and other data repositories.

Since the release of the last IPCC Assessment in 2013, research groups around the world have improved their global climate models with the latest science and are running the models for the Sixth IPCC assessment cycle (2021-23). As before, under support from CEC, Scripps Institution of Oceanography is developing a new downscaling technique with improvements, such as the effects of small particles in the air, known as aerosols, on the formation and behavior of clouds and the use of an improved hydrological model. The new downscaling technique will be ready when the IPCC global climate scenarios are available, again, to develop California-specific scenarios to explore adaptation options for the energy sector and other sectors of the economy. Constant advances in science result in more advanced global climate models that should be matched by improved downscaling techniques.

In the last few years additional research groups in California have started to produce their own downscaling techniques with climate projections for different regions in California. The most notable effort is the work at the University of California at Los Angeles that has produced very sophisticated climate projections for certain periods in the future for the Los Angeles region and the Sierra Nevada. For the next California Assessment, the hope is to take advantage of these products to complement what the State is funding directly.



Source: [Cal-Adapt](#) landing page.



of, or exceeding, 3.6°F (2°C) have been described as “dangerous”<sup>[136]</sup>. California has made a policy commitment – along with many state, local, private sector and international counterparts – to work toward this target, even though the current federal administration has announced its intention to withdraw the United States from the international agreement<sup>[111, 137]</sup>; see also <http://www.under2coalition.org/>).

Despite this laudable commitment by California and others, it is important to note that even if all human-driven heat-trapping emissions were eliminated today, the Earth system would continue to warm because it is still reaching equilibrium with the excess greenhouse gases that have accumulated in the atmosphere over the past decades (for example, CO<sub>2</sub> has a residence time in the atmosphere of 100 years or more). Research suggests there are tipping points in the Earth system beyond which the global climate would enter a “hothouse” state, even if emissions continue to be reduced<sup>[138]</sup>. Thus, even under the best (but unrealistic) circumstances, further warming would occur, and sea level would continue to

rise for the foreseeable future. And even under the next best (but difficult to achieve) scenario, i.e., if the global community were to meet the Paris targets, the Earth’s climate and environmental conditions would continue to change, since even the most ambitious targets guarantee further emissions and warming beyond what has already occurred. The prospect of less advantageous futures, unfortunately, cannot be excluded. Given this outlook, it is

accordingly prudent to consider the highest (or at least very high) warming scenarios in planning for climate change impacts to ensure the safest infrastructure possible.

In light of these trends in averages and extremes and the associated uncertainties, engineering will need a range

of new approaches to ensure that safety and functionality remain viable goals. From a scientific perspective, these approaches should include scenario planning; risk-management approaches; the use of probabilities and safety factors; building-in redundancy, adaptability and resiliency; and contingency planning for when climate events overwhelm even the best engineered infrastructure.

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*Extreme weather and climate events will continue to occur amidst an envelope of changing average conditions. Many will occur more frequently, a significant finding for infrastructure planners.*

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**Figure 2.6** Even if the global community were to meet the Paris Accord’s targets of limiting warming to 2 °C or less above preindustrial levels, the Earth’s climate and environmental conditions would continue to change. But the prospect of less advantageous futures cannot be excluded. (Photo: Fremont Weir in Knights Landing, California; Florence Low, DWR, used with permission).

# 3 Infrastructure – The Starting Place

## Overview

California’s infrastructure is aging, needs increasingly more maintenance than there is funding for and – as recent extreme events and disasters or near-disasters illustrate – is already at risk and vulnerable to the impacts of weather and climate change. In this section, we discuss the current state of the infrastructure in California, with information provided by the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG) and supplemented by additional resources such as the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)’s Infrastructure Report Card and other publicly available sources.

In addition to the often-degraded physical condition of today’s infrastructure, California faces significant infrastructure workforce issues. Moreover, the demand on the state’s infrastructure is growing due to steady population increases: as of January 2018, 39,810,000 people lived in California, and according to California’s Department of Finance, “since 2010, when the state’s population was 37,253,956, population growth has averaged 333,000 a year<sup>[139]</sup>.

The ASCE regularly assesses the status of infrastructure across the United States, and has found the nation’s – on average, across infrastructure types – to deserve no more than a D+ grade<sup>[4]</sup>. “D” stands for “poor, at risk,” which specifically translates into this overall judgement: “The infrastructure is in poor to fair condition and mostly below standard, with many elements approaching the end of their service life. A large portion of the system exhibits significant deterioration. Condition and capacity are of serious concern with strong risk of failure”<sup>[4]</sup>, (p. 13).

Looking just at California’s infrastructure, the state’s various types of infrastructure vary from better to worse



**Figure 3.1** California’s infrastructure fares slightly better or slightly worse than the nation’s, which the ASCE gave a D+ grade: poor and at risk. (Photo: Potholes in San Francisco; San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

than the national average<sup>1</sup> (Figure 3.1). We will discuss the situation in key infrastructure sectors below but offer the ASCE’s 2017 summary snapshot as an overview in Figure 3.2. The ASCE concluded its assessment with a clear clarion call to action:

“This deteriorating infrastructure impedes California’s ability to compete in an increasingly global marketplace. Success in a 21st century economy requires serious, sustained leadership on infrastructure investment at all levels of government. Delaying these investments only escalates the cost and risks of an aging infrastructure system, an option that the country, California, and families can no longer afford.”<sup>[7]</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a nationwide comparison, see: <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/infrastructure-super-map/>.





Figure 3.2 The American Society of Civil Engineers' 2017 factsheet on California's infrastructure. The state fared better in some infrastructure categories than in others compared to other states (Source: ASCE 2017<sup>[7]</sup>, used with permission)

As a result of its deliberations, the CSIWG has concluded that California faces a pivotal moment at which the state's political leaders – at all levels – need to become serious about sustained leadership on infrastructure investment and commit to making it a “climate-safe” investment.

In recent years, California has begun providing this leadership, converting budget deficits to surpluses and creating significant new funding for infrastructure statewide (see [Chapter 8](#) for detailed discussion). To fully meet the challenges ahead, to provide the basis for continued economic leadership across the nation and

the world and to create a safe foundation for living and working in or visiting California, this investment will need to be sustained and even increase through all levels of government.

Below, we describe the current state of infrastructure in key sectors considered by the Working Group<sup>2</sup>, including, where available, known threats to that infrastructure from climate change.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the limited time available and expertise on the Working Group, not all state infrastructure was treated in full detail, such as health or correctional facilities or parks. Some information is included in the appendices.



## Rushing Toward the Future: Infrastructure in the Water Sector

California's water infrastructure consists of a complex system of dams, reservoirs, canals, pipes, pumping stations, levees and groundwater recharge facilities (Figure 3.3). One important component – the State Water Project (SWP) – is composed of 701 miles of canals and pipelines, 34 storage facilities that provide drinking water in 29 urban and agricultural water service areas for 25 million people and irrigation for 750,000 acres of farmland. It also includes Oroville Dam, the tallest dam in the US<sup>[140]</sup>. Other State-owned facilities include approximately 1,600 miles of levees, 3 main bypass systems for flood control and protection, 26 non-leveed channels, 66 flood system structures as well as DWR-operated education and visitor centers and offices<sup>[141]</sup> (Figures 3.3 and 3.4).

These facts alone about the water sector illustrate why it is important to think of infrastructure systems rather than just individual physical assets. The state's reservoirs store water and produce electricity and provide flood protection services at once. The State water agency and contractors are involved in managing the different components, and local jurisdictions must work together to manage their water resources – from the SWP and other sources – in an integrated fashion. While most wastewater systems are not State-owned, they are regulated, permitted and funded by the State Water Regional Control Board (SWRCB). Moreover, wastewater management is a critical component of keeping water supplies clean and thus the infrastructure and management of wastewater infrastructure cannot be ignored.

The water system of California in many ways is a response to the historical climate variability – seasonal, interannual and inter-decadal – described in the previous chapter. A water conveyance system was built to transport water from where it is plentiful (in the northern Sierra) to where it is needed the most (in the drier but most populous parts of southern California), with water deliveries to users all along the way. Dams and reservoirs were built to capture runoff from snowmelt and heavy rains in the wet season and to make it available to users during the dry summer months. As populations grew and supplies remained fairly constant, demand was met with increasing reliance on water recycling, water conservation, groundwater and more recently, desalinization. Even with storage capacity in reservoirs and other surface water sources, California relies on groundwater for about 40% of its water needs. According to California's Fourth Climate Assessment Synthesis report<sup>[9]</sup>, “During dry years, this increases to more than half of the state's total supply and groundwater serves as a critical buffer against the impacts of drought.”

As climate continues to change its historical patterns and the state population continues to grow, the existing infrastructure systems may no longer be the best suited for the climate of the future. Already, higher temperatures, declining snowpack, extended droughts and more heavy rainfall/runoff events stretch the capacity of the existing system<sup>[142]</sup>. According to the Synthesis report, “The ability of water infrastructure to withstand and rebound from climate hazards is compromised by the advanced age of existing assets, deferred maintenance, funding constraints and technological changes<sup>[143]</sup>.”

Other Fourth Assessment studies reiterate previously identified vulnerabilities with the Delta levees, which are subsiding and thus are even more at risk from storms, floods and sea-level rise<sup>[144]</sup>. In coastal areas, wastewater treatment facilities – many of which are located at the lowest gravitational point, i.e., at sea level – are increasingly at risk of being compromised<sup>[145]</sup>. Other Fourth Assessment studies suggest that climate change will cause a decline in performance of the storage and conveyance system, diminish reservoir carryover storage (i.e., the amount of water available in the reservoirs before the start of the wet season in October), reduce Delta water exports, undermine drought resilience, and reduce operational control over downstream river flow temperature requirements in the future<sup>[146-148]</sup>. The experience with the recent five-year drought also revealed regulatory and administrative hurdles that resulted in inadequate flexibility and slow response time in addressing drought-stressors within the water system<sup>[149]</sup>. Another study conducted for the Fourth Assessment confirmed the challenges particularly small water utilities face in responding to climatic extremes, such as a multi-year drought<sup>[150]</sup>. Put differently, challenges



**Figure 3.3** Coastal wastewater treatment facilities, many of which are located at sea level, are increasingly at risk of being compromised by flooding due to sea-level rise. (Photo: San Jose-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility; [Land Use Interpretation Center](#); licensed under Creative Commons license 3.0)



Figure 3.4 The State Water Project is a critical water infrastructure system that spans much of the state. (Source: DWR 2016<sup>[140]</sup>, used with permission)

to the water system and ensuring that it is climate-safe, are not purely engineering problems, although some are. Some are regulatory, managerial and institutional, illustrating the systems approach required to address water sector challenges.

Focusing solely on the status of the physical assets, in 2012, the ASCE completed the state's second comprehensive infrastructure assessment. Even at that time, ASCE gave barely passing grades to levees/flood management (D), urban runoff (D+), wastewater (C+), and drinking water (supply) (C). These grades are roughly similar to those ASCE gave in its initial California Infrastructure Report Card in 2006, indicating little, if any, progress in improving the overall condition of California's water infrastructure over the previous six years. Regarding water supply, ASCE called out a few key issues, including aging infrastructure nearing or exceeding the end of its useful life; the vulnerability of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as the "vital link" in the state's conveyance system for water depended upon by millions of Californians; continued population growth; seismic and security risks; and the unique problems posed by small water systems. Funding was an issue across all four areas of water infrastructure, with a total of \$18.6 billion per year required to raise each grade by one letter.

The 2017 ASCE's nationwide report card included a number of updated facts for California's water infrastructure, suggesting that the challenges have in no way decreased and the investment need is considerable (Box 3.1).

The condition of the Delta and specifically its vulnerability to earthquakes was noted as well in the levees/flood control portion of the ASCE report card, which stated that catastrophic levee failure there could lead to a "mega-disaster" on the scale of Hurricane Katrina. With respect to flood management specifically in the Central Valley, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) issued its System Status Report of the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) in 2017<sup>[151]</sup>. In it, the Department evaluated the condition of the SPFC's urban and nonurban levees, channels, and flood control structures. Approximately half the levees were assessed as not meeting acceptable design criteria for a variety of characteristics (e.g., freeboard, stability, seepage), while a similar proportion of SFPC channels were found to be potentially inadequate in terms of capacity.

### Box 3.1: Water Infrastructure Challenges in California

- **678** high hazard dams
- **32%** of the State-regulated dams do not have an Emergency Action Plan
- **\$44.5 billion** in drinking water infrastructure needs over the next 20 years
- **9,560 miles** of levees
- **\$26.2 billion** in wastewater infrastructure needs over the next 20 years

Source: ASCE (2017)<sup>[7]</sup>



Figure 3.5 The interconnected components of California's water infrastructure illustrate why infrastructure should not be understood as singular physical assets but instead as systems that provide multiple functions to many different users. (Photo: Chrisman Pumping Plant; DWR, used with permission)



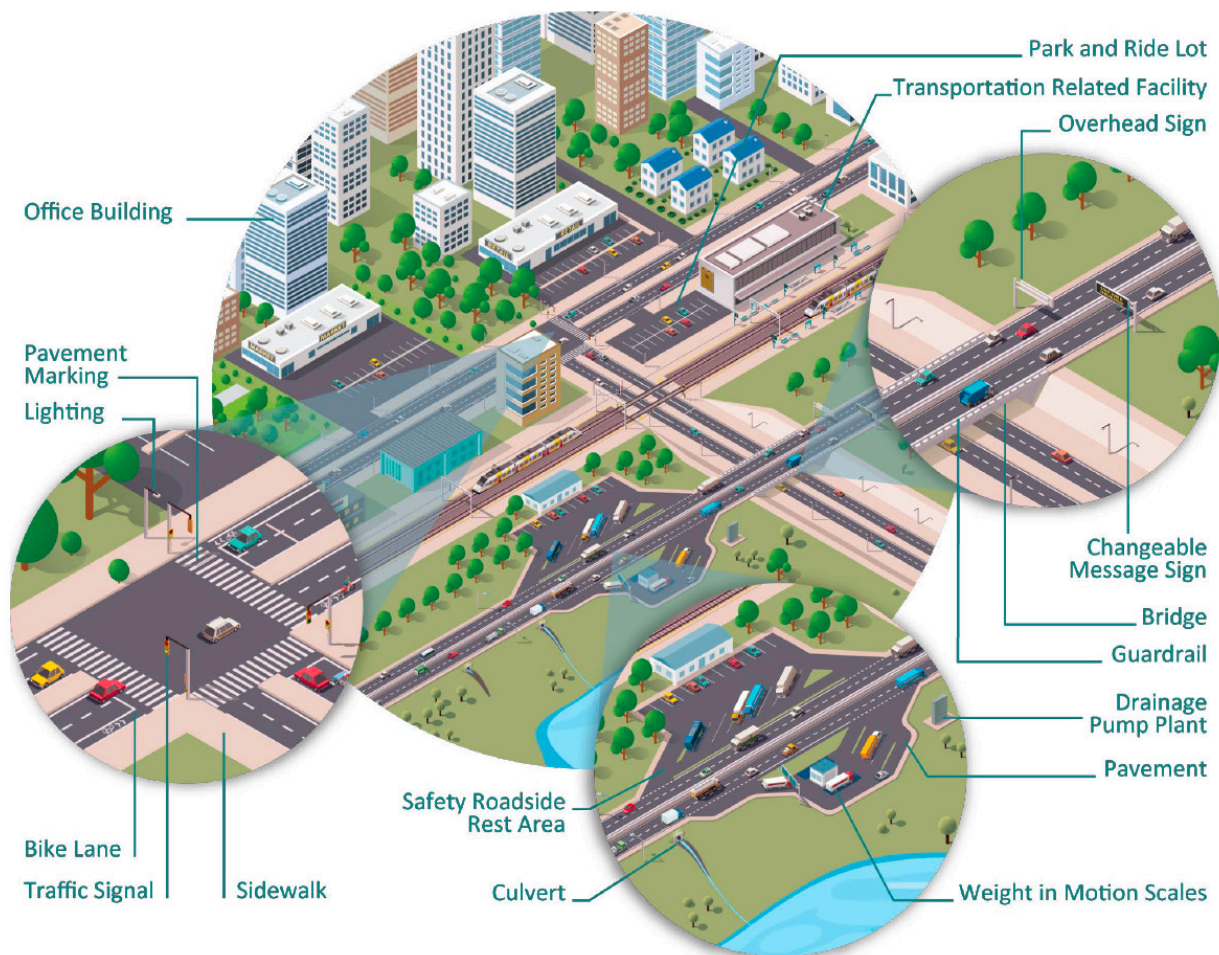


Figure 3.6 California's multi-modal transportation system faces a wide variety of threats from climate change (Source: Caltrans 2018<sup>[152]</sup>, used with permission)

## Mobilizing the Future: Infrastructure in the Transportation Sector

California's transportation agency, Caltrans, is responsible for multiple facets of transportation-related infrastructure including roadways, buildings, bridges, culverts, signals/signage, safety rest areas and landscape areas (Figure 3.6). The condition of the existing infrastructure varies by type and we provide more detail on each below, but overall, the ASCE rated transportation infrastructure similarly low as the water-related infrastructure. In 2012, California's transportation infrastructure was given a low C- grade overall due to the lack of funding for operation and maintenance and new road improvements. At the time, ASCE estimated that, "There is a need for \$10 billion per year more to be spent for ongoing maintenance of existing facilities and an investment of \$36.5 billion in order to raise Transportation to a B grade." Additional facts about California's transportation-related infrastructure challenges were provided in 2017 (Box 3.2).

### Box 3.2: Transportation Infrastructure Challenges in California

- **1,435,298,779** annual unlinked passenger trips via transit systems including bus, transit, and commuter trains;
- **\$844** per motorist per year in costs from driving on roads in need of repair;
- **195,834 miles** of Public Roads, with **50%** in poor condition
- **5,295 miles of freight railroads** across the state, ranking 3rd nationally

Source: ASCE (2017)<sup>[7]</sup>

More specifically, the current situation for the different types of transportation infrastructure was recently assessed in Caltrans' own asset management plan<sup>[152]</sup> as described below.

**Roadways:** Caltrans is responsible for nearly 50,000 lane miles of pavement, which are exposed to various climatic stressors ranging from extreme temperatures, precipitation, wildfires, sea-level rise and storm surge. Pavements need to be replaced or rehabilitated periodically as they deteriorate from usage and climatic stresses. Per the Caltrans Transportation Asset Management Plan 2018<sup>[152]</sup>, 40.8% pavement is in good condition, 53.5% is in fair condition and 5.7% is in poor condition. Caltrans has a goal per its five-year Maintenance Plan to repair 2,100 lane miles of pavement each year. In addition to maintenance of existing infrastructure, Caltrans currently constructs new infrastructure using historical climate data. However Caltrans is proactively working to develop forward-looking climate projections to assess its vulnerabilities.

**Buildings:** Caltrans has 13 office buildings comprising a 2.8 million square feet area, 26 equipment shops with 0.67 million square feet area, 369 maintenance stations covering a 3.67 million square feet area, and 16 laboratories with an additional 0.36 million square feet of space. Buildings are exposed to extreme temperatures and wildfires, which can lead to smoke hazards and power failures, and to extreme precipitation.

**Bridges:** Throughout the state, Caltrans is also responsible for 13,160 bridges which add up to 245 million square feet deck area. Bridge decks are exposed to temperature extremes resulting in stresses in joints and decks, extreme precipitation leading to higher velocities/scour on the bridge support structures, higher water surface elevations which could threaten the integrity of the bridge. Again, per the Caltrans Transportation Asset Management Plan 2018<sup>[152]</sup>, 74.9% bridges are in good condition, 21.8% are in fair condition and 3.3% are in poor condition. Bridges requiring maintenance have a backlog exceeding 1,100 bridges and the Caltrans goal is to reduce the number of bridges requiring maintenance to below 1,100 bridges on an annual basis.

**Culverts:** There are about 205,000 culverts along state highways. Statewide, 65% of all culverts are considered to be in “good” condition, 23.5% are in fair condition, and 11.5% are in poor condition<sup>[152]</sup>. The more than 23,000 culverts in poor condition need to be replaced or rehabilitated. Culverts may be exposed to scour from coastal storms, wildfires, mudslides, and extreme precipitation events resulting in roadway overtopping, etc.

**Signals & Signage:** Thousands of signals and signs on state highways are susceptible to extreme weather events. Maintaining them in good working condition is critical to ensure proper traffic flows. Impacts from climate change

and extreme weather events may include power failures, structural damage and functional failures.

**Safety Rest Areas:** Along California highways, Caltrans manages 0.24 million square feet of area and 86 rest areas. Per the Caltrans Transportation Asset Management Plan 2018, 32.6% rest areas are in good condition, 38.4% are in fair condition and 29% are in poor condition<sup>[152]</sup>. Rest areas are susceptible to extreme weather and wildfires, which could lead to power failures, flooding, smoke, failures of charging stations and failures of leach fields.

**Landscape Areas:** Finally, Caltrans is responsible for about 30,000 acres of landscaped areas within the right-of-way. While these areas could be susceptible to wildfires, extreme precipitation and temperature events, there is also a potential to utilize these areas as mitigation for various climatic stressors such as detention/retention for higher precipitation, greenhouse gas mitigation, rock landscaping to create fire barriers, locations for renewable energy for signals and rest areas.

**Railroads:** While not State-owned, railroads comprise an important part of California’s transportation system and they are vulnerable to climate change. Extreme heat and cold can potentially cause a buckling of railroad tracks resulting in train derailments. As average temperatures are expected to increase (up to 100°F in some regions of the state by the end of the century under the high-emissions scenario, RCP 8.5), buckling of railroad rails (sun kinks) is expected to increase. In June 2017, a train derailment in Tulare County was caused by extreme heat, buckling the track between Delano and Earlimart along Highway 99. Nineteen cars belonging to Union Pacific derailed after the track warped in the heat (Figure 3.7).



**Figure 3.7** Extreme heat can cause buckling of railroad tracks and lead – as in this example from Tulare County in June 2017 – to derailment. (Source: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, used with permission)

Union Pacific owns, operates and maintains approximately 3,400 miles of railroad tracks in California. One mile of non-constricted rail can contract or expand more than 2 ft in extreme weather. Steel rail is tempered and anchored during installation to improve the integrity of the infrastructure. But more frequent extreme temperatures as expected in the future require additional maintenance programs to inspect and repair any potential problems with the tracks<sup>[153]</sup>.

Recognizing these potential challenges, Caltrans has launched a systemwide effort to assess its vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change; this work is currently underway in addition to the agency's ongoing implementation of emission reduction and sustainability measures<sup>[154]</sup>. Impacts are already becoming evident, however. For example, the growing incidence of wildfires has had a cascading impact on transportation ranging from direct failures of infrastructure from fires to failures of infrastructure from subsequent mudslides. Fires in the El Dorado National Forest resulted in temporary closure of State Routes (SR) 50, 193 and 49 in El Dorado County on several occasions. Winter storms following the summer fires resulted in mudslides washing out segments of SR-50 and other highways in the region. Wildfires alongside SR-101 also resulted in devastation of roadways, plastic culverts and bridges, temporarily inhibiting access to local communities.

Meanwhile sea-level rise (SLR) is impacting segments of coastal highways (SR-1, SR-37, etc.) as well as airports (San Francisco International, Oakland and San Jose), sea ports and docks (see below). Coastal protection measures in the form of levees and seawalls would need to be incorporated into designs to counter the projected SLR by 2100.

## Energizing the Future: Infrastructure in the Energy Sector

Energy-related infrastructure in California is either publicly or privately owned, but State-regulated. It can be classified as falling into two major categories: electricity-related infrastructure and fuel-related infrastructure.

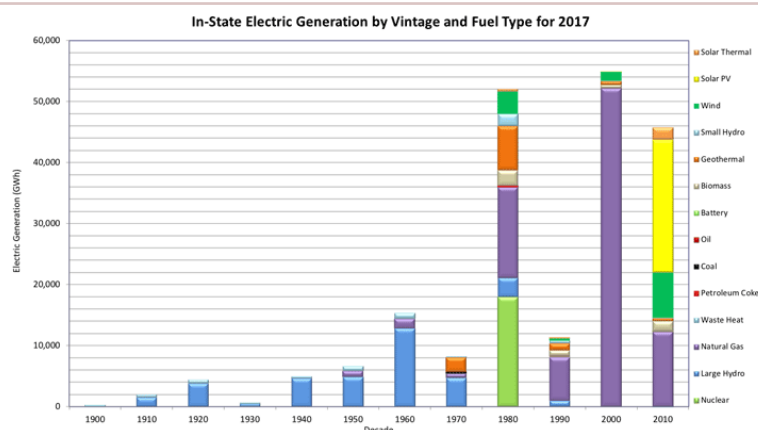
### Electricity-Related Infrastructure

As of 2015 there were 66 thermoelectric power plants operational in California<sup>[155]</sup>. In addition, California has two functional nuclear reactors as of 2017 (Diablo Canyon 1 and 2)<sup>[156]</sup>. California also had 344 hydroelectric power plants and 111 wind energy power plants in operation in 2017<sup>[157]</sup>. In-state solar photovoltaic and solar thermal generation reached 24,331 GWh that same year<sup>[158]</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

Electricity generation takes place in plants of varying age, some now more than 100 years old, many more than 50 years old (Figure 3.10). Increasingly, energy production is adding distributed energy generation (solar roofs etc.).<sup>4</sup>

A highly interwoven net of transmission lines connects these power generation plants via substations to millions of users (Figure 3.10). According to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), which has ratemaking and/or permitting authority over this infrastructure (built, owned or leased by private investor-owned or publicly-owned utilities), "Significant new infrastructure investments are required in order to support the state's transition to a low-carbon energy infrastructure. To realize these goals, including bringing renewable energy from remote areas of the state to urban load centers, new transmission lines have been planned and built. At the same time, significant investments to improve distribution level infrastructure are required to improve the safety, delivery and reliability of electricity and gas"<sup>[160]</sup>.

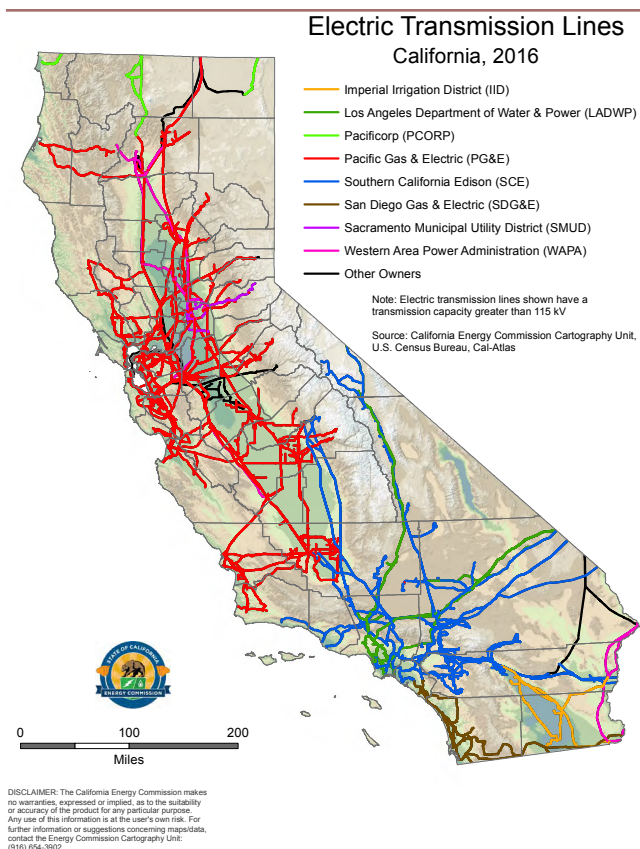
Several contributions to the Fourth Assessment have specifically investigated climate change risk to the energy sector's electricity-related infrastructure. They illuminate the following risks described below.



**Figure 3.9 California's energy is generated in diverse types of power plants. This graphic shows the type of power generation by decade when it was built, indicating that a significant number of power plants are more than 50 years old by now (Source: CEC 2018<sup>[159]</sup>, used with permission)**

<sup>4</sup> Because there is no energy generation reporting requirement for solar PV smaller than 1 megawatt, many residential and small commercial building solar installations are not captured in this figure<sup>[158]</sup>.





**Figure 3.10** A deeply interwoven network of transmission lines connects California's power plants via substations to millions of electricity consumers. (Source: CEC 2016<sup>[161]</sup>, used with permission)

**Wildfire risks to the electricity's transmission and distribution grid is expected to grow.** One study showed that between 2001 and 2016, a relatively small number of wildfires caused much of the damage that occurred to California's electricity grid with an estimated cost of these wildfires exceeding \$700 million<sup>[162]</sup>. The study also found that the fire threat to the electricity grid in the urban fringe around Los Angeles and San Diego is presently highest but will grow fastest to the Northern California grid and that the total cost of wildfires could be 10-15 times larger than that to the grid alone.

**Sea-level rise (SLR) and associated risks in San Diego Gas & Electric Co.'s (SDG&E) services territory can have cascading effects.** The study explored SLR-related risks to electricity sector assets and potential impacts to customers. Using a USGS model (CoSMoS) to investigate tidal inundation, extreme (100-year) storm events and coastal erosion associated with SLR of up to 2.0 m (6.6 ft), they find that direct risks to assets are dominated by substations in low-lying areas such as San Diego Bay

and Mission Bay<sup>[163]</sup>. Potential impacts associated with other assets such as underground duct banks and pole-mounted transformers would more likely come in the form of increased maintenance and repair costs rather than widespread service disruptions. Based on a low-probability, high-consequence scenario of a two-week power outage in areas served by exposed sub-stations, they find a range of \$2B to \$25B in economic impacts from service disruption to thousands of customers. Beyond these damages, interconnections with critical systems such as sewage pumping stations, hospitals, airports and ports could result in additional substantial impacts if they lost power. (The impact of a coincident fuel supply disruption to keep back-up generators running was not assessed but would likely drive the economic impact even higher.)

**Extreme heat risks to the Los Angeles electricity grid is exacerbated by population growth.** Burillo and colleagues<sup>[164]</sup> examined how increases in temperature, especially extreme heat, population growth, air conditioning penetration and changes in energy policy might affect energy demand, resource adequacy and component overloading in L.A. County. They found that "long-term service reliability is more susceptible to population growth and changes in technology than rising air temperatures due to climate change." However, "substations in the East El Monte and Pomona area were projected to be at risk of automatic outages (load factor  $\geq 2$ ) by 2040, which could be avoided with 200 MW of distributed solar PV and storage on the Chino and Walnut 220/66 kV systems. Calabasas to Malibu were identified at next highest risk, and lastly the southern Foothills, Pasadena, Alhambra, and East LA regions, as well as any in-basin neighborhoods that would experience population growth are also at risk of excessive loading."

**Long-distance and cascading impacts from climate impacts on Los Angeles' interconnected lifeline system.** Moser and Finzi Hart<sup>[165]</sup>, in their first-of-its kind investigation for L.A., examined cross-sector interrelationships among infrastructure sectors and long-distance connectivity, particularly via the electric grid, which can translate extreme events occurring far away to potentially serious impacts in the L.A. metro region. The authors noted that the greatest risks from these teleconnected and cascading events not only arises from the mutual dependence of infrastructure sectors on other sectors' reliable functionality and services but from lack of cross-sectoral coordination and planning for extreme climatic events, including lack of integrated adaptation planning.

## Oil and Gas-Related Infrastructure

Transportation fuels and the transmission of natural gas across the state require their own infrastructure. According to the California Energy Commission (CEC)<sup>[166]</sup>, “One third of energy commodities consumed in California is natural gas. The natural gas market continues to evolve and service options expand, but its use falls mainly into four sectors – residential, commercial, industrial and electric power generation. In addition, natural gas is a viable alternative to petroleum for use in cars, trucks and buses.”

In order for oil and gas to reach consumers, the state uses a largely north-south-oriented network of pipelines that crosses the state to transport natural gas. In addition, the state hosts 17 refineries, most of them located near waterways as most inputs to refineries are delivered by ocean-going vessels<sup>[167]</sup>. According to Radke and colleagues, “Refineries have long life cycles, which means that oil organizations have a tradition of investing and upgrading existing facilities rather than constructing new ones [...]. Because of permitting issues, low profit margins, and competitive markets, it is improbable that there will be any new refinery construction in the country” [or in California], as ten refineries in the state have already been closed between 1985 and 1995<sup>[168]</sup>.

Again, several contributions to the Fourth Assessment focused on climate change impacts on the fuel sector.

**Multiple risks from climate-related impacts to the natural gas sector in SDG&E’s service territory.** Although the natural gas system in SDG&E territory is generally considered not very vulnerable to flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat hazards, Bruzgul et al.<sup>[169]</sup> noted that impacts from costs and staff time associated with restoration of service connections after fire events could be substantial; extreme heat could result in accelerated wear and tear on, and increased cooling costs for, compressor equipment; disruption to a singular transmission line between Los Angeles and San Diego – the sole source of gas service for more than 2,000 customers – is the most notable potential exposure to coastal hazards; and cathodic protection to mitigate vulnerability of pipelines in coastal areas at risk from inundation and saltwater intrusion may or may not be sufficient<sup>5</sup>; and, finally, water crossings are thought to be the most vulnerable pipelines to inland and coastal flooding. With at least 32 aboveground pipelines

attached to or under bridges at water crossings, Southern California Gas Company recognizes (and is currently studying) risks related to scour, debris flow and buoyancy associated with flood events.

A separate, but related relevant Risk Assessment and Mitigation Phase (RAMP) report<sup>6</sup> by Sempra notes that the succession of extreme events as recently experienced in California – drought, followed by wildfire, flooding and mud/landslides – can cause serious damage to access roads and result in multiple exposures of high-pressure pipelines, including the risk of pipelines failing. Multiple-year projects are required involving extensive permitting and repairs to restore the infrastructure with millions of dollars in costs<sup>[171]</sup>.

**Wildfire and flood risks to the transportation fuel sector.** Radke and colleagues<sup>[167]</sup> undertook the first-ever attempt to consider weather-related risks posed to California’s transportation fuel system as a physically and organizationally connected, multi-sector network. Specifically, the research team explored wildfire- and flooding-related risks and how these risks may intensify under a changing climate. To engage transportation fuel system stakeholders, Radke et al. found that very fine (asset-level) resolution of 5-30 m is necessary to ground discussion of risks of potential disruption to operations and impact on assets. In particular, in the case of wildfire, fire behavior/intensity and consequent defensibility of assets can only be resolved by very fine-scale fire behavior models.

**Subsidence and flood overtopping risks to natural gas infrastructure in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.** In a delta-wide update to a 2007 study of subsidence rates, Brooks and colleagues examined flood overtopping potential to the levees surrounding the islands in the interior of California’s Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. They found average subsidence rates of ~1-2 cm/year (range: 0-5 cm/year), with significant small-scale variation, including near some pipeline crossings<sup>[144]</sup>. They estimated that – depending on how fast sea level will rise and how extreme storm events (e.g., the 100-year flood) will change – Federal levee height standards (PL84-99) could be exceeded by ca. 2060 (under the fast sea-level rise scenario) or by 2080 (under the slower sea-level rise scenario), with some places projected to exceed thresholds by ~2050. At that point, the safety of natural gas pipelines could no longer be guaranteed.

<sup>5</sup> Radke et al.<sup>[170]</sup> note that in 2007, more than two years after Hurricane Katrina, replacement of 486 km (302 miles) of cast iron and steel pipelines with high-density polyethylene was initiated out of concern for corrosion damage associated with extended exposure to saltwater.

<sup>6</sup> The RAMP is the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Phase filing required of Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) to be submitted to the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) with General Rate Cases (GRCs).

## Building the Future: Infrastructure in the Building Sector

State-owned, -funded and -operated infrastructure in the building sector fall under the purview of the Department of General Services (DGS) unless directed by statute to other specific agencies.<sup>7</sup> DGS is responsible for buildings in the following categories of structures:

- Design and construction oversight through the Division of the State Architect for 72 Community College Districts (with 114 campuses and 244 construction projects underway in 2017-2018 for a total construction cost of \$1.43 billion);
- Design and construction oversight through the Division of the State Architect for 1,084 K-12 School Districts (with 9,292 campuses and 3,119 projects in progress in 2017-2018 for a total construction cost of \$6.83 billion)<sup>8</sup>;
- Design and construction oversight through the Division of the State Architect for a variety of “essential service” buildings such as California Highway Patrol (CHP) facilities and communication towers (with 7 projects in 2017-2018 for a total construction cost of \$8.03 million) (see also [Widom webinar](#), based on submissions to the Division of the State Architect and estimates received from the Real Estate Services Division).
- Design oversight through the Division of the State Architect and relating to accessibility requirements for various state facilities including CSU, UC and Courts (for a total of 392 projects with a construction cost of \$2.77 billion).
- Design and construction through the Real Estate Services Division of a variety of office and service facilities (with approximately 450 projects for a total cost of projects under construction of approximately \$1.5 billion. This does not include projects in the design process which could be as high as \$3.5 billion at any specific time.)
- DGS also provides other State agencies with partial building management services, serving approximately 200 State-owned buildings, such as the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations’ leased building portfolio, selected health facilities and so on.

**The challenge of a variable building stock.** Each year, new construction in each of these areas adds to the existing non-residential building stock in California. This new construction varies depending on economic conditions

<sup>7</sup> Many other buildings and facilities are built and operated by different departments (such as emergency response, fire or law enforcement facilities) and are not discussed here, even though challenges and opportunities may be similar.

<sup>8</sup> Incremental projects not included. Note also, while the State provides some construction funding, at this time the majority of funds come from local bonds.



**Figure 3.11:** The building sector exemplifies the challenges of variable building stock, deferred maintenance, construction delays and cost escalation, as well as housing cost and shortage. (Photo: Downtown San Diego, Michael Seljos, [flickr](#); licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

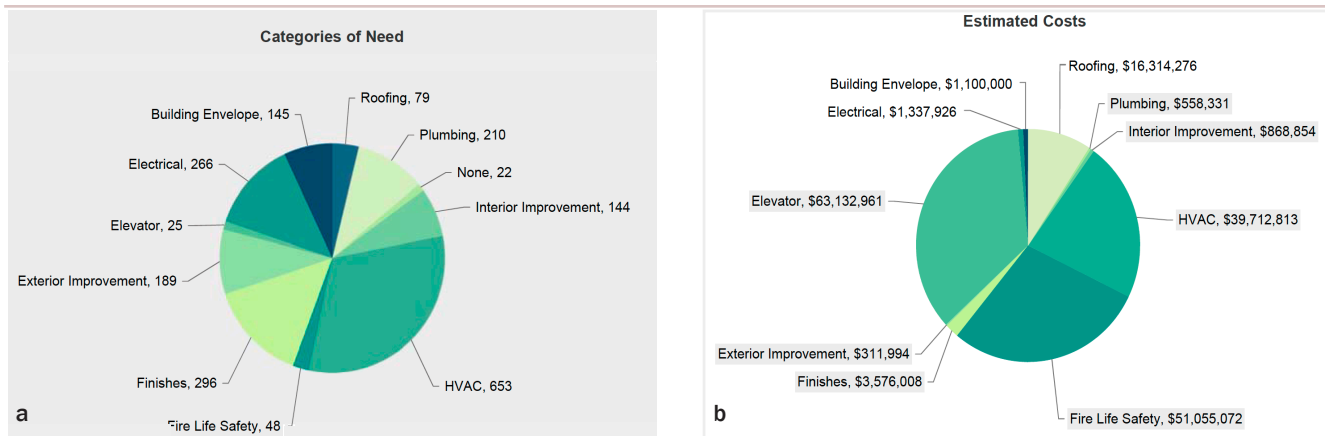
but is a small fraction of existing buildings in the state. Nearly half of the non-residential buildings in California were built prior to adoption of the first Title 24 energy standards in 1978. Title 24 aims to address the energy use in buildings, which is principally driven by the quality of the building envelop, i.e., the degree of insulation of walls, roofs and windows. Modern building approaches that use structural insulated panels, insulated concrete forms, double-stud walls, or advanced framing can all produce more energy-efficient buildings than traditional framing methods. In older buildings, the latter approaches are common.

To compensate particularly for high heat during the hot summers, building occupants commonly use air conditioners whose energy usage is also governed by the Title 24 codes.<sup>9</sup> As of 2010, central air conditioning saturation in California was 45% for Low Income households (<\$25,000), 53% for Moderate Income households (\$25,000-\$74,999) and 61% for High Income households (>\$75,000)<sup>[172]</sup>.

Inclusion of climate-related measures in the construction of new buildings will require, at a minimum, clearer design standards and tools as well as code requirements. Inclusion of climate-related measures in existing buildings will require that and more. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, building designers felt it essential to develop design guidelines to ensure buildings continue to provide a safe and comfortable living environment even when there is no electric power available due to a natural disaster<sup>[173, 174]</sup>. This focus on passive envelop designs – whereby buildings can maintain human comfort conditions without power – is increasingly important in the face of

<sup>9</sup> Air conditioning penetration varies by climate region. For example, in coastal and mountainous regions, air conditioning is still less prevalent than in other inland areas.





**Figure 3.12 (a) California's Department of General Services estimates of the number of projects within DGS-managed buildings that fall under its deferred maintenance program. Many would improve energy efficiency, generate energy savings, and improve building occupants' health and well-being. (b) The estimated cost of a range of deferred maintenance projects (a low estimate). (Source: DGS Facility Management Division Deferred Maintenance Program for FY 2017/18; used with permission)**

climate change and related extreme events in California, where summers and inland areas can reach well into the 100's °F. Other states have already incorporated building survivability guidelines in their codes (e.g., New Jersey<sup>[175]</sup>).

**The challenge of deferred maintenance.** Among the DGS-owned and -managed buildings alone, there are currently 224 roofing and building envelope projects seeking a total of \$17.5 million of deferred maintenance needs that – if left unaddressed – will contribute to the degradation of the existing buildings with the accelerated effects of climate change. Demolition of the existing buildings and the carbon produced in the course of replacing buildings add considerable greenhouse gas emissions. Avoiding these consequences will have a positive benefit to both the current building occupants and the State's commitments to reducing the unnecessary contributions to carbon emissions.

Moreover, there are currently 653 heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) projects in DGS-owned and -managed buildings, seeking \$39.7 million in deferred maintenance funds. Poorly operating HVAC systems require additional energy to maintain and contribute to the releasing of refrigerants (i.e., ozone-depleting substances that are also powerful greenhouse gases) through leaking equipment. The funding for properly retrofitting and/or replacing these systems would help reduce the state's energy use, remove sources of refrigerant releases and help reduce the state's carbon emissions.

According to the Deferred Maintenance Program for DGS-managed buildings, in addition to HVAC projects, there are significant existing needs (Figures 3.12 a-b). The estimated costs are considered low.

Significant progress in incorporating both climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures in California buildings must address the barriers associated with retrofitting existing buildings. Some of the key barriers include the following:

- The absence of a trigger that would drive a building owner to initiate a climate-related retrofit (i.e., there is no regulatory requirement to make an improvement);
- Higher costs associated with retrofitting a building versus incorporating measures in a new design (this is not always the case however while it might be less expensive on a particular element (replacing window glazing vs. new glazing, the cost of completely modernizing a facility (down to the shell and core) could be less expensive);
- Challenges in selling bonds; and
- Disruption to current building tenants during retrofits/construction.

**The challenge of delays and cost escalation.** In addition to DGS-owned and managed buildings, there are many more State-owned buildings (e.g., court houses, correctional facilities, Department of Motor Vehicle facilities), which are owned by their respective agencies and have their own needs for upgrades. Funding for resiliency across the entire building sector is especially impacted by the escalation of construction costs over time. Between December 2017 and April 2018 alone, the average cost of construction for K-12 and community colleges' construction was \$1.0 billion per month alone and cost increases month-to-month were substantial. Construction cost escalation in California is currently estimated at anywhere from 5-10% annually. Assuming a major

infrastructure project that costs \$100,000,000, a monthly delay at 5% amounts to a loss of over \$415,000 per month (Widom, pers. communication).

The inability of decision-makers to move swiftly on projects and for designers and contractors to rapidly build has a direct impact on a resilient society, even when the initial project includes all of the elements necessary to be climate safe. When construction is delayed, costs increase and building owners tend to eliminate “non-essential” elements from the designs to keep the costs in check. “Non-essential” sustainability or resilience-related features – i.e., non-required elements – are thus often the first things to be “value engineered” out of building projects.

The current situation – as described here – illustrates the costly uphill battle faced by the building sector in California to upgrade existing structures and build new ones. Deferred maintenance, construction delays, escalating costs and the more limited possibilities of preparing for future climate conditions through retrofitting of existing buildings illustrate the difficult starting place from which to transform toward a climate-safe building stock. The prospect involves both cost and political challenges.

**The challenge of housing cost and shortage.** Even without climate change, the building sector would need to add significantly to the building stock over the coming decades. Cost of housing is currently at crisis levels in some parts of the state, as is the concomitant rise in homelessness. Population growth is expected to continue, which implies that in addition to just maintaining and upgrading the existing building stock, the demand for

more housing continues and is magnified in the near-term by the loss of many thousands of housing units during the recent California wildfires and subsequent floods and landslides, and in the longer-term an increasing demand for public facilities and school and university buildings to accommodate the growing number of students.

## Ports, Airports and Telecommunication —

While not State-owned and funded, some types of infrastructure, such as ports, airports and telecommunications-related infrastructure, are critically important to the state’s functioning and economy, and often these types of infrastructure are co-located with and deeply inter-dependent on other State-owned and -managed infrastructure (Figure 3.13). We thus include them here, although a detailed assessment could not be completed in the context of the CSIWG’s deliberations.

California has 190 public-use airports, rated as C+ in the ASCE’s 2012 report card<sup>[176]</sup>. The state’s 11 large- to moderate-sized ports were rated slightly better at B- in that same year, an improvement since the first rating. Both are critical economic engines for the state and link to the state’s highway and rail system, thus serving as essential parts of the goods and people movement within and beyond the state. The CSIWG heard from the San Francisco and San Diego port as well as from the San Diego airport during its deliberations. The latter can be seen as a model for infrastructure modernization, and other ports and airports in the state have begun assessing their risks from climate change and developing adaptation plans – an indication that the owners of these important types of infrastructure recognize the need for ongoing sustainability and resilience-related improvements.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 3.13** Ports, airports and telecommunications infrastructure – while not State-owned – are critically important to the state’s functioning and economy. Many of these infrastructure systems are increasingly at risk from flooding, sea-level rise, wildfires and other extreme events. (Photo: San Francisco skyline and Port of Oakland, Tony Webster, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

**Table 3.1: Selected California Airport Land Area Exposed to Sea-Level Rise Currently and by the End of the Century**

Port (Enplanement area)*	2000 - 2020	% Area	2080 - 2100	% Area
San Francisco (25,707,101; 3.54 km <sup>2</sup> )	0.84 km <sup>2</sup> (0.33 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~24%	2.28 km <sup>2</sup> (0.89 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~64%
Oakland (5,934,639; 7.18 km <sup>2</sup> )	0.09 km <sup>2</sup> (0.04 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~1%	3.66 km <sup>2</sup> (1.43 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~51%
Los Angeles (39,636,042; 14.09 km <sup>2</sup> )	0.4 km <sup>2</sup> (0.16 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~3%	2.64 km <sup>2</sup> (1.03 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~19%
Long Beach (1,386,357; 13.91 km <sup>2</sup> )	2.39 km <sup>2</sup> (0.93 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~17%	4.94 km <sup>2</sup> (1.95 mi <sup>2</sup> )	~36%

\* Enplanement is the number of commercial passenger boardings per year (status 2017), a figure used here to indicate the importance of the airport; airport land surface areas, pers. communication, J. Radke (2018). (Source: Adapted from Bedsworth et al. 2018)<sup>[9]</sup>

In fact, one study in the Fourth Assessment<sup>[167]</sup> illustrates why it is critical for these infrastructure operators to pay close attention to the emerging climate science. Many of them are located on flat land at or near sea level and already experience flooding during extremely high tides and storms. These challenges will increase as sea level rises (Table 3.1).

The need to address this growing flooding risk varies from airport to airport and what types of infrastructure are impacted first. While San Francisco and Oakland are already experiencing occasional flooding, Santa Barbara airport is expected to see flooding in the 2020-2040 period, San Diego not until 2060-2080<sup>[167]</sup>. Another recent study of the Los Angeles International Airport, according to the Fourth Assessment synthesis report, concluded that “no major upgrades are necessary at this point, but that the situation must be reassessed every time a major upgrade of this port takes place. Implementing adaptation measures in coordination with major facility upgrades would lower costs substantially and, in addition, new scientific information could inform the design of specific adaptation measures.”

Telecommunication is not rated by ASCE, thus we have little information on the status of that infrastructure sector. The sector was also not represented on the CSIWG. The reason is that communication-related infrastructure (e.g., telephone poles and lines, data storage centers, cell towers) is typically privately owned and only minimally regulated in California by the CPUC. One study conducted as part of the Fourth Assessment, examined interconnected lifelines and noted the criticality of communication-related infrastructure and the challenge of integrating private sector entities into lifeline emergency response, recovery and adaptation planning efforts<sup>[165]</sup>. Participants in that study noted that some large data storage centers are located in flood-prone areas (“the cloud is in the ground”) – a risk confirmed by a recent independent study<sup>[177]</sup> – and that cellphone towers and telephone poles are at risk to wildfire. Rules pertaining to rebuilding after disaster inhibit or disfavor adaptive switching to more robust materials, as we will discuss in later chapters.

<sup>11</sup> This can be tracked for various port and airports (as well as other facilities) at the Sea-Level Rise Database developed under AB 2516 (Gordon), available at: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/planning-for-sea-level-rise-database/>.



## Old (But Still Prevalent) Perspectives and Ways of Doing Things

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The physical status of infrastructure is only one of the starting conditions for considering the integration of forward-looking climate science into infrastructure planning and design. The people and organizations that plan, design, build, operate and maintain infrastructure – how they think about their work and whether there are sufficient numbers of them available – are also crucial. Thus, we close this section by pointing to a number of issues that cut across infrastructure sectors that affect what is being done now and what the starting point for investing in a climate-safe future looks like, namely: 1) the reasons why climate safe infrastructure requires new ways of managing risk and uncertainty and 2) the status of the workforce and human capital that together affect how infrastructure is built.

**Beyond stationarity.** Across all the sectors discussed above, one thing unites them. Engineers (including the “engineers of buildings”, i.e., architects) traditionally design infrastructure to standards that are based on experimental data, such as the strength of specific materials or designs, historical conditions, such as observed rainfall or streamflow patterns, and historical trends projected into the future, such as population growth (see below). It was generally assumed that climate was stationary, meaning that the statistics of climate averages and extremes remained unchanged over time. In California, as well as many other places in the U.S. and worldwide, infrastructure designed today will need to perform in a future that will change in ways we cannot predict with accuracy. Engineers’ and architects’ professional code of ethics demands that structures perform to societal expectations of safety and well-being even under changing climate conditions. In fact, climate conditions are and will continue to deviate from the past. Past trends no longer will reliably continue as non-linear thresholds are approached (such as ecological conditions or demand for transportation influenced by new technology such as autonomous vehicles)<sup>[178-181]</sup>.

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*Infrastructure designed today will need to perform in a future that will change in ways we cannot predict with accuracy.*

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The traditional reliance on observations and past trends is partly codified in existing infrastructure standards and associated liability norms, partly the result of traditional ways of educating engineers and architects, and partly a

relic of a time when the climate was relatively stable. But for infrastructure to be climate-safe in the future, it needs to be designed to new tolerances, while recognizing that the various sources of uncertainty (discussed above) make it not always clear what degree of protection (or tolerance) will be needed. This will require a transition away from designing for static risks, e.g., the 1 in 100 storm event, to designing for dynamic conditions that may change in the future. We will return in [Chapter 4](#) and [5](#) to the barriers these old ways of thinking and doing things create and suggest ways forward.

**From individual structures to whole systems.** The Working Group also agreed that infrastructure is more than individual physical structures such as a seawall, a water pipe, a stretch of road, a transmission line or a building. The CSIWG felt strongly that threats to infrastructure – and possible solutions – should instead be assessed through a systemic lens, using multi-disciplinary analyses that recognize the impacts of risks on infrastructure and people, and on human interests and the environment, and thus meaningfully engage and integrate the perspectives of all affected stakeholders.

**Confronting a more complex and interconnected future.** Infrastructure planners are used to considering future population growth as an important input into assessing future use or demand of infrastructure and the cost-benefit value of building or expanding infrastructure. In the past, to do so, historical trends were simply linearly extended several decades out to conduct such assessments. But climate change may very well cause demographic (and underlying economic) shifts that complicate this old way of doing things. For example, increased coastal storm-related and increasingly frequent nuisance flooding may cause people to move away from immediate shoreline areas<sup>[182-184]</sup>, while intense inland heat may drive people toward cooler coastal regions to avoid heat-related health risks<sup>[185, 186]</sup>. Non-climatic forces such as changes in economic opportunities, affordability of housing or the attractiveness of certain areas for cultural or environmental regions may further complicate the movement of people. This migration, together with changing behavior, would determine the future economic value of different forms of infrastructure. And this, in turn, means that the economic value of making infrastructure more climate-safe depends on both projected climate risk faced by the infrastructure and its projected usage.

**More constraints on and new opportunities for infrastructure systems.** Over the course of the 20th century, engineers transformed California, building vast infrastructure systems to serve a population that grew over twenty times larger, from 1.5 to 34 million people.

Today's engineers will also shape California but face a new and difficult set of constraints. For example, funding for infrastructure is limited as decision-makers are faced with challenging trade-offs. This can restrict the ability to manage uncertainty with large safety margins. Moreover, environmental concerns have become more prominent and significant. And infrastructure systems must serve a diverse population equitably. Much of the land surrounding particular infrastructure projects is bespoke for private and public uses. Concurrently, rapid advances in technologies such as information, materials and artificial intelligence open up new possibilities for providing infrastructure's services. Engineers must also reckon with California residents' varied views on how to balance among these constraints and opportunities, how to use and live around infrastructure and their demands to have their voices heard.

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*The economic value of making infrastructure more climate-safe depends on both projected climate risk faced by the infrastructure and its projected usage.*

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Consider the specific example of a highway along the California coast. The key climate change concern is flooding risk due to higher storm surges as well as more frequent nuisance flooding as a result of climate change-driven sea-level rise. Projected usage of that highway in the future will depend on a) how many people live along that stretch of the coast, b) how much these residents use the highway, and c) how much it is used by non-local, longer-distance travelers for commuting or tourism. The drivers of where people live and how they use infrastructure are not well understood. This makes forecasts of usage challenging in the face of both economic and climate uncertainties. And if climatic, economic and demographic shifts are not enough yet to complicate preparing and planning for the future, profound changes in technology – as expected for example in the transportation and energy sectors – and related changes in performance of technology all create additional opportunities and uncertainties. More research is needed to understand the relationships among these factors empirically and to develop more accurate forecasts for the future.

Infrastructure planners in the past certainly considered the future and managed risks. But the future looks more uncertain now than it used to be. Financial, social and environmental pressures impose additional demands

on risk management. Technology opens up new but also uncertain opportunities.

In short, infrastructure engineering will have to go through significant shifts in thinking and in the tools and approaches traditionally used (Box 3.3) to assess robust options and make decisions under conditions of deep uncertainty. We will return to those approaches and tools in later chapters.

**The present and coming workforce crisis.** California<sup>[187]</sup>, like the rest of the United States<sup>[188-193]</sup>, faces a well-documented “high risk” workforce challenge in all critical lifeline infrastructure sectors, including large numbers of retirements, lack of succession planning and consequent loss of institutional knowledge and experience; large numbers of unfilled vacancies with appropriately skilled employees, ongoing and emerging skills gaps and rapid deployment of new technologies. The problem of an aging workforce and inadequate investment in workforce development is worst in the transit sector<sup>[188, 190, 191]</sup>. Moreover, the representation of minorities and women in the engineering workforce continues to seriously lag behind (Figure 3.14). This systemic problem of lacking “people-readiness” stems from inadequate attention to “human assets” and directly impacts infrastructure safety, reliability, overall performance and productivity. Making up for the past lack of infrastructure investment, bringing up the ASCE’s low grades to adequate and modern standards, much less making the additional investment to build climate-safe infrastructure cannot succeed, even if all the climate science in the world were readily available, without an adequately-sized and adequately-prepared workforce. We will revisit this serious issue in [Chapter 9](#).



**Figure 3.14** California – like the rest of the United States – faces a well-documented “high risk” workforce challenge in all critical infrastructure sectors. (Photo: Engineers at Folsom Lake, US Army Corps of Engineers)

### Box 3.3: Traditional Ways of Designing Infrastructure in the Face of Uncertainty

Engineers have long addressed uncertainty and managed risks. For instance, California's current water system uses many risk strategies to manage the state's large hydrologic variability, including:

- Safety factors (e.g., building more supply than projected demand);
- Operational rules (e.g., using a demand restriction schedule during droughts);
- Infrastructure components with performance that is relatively insensitive to uncertainties (e.g., developing storage capacity, instituting demand reductions or using conveyance and inter-basin water transfers)
- Diversifying supply (e.g., drawing surface water from multiple basins; using local ground water, recycling water; rain water capture, desalinization); and
- Adaptive decision strategies (e.g., regular plan updates, near-term actions designed to create future options and dynamic short-term updating of operations).

Despite these innovative strategies, California's water systems are under increasing stress now and in the future. Engineers face the challenge of choosing the best mix of these and other options to increase the future robustness and resilience of the system in the face of large and increasing uncertainties, tightening constraints and increased demand for citizen engagement. Fortunately, better methods and tools for managing uncertainty have become increasingly available. We will return to the tools and options available for dealing with uncertainty in later chapters.

## Conclusion

Together, [Chapters 2](#) and 3 aimed to lay out the basic challenges facing infrastructure planning, design, operation and maintenance in a climate-changed world. In [Chapter 2](#), we showed how the climate is no longer static, but now unquestionably on an accelerating warming trend. This warming has already and will result in the future in a number of effects such as sea-level rise, changing seasons and other changes in average climate parameters, but also in a more volatile climate future, marked by more frequent and/or more intense extreme events. While much of this is now understood with considerable confidence, there is some irreducible uncertainty, posing the challenge to plan for climate-safe infrastructure in new ways than engineers and architects have done in the past.

In this chapter, we showed that California's infrastructure is already not in great condition and infrastructure developers are facing significant financial, political, workforce and other hurdles to modernizing it, much less rendering it climate-safe for this warmer and increasingly volatile future. The CSIWG concluded that California stands at a critical juncture: to either risk the very foundation of its economy and its communities' safety and well-being or to make the necessary sustained investment in its infrastructure as if California's future depended on it.

It does.

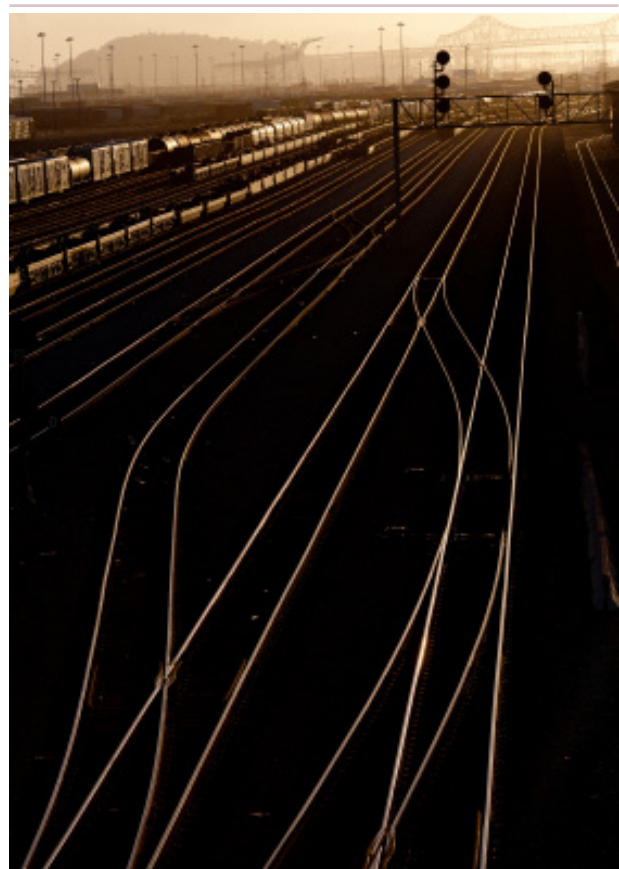


Figure 3.15: California stands at a critical juncture: to either risk the very foundation of its economy and its communities' safety and well-being or make the necessary sustained investment in its infrastructure as if California's future depended on it. It does. (Photo: Thomas Hawk, flickr, licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)





# 4 A Vision for Climate-Safe Infrastructure for All

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## Climate Safety Through Mitigation and Adaptation: The Climate-Safe Path

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Through high-level policies, executive orders and laws, California has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by mid-century. This level of commitment puts the state on a responsible path toward helping the global community achieve the targets of the Paris Accord, namely to limit global average warming to 2°C (3.6°F) or less (1.5°C or 2.7°F) by the end of this century. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is an ambitious target and will require considerable political will to achieve. Many motivations lie beneath this choice, including economic opportunity, a desire to lead politically, technologically, environmentally and morally, and enlightened self-interest. This policy orientation is also informed by the best available science that unmitigated climate change will undermine California's safety and well-being, natural resources and beauty, and crucially important economic sectors. While a 2°C (or less) warming will not prevent impacts from a warming climate (in fact, they are already being felt and more warming is inevitable), the impacts expected at that level of warming (roughly equivalent to the goals of the Paris Accord) are widely seen as considerably more manageable than those associated with greater and faster warming.

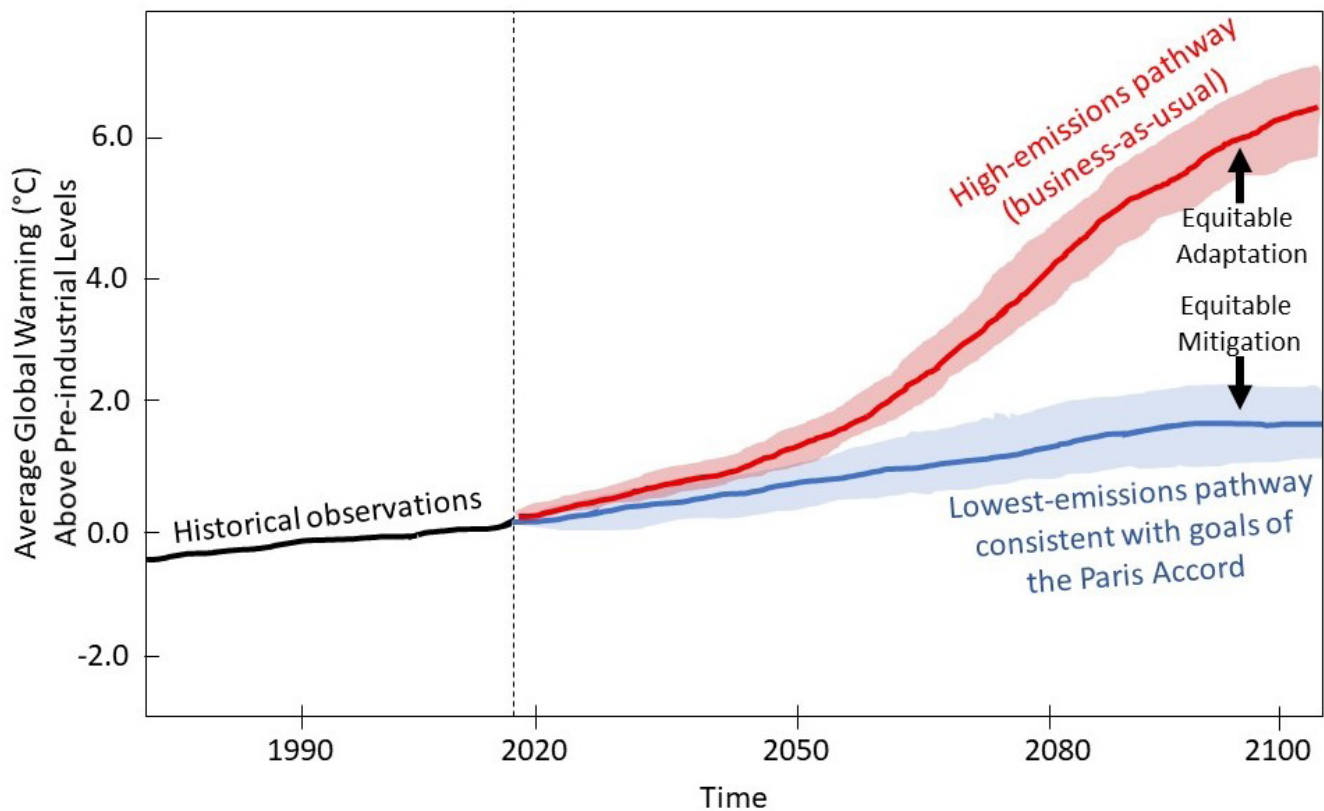
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*Political leaders now have an opportunity to strengthen adaptation as a political priority. They can send a directional signal that the safety of communities and the infrastructure on which they and the state's economy vitally depend is of utmost importance.*

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As the nearly two decades of international climate negotiations make clear, and as California's own path to increasingly stricter emissions reduction targets illustrates, stringent mitigation targets are not just a rational choice in light of potentially severe risks, but ultimately a political choice. However difficult it may be to achieve, aiming for 2°C or less is the choice that focuses the compass needle toward greater safety from some of the harmful climate impacts that would occur if emissions were allowed to further destabilize the Earth's climate system. However, the great difficulty involved in compelling the international community to make this commitment suggests that California must be prepared to contend with much greater climate impacts.

Thus, there is a parallel political choice to be made in setting adaptation targets. Over the past few years, California's political leaders and State lawmakers have laid some policy foundations for adaptation and now have an opportunity to strengthen adaptation as a political priority. They can send the same directional signal as they did with mitigation, namely, that the safety of communities and the infrastructure on which they and the state's economy vitally depend is of utmost importance. That choice is to ensure that long-lived infrastructure is planned, and may eventually need to be built, operated and maintained, to withstand future impacts from climate change associated with the "business-as-usual" emissions pathway (currently



**Figure 4.1** The Climate-Safe Path describes the simultaneous pursuit of stringent greenhouse gas mitigation that aims to meet the goals of the Paris Accord while charting an adaptive pathway to protect Californians against the impacts of a high-emissions scenario, both with a central focus on social equity.

the RCP 8.5 emissions scenario). Consistent with State guidance from the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), we refer to this pathway as a “high-emissions pathway” from here on.<sup>1</sup>

Should it become apparent over time that – globally – society has safely averted a high-emissions future, the adaptive approach promoted in this report should allow for an “off ramp” to adapt to the impacts associated with a lower-emissions pathway. However, determining the point in time when such a transition to a lower-safety threshold is indicated, is both scientifically and politically complex and requires dedicated research and public debate.

By reducing the causes of climate change through mitigation and simultaneously implementing preparedness and adaptation measures, California would pursue the safest of possible climate action pathways any state can take. We call this comprehensive strategy “the Climate-Safe Path” (Figure 4.1).

*By reducing the causes of climate change through mitigation and simultaneously implementing preparedness and adaptation measures, California would pursue the safest of possible climate action pathways any state can take. We call this comprehensive strategy “the Climate-Safe Path”*

<sup>1</sup> The emissions scenarios currently used in the Fourth Assessment, NCA4 and the Fifth IPCC assessment will be replaced with updated ones in the future. To maintain the concept without becoming obsolete when that happens, we use the more general term, which – at any one time – should be operationalized with the highest emissions scenario used by scientists to produce climate change projections.

# From Guidance to Policy

Current guidance documents from State agencies on considering climate impacts recommend considering impacts associated with the high-emissions scenario within the context of specific projects. The Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) recently released updated sea-level rise guidance suggests that coastal managers consider risks from sea-level rise associated with high-emissions scenarios depending on the level of risk tolerance and potential adaptation pathways for different projects, with the highest sea levels considered for the most critical and least adaptive projects<sup>[49]</sup>. Similarly, the OPR statewide guidance for infrastructure planning *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*, recommends that state infrastructure managers plan for impacts associated with the high-emissions scenario for all decisions with time horizons to 2050<sup>[49]</sup>. Beyond that the OPC and OPR guidance documents differ nominally from the Climate-Safe Path proposed here in that they recommend a risk assessment approach using a range of scenarios based on the criticality of the project. However, OPR's *Infrastructure Planning Guidance* does emphasize the use of the high-emissions scenario, whenever people and highly vulnerable assets may be placed at risk, if the project is more or less permanent or its failure could cause

major economic impacts. Thus, the OPR guidance and the Climate-Safe Path proposed here are essentially identical. We propose a similarly adaptive and flexible approach with a stringent protective target, given the legislative intent to protect lives, the long-lived nature of most infrastructure and the continued high-emissions pathway that society appears to be on.

Guidance documents, however, are not mandatory and they will have the desired impact on decisions primarily if and when they get teeth, i.e., when they are either turned into a mandate or when effectively designed, complementary "carrot and stick" approaches ensure investment decisions protect against the impacts of a high-emissions scenario.

# Realizing the Climate-Safe Path One Step at a Time

Preparing for the climate change impacts associated with the high-emissions pathway is an ambitious undertaking that has different implications for different types of infrastructure, for existing and newly built infrastructure, and for short- and long-term climate impacts. In no way does it imply that every infrastructure investment made today must build immediately to the protective level that

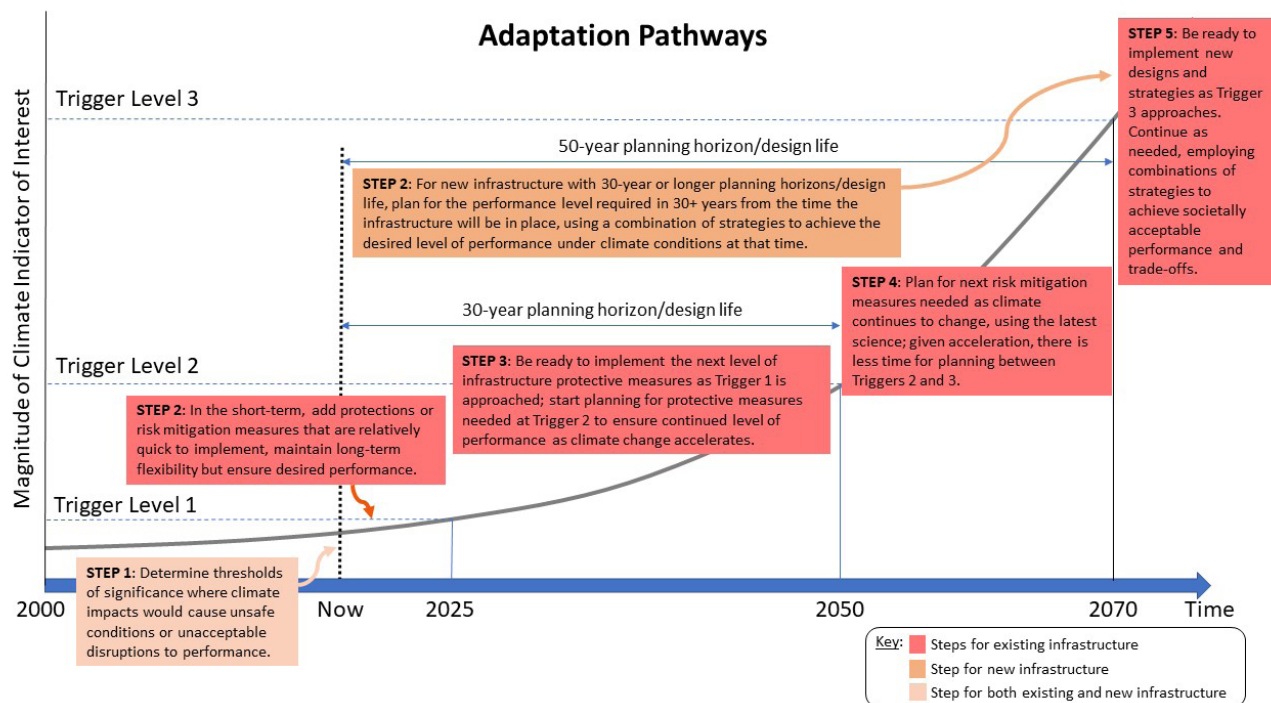


Figure 4.2 Conceptual diagram of an adaptation pathway. (Source: Adapted from Moser 2016<sup>[194]</sup>, used with permission) (Explanation in text)



would be required in many decades when the impacts associated with the high-emissions pathway are beginning to unfold. In other words, realizing the Climate-Safe Path does not mean a once-and-for-all step change, but a change in many steps. This is similar to how emission reductions are achieved: not turning off all emissions at once, but successively and steadily moving toward the ultimate goal. Realizing the Climate-Safe Path means following an adaptation pathway that keeps an eye on a long-term goal but is realized through a variety of strategies in multiple stages over the course of decades (Figure 4.2).

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*Realizing the Climate-Safe Path does not mean a once-and-for-all step change, but a change in many steps.*

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Such a flexible adaptation pathway begins with an agreement among relevant stakeholders as to the desired performance/service level of infrastructure. This desired performance level also has direct implications for the degree of risk aversion decision-makers might have. As climate change continues, thresholds will be crossed where the performance of the existing infrastructure as it is currently built no longer fulfills societal expectations. Where existing infrastructure is already inadequate, steps should be taken as soon as possible to augment existing levels of protection to ensure that performance can be maintained. Planning for implementing subsequent retrofits is also begun, recognizing that lead time is needed to implement them. As climate change continues and its impacts eventually exceed the projections for which infrastructure is designed to withstand, the next level of protection – using a combination of strategies – is implemented. The more flexibility is maintained each time, the better. At subsequent steps, the best available knowledge both about climate science, societal trends and performance of different infrastructure designs must be taken into account. But planning time to the next trigger level/threshold becomes shorter as climate change accelerates. These steps are continued as long as conditions change. To realize an adaptive approach to infrastructure upgrades, it is critical that money be set aside now and over time to fund the needed future changes. Otherwise, in a different future political or economic climate, support and resources for the necessary updates could lessen and thus place greater risks on communities in the future.

While we will offer more technical and tactical detail in the subsequent chapters on what is needed to implement the Climate-Safe Path, we can already say here that building and maintaining infrastructure fit for a high-emissions world will be realized through a combination of strategies, each adding a necessary but by itself insufficient dimension to “climate safety.” These strategies are based on decades of experience in hazards management and mirror the definitions for climate-safe infrastructure, resilience and related terms offered in Chapter 1<sup>[181]</sup>.

**For newly built infrastructure**, a number of interrelated but complementary strategies must be pursued to ensure infrastructure functionality and obtain desired risk aversion levels over the changing conditions that can be expected over its lifetime:

- **Robustness:** infrastructure is built to the protective level expected to be needed to ensure acceptable functionality and reliability (assuming the high-emissions pathway) over the design life of the infrastructure (e.g., 30 or 50 years); because there is inevitable uncertainty and multiple design criteria must be met simultaneously, the infrastructure would be expected to be robust over a range of uncertain conditions;
- **Resilience:** plans are developed and practiced from now on for the possibility of a situation when an extreme event exceeds the protective level and infrastructure fails, so as to improve and speed up the response and adaptive recovery to requisite levels of protection needed at that time (sometimes referred to as safe-to-fail approaches with appropriate disaster preparedness and response management); this complementarity to robustness is shown in Figure 4.3;<sup>1</sup>
- **Adaptability:** plans are developed and features integrated into the design now that would allow infrastructure owners to adapt the structure to a higher level of protection should it become necessary over time;
- **Redundancy:** plans are developed now and implemented over time that help the new infrastructure maintain functionality when it or parts of it fail; and
- **Avoidance:** on the basis of vulnerability assessments already in place, underway or to be conducted in the future, infrastructure development in high-risk areas should be avoided unless the infrastructure owner is willing to pay for the necessary measures to ensure functionality over the effective lifetime of the infrastructure (often considerably longer than the design life), using the above four strategies.

<sup>2</sup> See The L.A. Metro Resiliency Indicator Framework<sup>(195)</sup> as an example.

For existing infrastructure, the same basic types of strategies listed above must be considered including a strategy that will become necessary when the limits of changing existing infrastructure are being approached:

- **Robustness:** as existing infrastructure undergoes maintenance, upgrades or repairs after damage, structural or material changes are made to bring the existing infrastructure to a higher protective level (if structurally possible to the level needed for impacts expected with the high-emissions scenario over the remaining lifetime of the structure) through retrofits;
- **Resilience:** because robustness and adaptability strategies may be limited with existing infrastructure, plans are developed or updated and practiced from now on for the possibility of a situation when an extreme event exceeds the protective level of the existing structure, so as to improve and speed up the response and adaptive recovery to requisite levels of protection needed at that time;
- **Adaptability:** as existing infrastructure undergoes maintenance, upgrades or repairs after damage, efforts are made to build adaptive features into the retrofit measures so as to allow further adjustments in the future (if structurally possible);
- **Redundancy:** plans are developed and implemented now that help the existing infrastructure maintain functionality when one or more parts of it fail; and
- **Retreat or Decommissioning and Removal:** assessments are undertaken to estimate the time – under the assumption of a high-emissions pathways – when the physical defense of even upgraded existing infrastructure is no longer viable and the functionality of the infrastructure can no longer be assured; based on this assessment, time-sensitive plans should be developed to either move or remove and decommission and replace the infrastructure (Figure 4.3).

Over time, the dual approach of limiting greenhouse gas emissions and simultaneously investing in retrofitting, replacing and building new infrastructure that incorporates these strategies or principles will result in safer communities with more reliable infrastructure and well-practiced plans in place to recover from extreme events. This will allow infrastructure to quickly return to functionality and increased safety in the face of the trends and changing extremes experienced over time.

Importantly, designing for and working toward climate-safe infrastructure requires a shift in thinking from focusing on individual structures to thinking in interconnected and interdependent, multisectoral systems of infrastructure that can withstand not just the occasional extreme event but tightly-spaced sequences of hazardous events

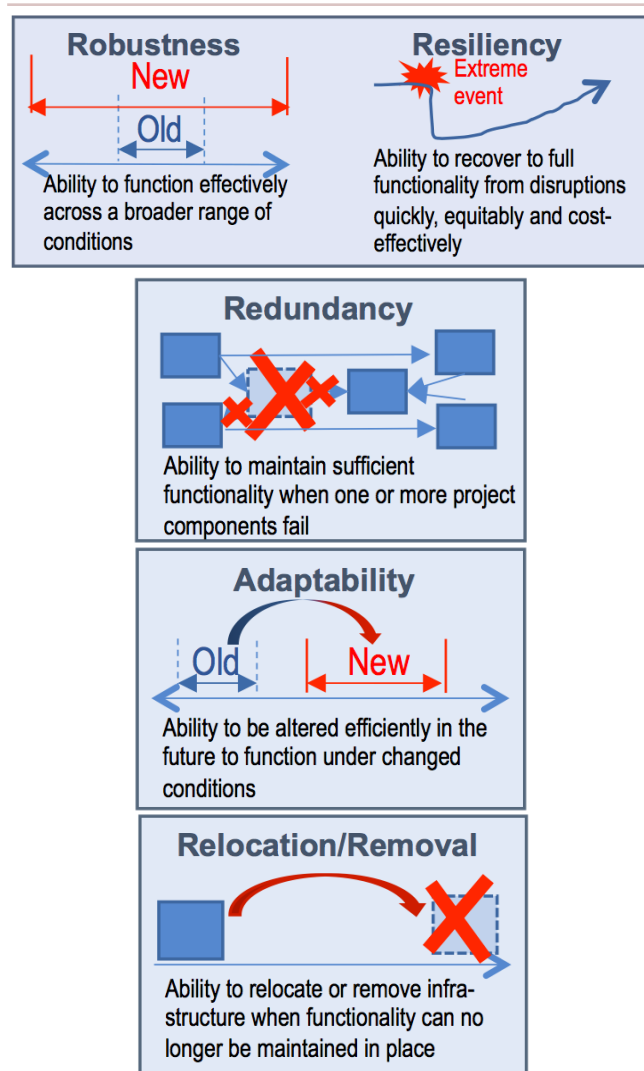


Figure 4.3 Conceptual drawings of the five basic strategies that can be flexibly combined to achieve the desired performance levels of climate-safe, sustainable infrastructure (Source: Adapted from Wallace 2017<sup>[181]</sup>, original used with permission)

and complex, concatenated simultaneous events<sup>[165]</sup>. Infrastructure planners, designers, builders and operators must come to think long-term and in systems, considering both directional trends and changing patterns and characteristics of extremes.

In short, climate-safe infrastructure would be that which is designed in a way that extreme events do not lead to catastrophic failure, neither now nor across a wide range of uncertain future conditions (Box 4.1).

## Box 4.1: Flexible Combination of the Five Strategies of “Climate-Safe” Design

Climate safe infrastructure would be that which is designed such that extreme events don't lead to failure, both now and across a wide range of uncertain future conditions. To achieve this goal, it would build in robustness, redundancy, be readily modifiable to adapt to the prevailing conditions and incorporate resiliency to ensure quick recovery in case of a bigger-than-expected event.

Resiliency and redundancy in particular, are useful concepts for infrastructure design because they acknowledge that events beyond design specification will happen – and maybe more often in the future than currently expected. The common preference is to build infrastructure strong enough – robust enough – that it can withstand worsening conditions. Robustness is a concept that relates to both a particular multi-factorial way of making decisions and how resulting designs will perform regardless of how uncertain future conditions play out. A robust infrastructure design would be one that remains appropriately designed in the future even if climate conditions change in ways different from our current best prediction. Achieving robustness is often accomplished by building adaptive features into the design so that the structure can evolve in response to changing conditions, i.e., it would be readily modifiable to adapt to future prevailing conditions. The complementary notion of resilience implies that infrastructure would be designed to recover (or be restored) with low effort or costs and contingency plans would be made (including redundancy) to ensure quick return to functioning or minimal disruption of functionality at all. In other words, if or when infrastructure fails, it should do so in a non-catastrophic way, fairly compensating those who experience loss or damage (the concept of “safe-to-fail”, see Chapter 6 for more details).

For example, a climate-safe sea-level-rise protection scheme might include both a physical barrier designed to hold back storm surge as well as a green space that can absorb overtopping surge and thus minimize the impact of such an event. The design would also include the ability to expand the absorption capacity of the green space if future surge becomes more frequent or larger than presently anticipated. And should failure occur, plans and processes would be in place to quickly and effectively deal with the consequences should the protective features be overwhelmed by a larger-than-expected coastal storm event. Systemic infrastructure planning would also carefully assess the possibility of cascading events and the impacts of infrastructure disruption on interconnected lifelines. This multi-pronged, comprehensive approach would allow the surrounding community to efficiently regain functionality with the least possible disruption of activities and loss of life and damage to structures.

But planning for climate-safe infrastructure should also involve planning for cases – which may or may not come over the course of the functional lifetime of the infrastructure – when appropriate functioning, and thus the safety of facilities and communities, can no longer be guaranteed even after all other strategies have been applied. Where climate trends are accelerating (as, for example, in the case of sea-level rise), such a time may come faster than anticipated. But if society succeeds in reducing emissions more significantly than anticipated, that time may be far out in the future.

Thus, the full set of strategies is available – in whatever combination – to infrastructure planners and designers so that they can wisely incorporate precaution, flexibility and adaptability; ensure that infrastructure can function across the wide range of plausible future conditions; and, ultimately, be taken efficiently and seamlessly out of use if necessary.



**The flexible combination of multiple strategies to achieve climate safety will look unique in different localities and for different types of infrastructure. Here, hard and soft infrastructure are combined, and others could be added to protect a shoreline. (Photo: Ocean Beach, California; Dawn Danby, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0).**



## A Climate-Safe Path for All

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The vision of the Climate-Safe Path outlined here is not a path just for the privileged. Instead, it is envisioned to be a path for all. Following the Climate-Safe Path must include an integral commitment to remedying past injustice in infrastructure investment so as to ensure the safety, health, well-being and opportunities of those who have borne insecurity, public health burdens and lack of economic opportunity the most and the longest.

As we described in Chapter 3, California's infrastructure – much like that of any other US state – is in many ways inadequate for current climate conditions, much less for those expected over the next several decades or more<sup>[7]</sup>. Insufficient infrastructure investment, deferred infrastructure maintenance, and a general lack of vision and political will to make the necessary long-term investments in highly functional infrastructure has plagued the state for decades (see Chapter 8). Thus, what we call for in this report is not no- or low-cost, but it is no- or low-regret because any new and additional infrastructure investment California decides to make is remedying a current problem and constitutes an investment into its future (“paying it forward”). But it will be that only if the investment is cognizant of the changing climate in which this infrastructure must serve.

The state's most outdated and dilapidated infrastructure is not evenly distributed, neither geographically, nor socio-economically. It is not affecting Californians equally. Due to decades of underinvestment and redlining (i.e., the systematic denial of various services to residents of specific areas or segments of society), low-income communities and communities of color often confront the largest potholes, the most outdated school buildings, the leakiest pipes, the worst connectivity to modern transportation, communication and other community infrastructure. The added risks arising from climate change are not going to be equally distributed either. These same communities often have the fewest resources to deal with the risks from climate change. As such, these communities are those where the State has the greatest opportunity to make a difference.

Inadequate engagement during the infrastructure planning and decision-making processes, systemic disadvantaging through decision criteria and cost-benefit requirements, long-standing institutionalized racism and narrow thinking about the role of infrastructure across multiple sectors and within a region or community are at the root of this inequitable investment in infrastructure<sup>[3,196,197]</sup>.

As the Movement Strategy Center argues in its *Pathways to Resilience* report<sup>[198]</sup>, “climate resilience is not about ‘bouncing back.’ Instead it is about bouncing forward to eradicate the inequities and unsustainable resource use at the heart of the climate crisis... [Thus,] climate resilience requires a holistic view of the challenges we face, and it calls for solutions at the intersections of people, the environment and the economy.” This is consistent with the paradigm of “sustainable infrastructure” promoted since the early 2000's by the American Society of Civil Engineers<sup>3</sup> (ASCE) although still requiring widespread adoption.

Again, the State already promotes social equity and inclusion as one of its guiding principles for adaptation in its statewide adaptation strategy (*Safeguarding California*<sup>[199]</sup>) and through EO B-30-15. Making social equity explicitly central to infrastructure investment as a matter of State policy is not a leap, but an extension, a matter of consistency across State policies.

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*The Climate-Safe Path must include an integral commitment to remedying past injustice in infrastructure investment so as to ensure the safety, health, well-being and opportunities of those who have borne insecurity, public health burdens and lack of economic opportunity the most and the longest.*

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PolicyLink, an Oakland-based racial and economic equity advocacy group which includes a focus on infrastructure, suggests the following principles to guide equitable infrastructure planning, policy and investment<sup>[200]</sup>:

- Include residents in decision-making;
- Serve underinvested communities without pushing out existing residents;
- Improve the environmental health and quality of life for residents of disinvested communities;
- Be equitably owned, financed and funded;
- Create good jobs and business opportunities for local residents; and
- Invest in workforce training.

<sup>3</sup> For the full range of sustainability policies, strategic roadmaps, certificate programs and resources, see: <http://www.asce.org/sustainability/>.

The Working Group endorses these principles. In fact, effects of increasing impacts from climate change is a human rights issue<sup>[201]</sup>. Holding paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public is central to the code of ethics of the engineering profession. The Working Group's strong conviction is that social equity in infrastructure development should not be a last-minute adjustment of an already-decided plan, nor merely one among many criteria to guide infrastructure decisions. If the protection of lives is the goal, social equity must be considered in the beginning, middle and end of infrastructure planning and decision-making. It is the outcome that is planned for from the start, and that means a different process must prevail. As Dr. Beverly Scott put it in one of the CSIWG meetings, "Are we planning *for* communities, or *with* them?" Figure 4.4).

Social equity thus rises to an overarching priority, guiding climate-safe infrastructure planning, design and implementation. In light of the greatest need for infrastructure investment in low-income communities and communities of color, and the legislative intent of AB 2800 to ensure the safety of Californians as climate change threats to the state's infrastructure increase, equity should be included every step of the way from infrastructure planning and decision-making to implementation and performance evaluation, with clear indicators and guiding questions to show the way (Box 4.2).

Figure 4.5 illustrates how to rate infrastructure investments. The three criteria are the degree to which they would (a) reduce the state's risks from climate change, (b) remedy past lack of investment in infrastructure and (c) explicitly reduce/remedy social inequity through comprehensive approaches. This would lead to clear priority setting in favor of those regions and communities of the state that have long been neglected and are therefore in greatest need now.



Figure 4.4 To ensure the safety of all Californians as climate change threats to the state's infrastructure increase, equity should be included every step of the way from infrastructure planning and decision-making to implementation and performance evaluation. (Photo: US Army)

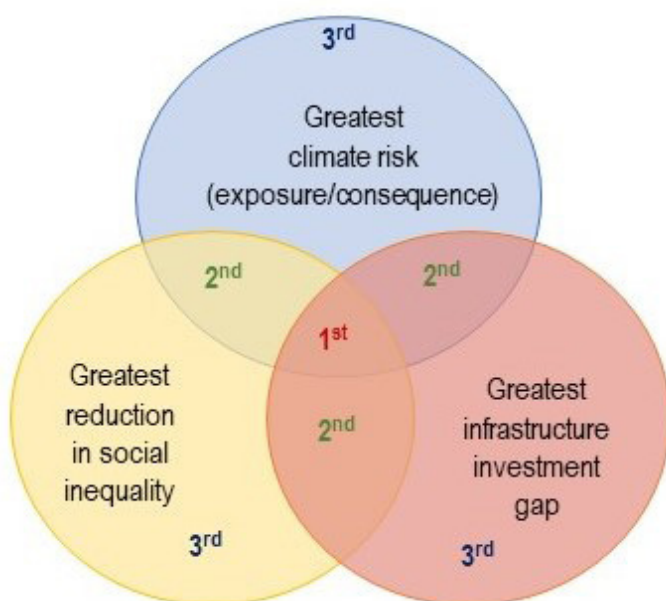


Figure 4.5 Prioritizing infrastructure investments in line with the Climate-Safe Path for All proposed here should be guided by three criteria: (1) where is the risk the greatest?; (2) where is the greatest infrastructure investment gap?; and (3) where can the investment most reduce inequality and increase opportunity? This will result in tangible improvements for long-neglected communities and regions of California.

# Recommendation 1

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*The State Legislature should establish as official State policy “The Climate-Safe Path for All”, which is a flexible adaptation pathway realized through a variety of strategies, in multiple stages over the course of decades. The Climate-Safe Path for All accounts for the full life-cycle costs of infrastructure and uses a multi-sectoral, systems approach. It prioritizes infrastructure investments based upon the greatest risks and investment gaps, as well as where investment can most reduce inequality and increase opportunity. For highly vulnerable, long-lived infrastructure, State agencies should consider climate change impacts associated with a high-emissions scenario while continuing to implement all applicable State laws related to stringent greenhouse gas emissions reductions.*

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***To operationalize Recommendation 1, the CSIWG suggested the following concrete next steps:***

1. All State infrastructure agencies should establish as a matter of agency-wide policy an adaptation and resilience requirement, namely that all investments in new and existing state-owned, -funded and regulated infrastructure consider and then employ an appropriate combination of the five strategies described above to work toward increasing climate safety.
2. State agencies should furthermore establish formal and readily implementable guidelines at the agency/programmatic level and at the project level as to what it means to “incorporate climate change” into infrastructure planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance. This guidance should rely on the concepts and suggestions made in this report.
3. At the program level, guidelines should address the full range of decisions related to infrastructure, including policy, planning, procurement, funding, cross-agency/cross-sector coordination to foster systemic approaches and program evaluation; and
4. At the project level, guidelines should clarify and specify agency-relevant risk and vulnerability assessment approaches, event tree analysis, full life cycle cost assessments, assessment of costs, benefits, tradeoffs as well as potential risk mitigation measures.
5. Development of guidance will often require workload and expertise beyond what is available in current budgets. To achieve this recommendation, agencies should have adequate funding and efficient ways to leverage similar activities from other agencies and solicit outside scientific and technical expertise.

***To operationalize the social equity dimension of Recommendation 1 specifically, the CSIWG suggested the following critical next step:***

1. State legislation, propositions and state agency policy directives related to infrastructure should direct infrastructure investment where it is needed most as determined by a screening of climate risks (see Climate-Screening Tool in Chapter 6), the infrastructure investment gap and the potential to reduce social inequities. This would prioritize infrastructure upgrades, repairs and new investment in long-neglected communities and regions of the state.



## Box 4.2: An Equity Indicators Framework

### Demographics:

Who lives in the region and how is this changing?

- Racial/ethnic diversity
- Demographic change
- Population growth
- Racial generation gap

### Economic vitality:

How is the region doing on measures of economic growth and well being?

- Is the region producing good jobs?
- Can all residents access good jobs?
- Is growth widely shared?
- Do all residents have enough income to sustain their families?
- Is race/ethnicity/nativity a barrier to economic success?
- What are the strongest industries and occupations?

### Readiness:

How prepared are the region's residents for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy?

- Does the workforce have the skills for the jobs of the future?
- Are all youth ready to enter the workforce?
- Are residents healthy?
- Are racial gaps in education and health decreasing?

### Neighborhoods:

Are the residents of [the region] prepared for and connected to the region's opportunities?

- How are demographics changing?
- How are residents doing on measures of economic opportunity and readiness?
- Are residents connected to opportunities?

### Connectedness:

Are the region's residents and neighborhoods connected to one another and to the region's assets and opportunities?

- Do residents have transportation choices?
- Can residents access jobs and opportunities located throughout the region?
- Can all residents access affordable, quality, convenient housing?
- Do neighborhoods reflect the region's diversity? Is segregation decreasing?
- Can all residents access healthy food?

The [National Equity Atlas](#) has developed an equity indicators framework, along with several regional profiles to illustrate how it would be applied (examples for the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento and Los Angeles regions and Fresno County are available, see PolicyLink and PERE<sup>[200,202-205]</sup>). The guiding questions and associated quantitative indicators, especially disaggregated data on each of the indicators, offer a tangible way toward improving, tracking and evaluating social equity over time. (Source: Adapted from PolicyLink and PERE (2017)<sup>[202]</sup>, p.13, used with permission)

## From Vision to Action: A Framework for Action

In order for this vision of climate-safe infrastructure to be realized, integrating the best available forward-looking science (of climate change as well as demographic, socio-economic, technological and ecological changes relevant to infrastructure investment decisions) is necessary, but insufficient. Publicly accessible data and information inputs, as well as high-quality analytics such as risk and vulnerability assessments, are essential both to set standards and guidelines and for ongoing operation and maintenance. But they are only one part of an action-oriented framework that will result in the ultimate intent of AB 2800, namely that infrastructure investments get made and that climate-safe infrastructure is actually built so that lives are protected and the foundation for a prosperous future is built and maintained.

We therefore propose the following framework that places the integration of forward-looking science into infrastructure planning and design in the context of additional necessary steps and areas for improvement in order for climate-safe infrastructure to be implemented on the ground (Figure 4.6).

The five core components of this framework mirror key needs of any infrastructure planning and design process, and we dedicate a chapter to each in the remainder of this report.

- **Data and Analytics (e.g., risk and vulnerability assessments, along with the necessary tools)** Infrastructure planning and design requires many types of data, model simulations and forward-looking science – appropriately used and interpreted. This is a central focus of AB 2800, and we will discuss in greater detail what information is needed, what information is currently available or should be produced in the future in Chapter 5.

- **Project Pipeline** (e.g., project planning and pre-development, standards for prioritization, project management flow) Infrastructure projects are often years to even decades in the making. Where and what to prioritize, to what standards of performance climate-safe infrastructure should be built, and planning and deciding about them in a transparent and inclusive fashion requires effective project management and coordination. A well-developed project pipeline is a necessary pre-condition to attract infrastructure finance and involves successful stakeholder engagement, efficient progress through the permitting process, multi-sectoral alignment and other processes, which we describe in chapter 6.
- **Governance Structures** (e.g., at various scales) Many types of infrastructure involve engagement of multiple levels and different kinds of jurisdictions and can include multiple State agencies or sectors, for funding and financing, review and permitting, oversight, operation and maintenance. Appropriate and effective governance structures and processes are required for complex partnerships and financing but may be lacking or need clarification and streamlining for efficient functioning. Governance also involves the rules, codes, standards and guidelines that govern where and how infrastructure is built. We discuss these needs in Chapter 7.
- **Financing Tools** (e.g., funding/revenue, financing/loans, innovative instruments incl. insurance) Federal and State funding sources alone are widely seen as insufficient to catch up on past inadequate infrastructure investment, resulting in a call for private sector involvement and innovative partnerships and financial tools to generate the necessary funds. In addition to familiar tools such as bonds, taxes and fees, a number of innovative tools are currently being piloted. We review these trends, needs, related obstacles and opportunities in Chapter 8.
- **Implementation Aids** (e.g., training, professional development, M&E, public engagement) None of the above will be realized at the rate and quality needed without engineers, architects, planners, procurement officers and on-the-ground operations personnel having the necessary professional training and know-how to appropriately use available scientific data and tools. They must also be able to understand different planning or financing options and be capable of navigating complex governance challenges. Thus, to enable climate-safe infrastructure to be built, relevant staff require professional development opportunities, accountability mechanisms, and a cyclical, iterative approach – informed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the performance of infrastructure – to periodically reassess climate risks and adjust infrastructure planning and design approaches accordingly over time. We will discuss critical needs in this category in Chapter 9.



It is clear from the discussion so far, and from what will be explained in much greater detail in the following chapters of this report, that the integration of forward-looking climate science alone will not “solve” the problem of the state’s infrastructure being ill-prepared for the current and coming climatic conditions. A systemic, iterative approach must be developed that links climate and other forward-looking science to planning, governance, financing and the appropriate conditions for project implementation.

To ensure strategic advancement toward realizing the Climate-Safe Path for All, and to make implementation more likely, future State legislation and programs developed by the Strategic Growth Council and individual State agencies (as well as other entities interested in or charged with climate-safe infrastructure planning and design) should adopt an “it takes a system” approach as a foundation for building climate-safe infrastructure.

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*To ensure strategic advancement toward realizing the Climate-Safe Path for All, and to make implementation more likely, future legislation and programs should adopt an “it takes a system” approach*

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The following five chapters take on each of the framework-to-action elements in greater detail, beginning with the data and analytics in Chapter 5.



Figure 4.7 At “The Longest Table” event in Howard County, Maryland, 320 residents sat at a 320-foot long table and shared their respective vision for their community. This type of socially inclusive engagement ensures equitable representation; everyone had a seat at “the table.” (Photo: Howard County (Md.) Library System, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



# 5

## Data and Analytics: Meeting Forward-Looking Science Needs

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### Introduction

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Two important mandates of AB 2800 are to consider and investigate:

1. The current informational and institutional barriers to integrating projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design; and
2. The critical information that engineers and architects responsible for infrastructure design and construction need to address climate change impacts.

In this chapter we summarize what the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG) found in terms of climate information currently used in infrastructure planning and design and what forward-looking climate science needs exist, along with barriers to using it. Throughout the discussions, the CSIWG identified other sources of forward-looking information beyond physical climate science. Those are presented here as well.

### Identification of Climate-Sensitive Infrastructure

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Perhaps the most important immediate outcome of AB 2800 is to demonstrate the State's commitment to understand the barriers that until now have limited agencies' ability to incorporate forward-looking climate information.

Following the mandate of AB 2800 and using the ASCE (2015)<sup>[178]</sup> report recommendations, the CSIWG identified the infrastructure that should be addressed as part of this study. It then assessed the information required to implement existing standards, guidelines and regulations, which determine how infrastructure is planned, designed,

built, operated and maintained. Working Group members also identified relevant standards that come into play in building and maintaining infrastructure. Only those codes, standards and guidelines that cannot accommodate a changing climate must eventually be updated with forward-looking climate information (for a fuller discussion see [Chapter 7](#)). While some State agencies have begun to do so, not all have.

CSIWG discussions focused on State-owned, -funded and -regulated infrastructure in the building, energy, water and transportation sectors (with an emphasis on infrastructure for which members had expertise), with lesser attention to infrastructure such as correctional and healthcare facilities, State parks and related green or nature-based infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> CSIWG members identified which weather/climate impacts their respective infrastructure assets currently face and those they expect to face more of in the future (Table 5.1).

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*One of the most important immediate outcomes of AB 2800 is to demonstrate the State's commitment to understand the barriers that until now have limited agencies' ability to incorporate forward-looking climate information.*

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, we use a very broad definition of green infrastructure that can include both already existing or restored natural features, such as beaches, wetlands or habitat corridors, as well as human-made but nature-based infrastructure that is intended to serve a protective function or provide other ecosystem services to a community such as storm water management, groundwater recharge or greater tree cover in urban areas.

**Table 5.1 CSIWG-Identified Climate Impacts to Asset Categories For Each Sector**

	Temperature		Wildfire		High Winds		Precipitation		Flooding/ Run-Off		Debris Flow / Mudslides		Coastal Flooding / Waves / Storm Surge		Sea Level Rise		Erosion		Drought	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
Transportation	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓					
	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓							
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	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
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Energy									✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
		✓							✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	✓	✓							✓	✓										
	✓	✓							✓	✓										
	✓	✓							✓	✓										

**Table 5.1 (Con'd) CSIWG-Identified Climate Impacts to Assest Categories For Each Sector**

	Temperature		Wildfire		High Winds		Precipitation		Flooding/ Run-Off		Debris Flow / Mudslides		Coastal Flooding / Waves / Storm Surge		Sea Level Rise		Erosion		Drought	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
Buildings	✓	✓																		
	✓	✓																		
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
Water			✓	✓			✓	✓				✓								
							✓	✓				✓								
	✓	✓					✓	✓										✓		✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



It is immediately apparent from Table 5.1 that the impacts of temperature, wildfire and high winds, as well as the combined impacts of precipitation and associated flooding present immediate challenges to existing infrastructure, and these are expected to be exacerbated with a changing climate. Impacts from sea-level rise, coastal flooding and coastal erosion are important in specific locations where critical infrastructure is located along the coast.

## Information Currently Used for Infrastructure

Fulfilling the mandate of AB 2800 to identify information needs and any barriers to information uptake requires: (1) an understanding of the information that is currently available and that is regularly being used by engineers and architects now; (2) identifying the perceived gaps in currently existing information; and (3) identifying future climate-science (and other forward-looking science) needs. Appendices 4 and 5 provide summaries of the information currently used in infrastructure design and maintenance and identify future climate-science needs broken out by infrastructure sector. These tables in the appendices belie the complexity of the conversations, however, about what information is really needed and the level of detail required to continue to decrease risk in infrastructure design, planning and implementation. We address this greater complexity in the sections below.

### Forward-Looking Climate Science Needs

[Chapter 2](#) of this report identified what is currently understood about climate trends and projections into the future. However, engineering studies and planning often require information at a parcel- or project-level scale, and at time scales not always currently available from global climate projections (e.g., precipitation rates on an hourly scale versus monthly or annual averages). If that level of detailed information is available, it is usually accompanied with high degrees of uncertainty and wide ranges of possible future climates, which are themselves dependent on the even less predictable behavior of humans and future global greenhouse gas emissions. This disconnect between what is available and credible on the one hand and what is needed by engineers and architects on the other has stymied much effort to incorporate forward-looking climate information into existing design standards, guidelines and principles.

The CSIWG does not believe, however, that this disconnect creates an unworkable impasse. Instead, the CSIWG identified an adaptive process by which infrastructure planning can continue with the information that is currently available, while also highlighting climate information needs that would be useful moving forward. This entails

using the information that is currently available, while allowing for more refined information to be incorporated in the future (see the adaptive pathway described in [Chapter 4](#)); when possible, using adaptive designs for planning infrastructure (discussed more fully below); while developing sustained funding source to advance climate and social science as well adaptive engineering research to fill identified gaps (see research needs below and in [Chapter 8](#)). To prioritize achieving this latter step, the CSIWG identified critical information needs for each sector (Appendices 4 and 5). Table 5.2 provides selected examples of some of the information needs – typically requiring additional research to fill them – while Appendices 4 and 5 provide a more complete list for each sector.



**Figure 5.1** An important component to adaptive design entails monitoring and observing how the infrastructure responds to current environmental conditions, as well as monitoring global emissions, how climate is responding and whether adjustments are needed to ensure existing infrastructure is climate-safe (see also [Chapter 9](#)) (Photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

As we highlight these climate information needs, it is important to recognize that most of these data are already available, just not at the level of granularity thought to be needed by the engineering community. Where the desired granularity cannot be obtained, decision-analytic frameworks such as decisions scaling<sup>[146,206-208]</sup> and robust decision making (see [Chapter 6](#)) can be used to arrive at climate-safe infrastructure designs despite lack of adequate or uncertain data. In fact, many of the forward-looking climate data needs are in fact climate research – and research capacity – needs. For instance, the CSIWG called for more detailed information on increased capacity to model precipitation and storm water flows in urban areas in a changing climate. There has been some pioneering work in this area by CSIWG members and other researchers<sup>[56,58,209-213]</sup>, however most studies are limited in geographic scope and require

time and investment to apply to other locations (see [Chapter 2](#) and Box 5.1 below). Detailed analysis of the concurrence of different flood contributors is equally time- and resource-consuming<sup>[56]</sup>. Thus, research is needed to identify less computationally-expensive methods to develop these flood projections; this is, in turn, dependent on funds to ensure adequate research capacity.

The perceived lack of sufficiently high-resolution data and too much uncertainty in the projections already available may not be solved by more research, but rather requires a new approach to planning and design. The CSIWG accordingly grappled with the consistent challenge of ensuring that “the perfect not become the enemy of the good.” The applied research question then becomes: where is the higher-resolution information actually needed and when/where does this higher level of resolution imply a false sense of precision about what we can expect in the future? Can infrastructure systems be designed to

*The perceived lack of sufficiently high-resolution data and too much uncertainty in the projections already available may not be solved by more research, but rather requires a new approach to planning and design.*

be adaptive and be able to withstand a range of possible climate futures, rather than be tied to one particular future, which may or may not ever become reality. In [Chapter 6](#), we will discuss probabilistic risk management and adaptive design approaches, and in [Chapter 7](#) ASCE’s Manual of Practice. Both provide concrete steps by which engineers and architects can do exactly this.

**Table 5.2: Examples of Forward-Looking Climate Information Needs, Requiring Additional Research, for Selected Infrastructure Sectors (see also [Appendix 5](#))**

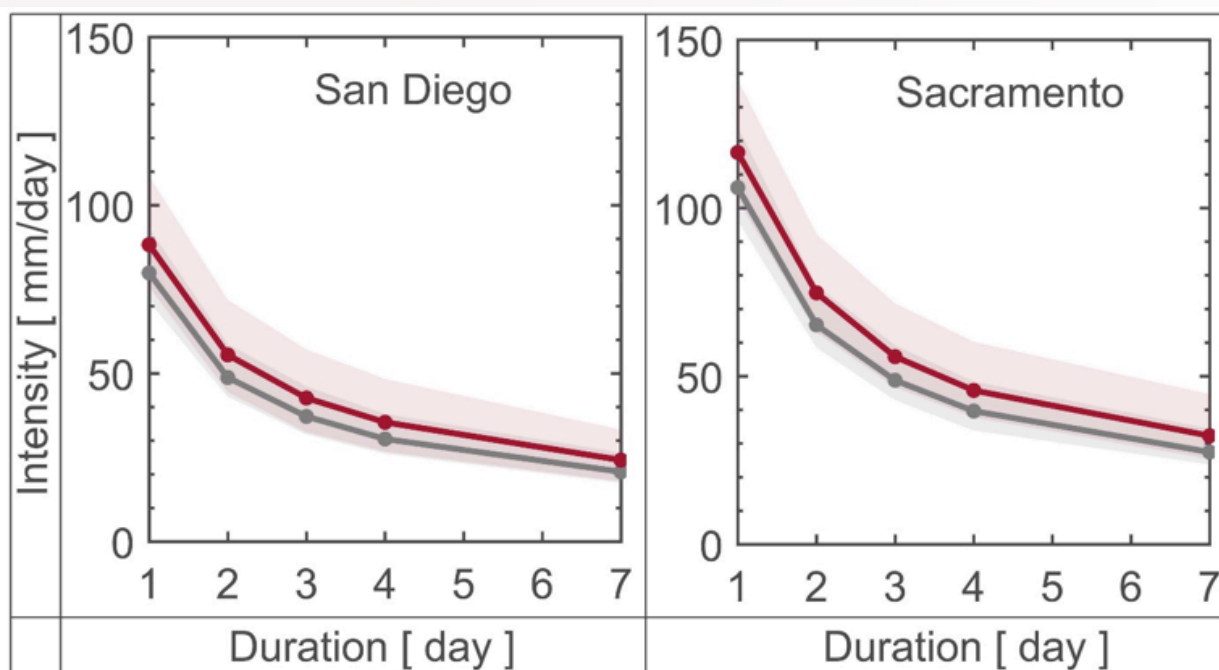
<p><b>Water Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flow rate (hourly) data for urban water systems</li> <li>Increased capacity to model flow in urban areas</li> <li>Continuous and reliable runoff information</li> <li>Sub-hourly precipitation measurement</li> <li>Spatial/temporal resolution (varies for different types of infrastructure and depends on size/scale)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rain intensity, downscaled to highest spatial resolution possible</li> <li>Sea level rise downscaled to highest spatial resolution possible</li> <li>Extreme wind prediction</li> <li>Change in storm surges</li> <li>Change in temperature</li> <li>Frequency of extreme temperatures</li> <li>State developed flood plain maps</li> <li>Regional maps identifying areas susceptible to wildfires (i.e., infrastructure within areas susceptible to wildfires)</li> <li>Regional maps identifying areas susceptible to mudslides (following wildfires)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Energy/Buildings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downscaled global climate model data at smaller temporal scales (i.e., from daily [6 hour] to hourly data needed for building energy modeling [e.g., dry/wet bulb temperatures, solar radiation, wind speed and direction])</li> <li>Sea-level rise impacts on groundwater levels</li> <li>Different spectrums of radiation for material and surface light of building components</li> <li>Future projections and variability of outdoor air quality</li> </ul>

### Box 5.1: Example of How to Fill Specific Climate Science Needs

Experts at the University of California, Irvine, have prepared rainfall Intensity-Duration-Frequency (IDF) curves using projected precipitation data. These projected precipitation IDF curves have been prepared for 14 major cities in California<sup>[58]</sup>. Members of the CSIWG noted that forward-looking IDF curves need to be developed for the entire state. Such IDF curves are used in design of storm water systems, levees, bridges, culverts, etc.

At present, IDF curves are based on historical data, using data tables from NOAA Atlas 14. Not having IDF curves for future climate conditions limits incorporation of climate change into the design of these types of infrastructure. Data would need to be developed at a resolution of 0.06 degree (dividing the state into ~11,800 grid cells). This would amount to having data representing 3 to 4-mile square cells statewide. To complete this task could take 1-2 years and additional resources but is entirely achievable and would benefit water and transportation agencies and other State agencies for design and planning projects.

A recent paper<sup>[214]</sup> assessed how out-of-date state design manuals are, given extreme rainfall occurrences and projected changes in extremes. It shows that California is one of eight states where updates of this sort should be a high priority.



IDF curves using forward-looking climate projections (RCP 8.5, red curve) for a rainfall event in San Diego (left) and Sacramento (right) that has a 25-year recurrence interval), with a 90% confidence interval (pink-shaded area), compared to the historical IDF curve (black curve) (Source: Adapted from Ragno et al. 2018<sup>[58]</sup>; used with permission)



## Beyond Climate Science Information

While the scope of AB 2800 can be read to be limited to physical climate science information, the phrase “climate impact science” opens up a much larger body of work, ranging from physical impacts to ecological and social impacts. In the course of the CSIWG’s deliberations, many other information needs were identified that extend beyond traditional climate, geophysical or meteorological information that are not even just “impacts science.” These data needs spanned from traditional social scientific information such as projections of future land use, demographics and social vulnerabilities, to the economics of adaptation and cost-benefit analyses of different infrastructure concepts and plans (which then ultimately drive final design decisions), to shifting infrastructure technologies and associated energy demands as communities electrify transportation and move from fossil fuel-based energy sources to renewables throughout California. Such information is as critical to making infrastructure decisions as climate information: if future transportation is electrified, how and where should charging stations be built to be safe from climate impacts? If the energy system is reliant on a greater share of microgrids and distributed energy sources, should existing energy infrastructure be retrofitted or decommissioned? And so on.

## Land Use, Demographic, Socioeconomic and Ecological Information

Many types of critical infrastructure have a 20 to 30-year design life cycle, with a useful life that can extend an asset’s life for several more decades if it is well maintained and built appropriately. The communities dependent on, and hosting, these long-lived assets can – and do – change dramatically over these years. In California’s major urban centers, urbanization continued unabated, involving rapid population growth with concomitant increased economic activity – albeit with increasing income disparities, gentrification, housing costs and homelessness. Conversely, in the early 2000s, a number of communities went bankrupt or experienced serious declines in their budgets, either due to population declines, shifts in the economic bases, the 2007-08 recession or other fiscal challenges (e.g., in California, the City of San Bernardino and City of Stockton had to declare bankruptcy). As urban sprawl continues its growth along the edges of the major metropolitan regions, land use patterns shift and infrastructure needs and vulnerabilities

change<sup>[215-217]</sup>; [J. Thorne presentation to the CSIWG, 2018](#)). If income disparities persist or increase further, the number of people living below the poverty level would increase (see the equity profiles highlighted in [Chapter 4](#)). These economic disparities are a key contributor to social vulnerability. Implementation of the Climate-Safe Path for All, as argued in the previous chapter, should be informed by such socioeconomic data as much as by climate data.

When determining whether to retrofit existing or build new infrastructure such social and economic data points must be considered. However, reliable projections of land use, population growth and economic activity are inadequately understood (as discussed in [Chapter 3](#)). Climate change also causes significant (and uncertain) change in the environment. However, major infrastructure projects must mitigate their impacts on the environment and thus need reliable ecological information to inform those environmental mitigation efforts (J. Thorne presentation to the CSIWG 2018). In the past, California has supported some research that has considered various interactive (social, physical and ecological) drivers of climate impacts<sup>[84,218]</sup>, but more such work is needed to cover all of the state.



**Figure 5.2:** As urban sprawl continues its growth along the edges of California’s major metropolitan regions, land use patterns shift and infrastructure needs and vulnerabilities change. Planning climate-safe infrastructure should be informed by forward-looking socioeconomic data as much as climate data. (Photo: Interstate 805 in San Diego, [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0).

## Recommendation 2

*In the past, the State's financial support for its various climate science efforts and decision-support tools has been uneven and insufficient. At a minimum, the State Legislature should provide a permanent source of funding for the State's mandated Climate Change Assessment process, the State's ongoing Climate Change Research Program, and decision-support tools and other assistance that disseminate their findings, so as to meet the needs for improved understanding and forward-looking science information.*

*There are several critical next steps that the State can take to operationalize Recommendation 2 and fill the identified information/research gaps and place California's climate research and assessment efforts on a stronger foundation (see also Table 5.2 and Appendices 1-2):*

1. The State should convene a follow-up panel or process to prioritize the full range of information gaps (bio-physical, engineering, and socio-economic) identified by the CSIWG into high, medium and low priority. For those gaps identified as high priority, the State budget should provide a level of funding and staffing commensurate to fill these gaps—utilizing resources both internal and external to State government – within five years, where scientifically feasible. State agencies should furthermore establish formal and readily implementable guidelines at the agency/programmatic level and at the project level as to what it means to “incorporate climate change” into infrastructure planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance. This guidance should rely on the concepts and suggestions made in this report.
2. With the help of the Strategic Growth Council, the Natural Resources Agency and the California Energy Commission, future renditions of the Climate Change Research Plan should prioritize research needs identified in this report, including identification of the most appropriate agency and outside partners capable of addressing them, and look at all relevant climate, emergency planning and infrastructure-specific funding sources to support these needs.
3. For water infrastructure information needs in particular, the Department of Water Resources (DWR), working with other State agencies as well as a diverse group of stakeholders, has recommended formally establishing and funding a California Climate Science and Monitoring Program in the *Draft California Water Plan Update 2018*. Should this finding be included in the final version of the 2018 update, the State should implement and fully fund this recommendation.
4. The State Budget should provide modest and stable additional funding to expand the State Climatologist Office, in order to realize the full potential of the State Climatologist to engage the climate science community and in turn advise State government on climate change issues.

5. The State need not begin from scratch, but rather can leverage and expand on already ongoing (and in some cases, state-funded) research throughout the state by both public and academic researchers to ensure forward-looking climate science is available at high resolution for use by state and regional or local infrastructure owners. With expected benefits to various State agencies and to projects across the state, the Legislature should provide funding for research in the following areas:
  - (a) Produce statewide IDF curves with associated uncertainty for future climate conditions (especially the high-emissions scenario, to be consistent with the Climate-Safe Path for All described in [Chapter 4](#));
  - (b) Continue to invest in high-resolution climate modeling to better define spatial and temporal structure of extreme events;
  - (c) In addition to studies focusing on future projections, traditional knowledges and paleoclimatology should also be included as funding priorities;
  - (d) Building on the State's previous investment in USGS's CoSMoS model for sea-level rise and storm surge, determine where exactly in the state even more fine-scaled hydrodynamic modeling is needed and focus additional resources there; and
  - (e) Because extreme events are particularly critical to climate-safe infrastructure design, invest in research that merges case studies, ensemble modeling, forecast experiments and sophisticated uncertainty analysis approaches to investigate the likelihood, mechanisms, joint probabilities, predictability of climatic extremes, including worst-case events, that pose significant threats to California's infrastructure.

*In order then to further implement Recommendation 2, the CSIWG identified critical social science information needs that should be filled through State agency-supported research and in partnership with external experts. Some of this information may be available in existing academic research but is not widely known or available to infrastructure planners and familiarity with such information is often lower than with physical science information:*

1. Fine-spatial scale historical demographic information to identify vulnerable populations and to more fully understand the factors that drive social vulnerability;
2. Fine-spatial scale historical information on infrastructure use and detailed understanding of the factors that drove those use patterns;
3. Transit-dependent population information;
4. Projections of demographic shifts under different economic and climate conditions;
5. Projections of climate change impacts (e.g., ecological) that combine climate, economic, demographic and other drivers; and
6. Projections of changes in technology and infrastructure use (e.g., electrification and related changes in energy infrastructure needs and energy use).

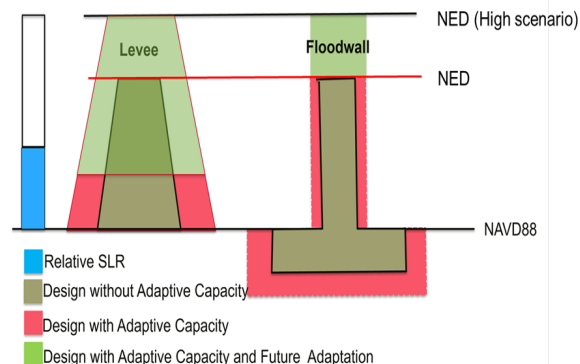


## Adaptive Design and Related Economic Analyses

With climate change, the impacts that infrastructure will have to withstand will change over time, but both the rate and extent of change are uncertain. Most infrastructure incur a large upfront cost that is fixed and sunk. It is fixed in the sense that it is required even before any usage can begin. A highway needs to be built before anyone can use it. It is sunk in that once built, one cannot really recoup this cost by selling it. Once a highway is built, the concrete cannot easily be repurposed for something else that has value. Because of these features, most standard infrastructure projects are not very flexible. They are built for a particular design requirement and cannot easily be adjusted if requirements change in the future.

As we discuss in this report, however, there are a number of ways to ensure even during construction that infrastructure can withstand future conditions, which cannot be fully known. Traditionally, designers required infrastructure to be built with “safety buffers” (see [Chapter 3](#)). For example, if sea level is projected to rise 1 ft by the middle of the century but there’s a 10% chance it rises by 2 ft, the uncertainty could be addressed by requiring a structure to be built with a 2 ft clearance. This is costly as it is building for a lower-probability event but, if it occurs, can be a high-impact event. An alternative approach is to require that infrastructure is built with some degree of modularity so that it can be adaptively adjusted in the future, if needed. In the example above, engineers could design the highway today such that it meets the near-term needs of accommodating just 1 ft of rise, but has the option to build it higher in the future if the 2 ft rise becomes reality. This might involve a stronger base to elevate protective measures or the ability to raise the structure or space to move it back (Figure 5.3). In the first (safety buffer) approach, infrastructure is fixed now to deal with the “worst case” of what is known about the future today. In the second (adaptive) approach, infrastructure is built in a modular fashion to allow for adjustment if it becomes necessary at some point in the future.

Neither adaptive design choices in different infrastructure sectors nor cost estimates of these options – compared to traditional design choices – are well understood at this time. While the shift in this direction has begun ([B. Ayyub, presentation to the CSIWG 2018](#); see also discussion in [Chapter 6](#)), questions arise as to whether traditional cost-benefit analyses adequately capture the value gained for such construction, despite potentially higher initial cost outlays (see [Chapter 8](#)). How to incentivize adaptive design approaches is insufficiently understood and there is still a paucity of research on what cost-benefit methodologies



**Figure 5.3: Cross sections of a levee and a seawall built with foresight and adaptive capacity so that the protective structures can be enlarged in size later if or when sea-level rise requires additional protection. (Source: [Kate White webinar 2018, USACE](#))**

might be best. Research is therefore needed to improve economic models and cost-benefit analysis methodologies to better model the true life-cycle costs of adaptive design. This may entail a paradigm shift as future resilience is not currently prioritized in traditional analyses.

More fundamentally, there are profound knowledge gaps as to how much it might cost to adapt California’s infrastructure to the changing climate. The State should invest in economic research to better understand the growing fiscal risks (and opportunities) from climate change impacts and adaptation, particularly in the context of an integrated infrastructure investment strategy ([Chapter 8](#)).

## Tools, Platforms and Processes to Support the Exchange between Scientists, Engineers and Architects

AB 2800 mandated that the CSIWG review and include recommendations on tools and “a platform or process to facilitate communication between climate scientists, infrastructure engineers [and architects].” CSIWG members discussed their experiences with existing tools, platforms and processes, the strengths and weaknesses of those, and what they see as the most useful path forward for the State.

### Existing Efforts

The CSIWG emphasized the importance of recognizing that there is already ongoing work at various State agencies to facilitate discussion among climate scientists, engineers and architects. During in-state conferences, California’s climate change assessments and research activities, professional association meetings (e.g., annual meetings of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), which in the past

were regularly held in San Francisco) and in other venues and activities, state engineers have actively engaged with climate scientists for many years. In turn, these exchanges have informed the direction and usefulness of climate science for practicing engineers. While difficult to measure, such interactions have led to the formation of lasting and valuable personal relationships and the creation of trust between individual climate scientists and state engineers, providing for informal, two-way consultation on a variety of scientific matters (Box 5.2). Within California, state engineers have also worked closely with state-based climate researchers in several research studies included in the Fourth Assessment (see also [Chapter 2](#)), and such collaboration in future research and assessment activities should be continued and enhanced, starting with the development of user-oriented research agendas to ensure that the science that gets funded fits the most pressing state needs.

State agencies also have made dedicated efforts to bring together climate scientists and state engineers for focused projects and outcomes. For instance, DWR has twice formally assembled a Climate Change Technical Advisory Group (CCTAG), the first to specifically advise the *California Water Plan Update 2009*, and the second – which involved CSIWG member, Dr. Dan Cayan, and Project Team member, Guido Franco – to provide advice on the use of planning approaches and analytical tools in DWR project management. In 2015, this collaboration, chaired by DWR climate scientist Elissa Lynn, produced a widely cited final report, *Perspectives and Guidance for Climate Change Analysis*<sup>[219]</sup>, which directly informed the state’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment<sup>[220]</sup>. This process of bringing together scientists and engineers was also the subject of a poster at the AGU meeting in 2016 ([Appendix 6](#)).

Yet, while DWR’s CCTAG is an excellent example of interdisciplinary coordination, these types of efforts are still not commonplace, largely because they require significant resources (money, time and people) and sustained commitment from the lead agency and the participating scientists to ensure a continued effort and actionable outcomes. Moreover, the purview of the CCTAG was focused on just one sector; but this level of effort needs to be replicated across all critical infrastructure sectors (transportation, energy, buildings, telecommunications etc.) in order to advance climate-safe infrastructure across the State’s assets.

The challenge is also bigger than “simply” bringing together climate scientists, engineers and architects. Throughout the CSIWG’s discussions, it became evident that big sources of uncertainty or lack of knowledge

are not only about climate change but are related to the subject matters of other disciplines, such as economics, land use, demographics and behavioral science as discussed above. Similarly, discussions on policy design, governance, implementation of new methods through workforce development and training, and concerns of ensuring social equity, are also critical to the discussion. Thus, there may not be a single platform or process, and for any to be effective, the engagement must include representatives from all of these disciplines and areas of expertise. It will take time for participants to understand each other’s language and concerns, thus sustained efforts will actually be more cost-effective than one-off engagements (Box 5.3).

### Box 5.2: Unsung Heroes

While mostly unsung, there is a long and rich history of the state’s engineers communicating and working with climate scientists. In 1987, Mr. Maury Roos, Chief Hydrologist for DWR, presented a paper entitled “Possible Changes in California Snowmelt Patterns” at the Fourth Pacific Climate (PACCLIM) workshop in Pacific Grove, California – one of the early investigations into the effects of a changing climate on California’s water resources. Another example is Guido Franco, a licensed mechanical engineer with the California Energy Commission (CEC). Mr. Franco has played a major role in each of the state’s four climate change assessments (2006, 2009, 2012 and 2018), mandated by former Governor Schwarzenegger’s Executive Order S-3-05. State engineers, including Mr. Franco, are also members of the editorial board for California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment. Mr. Franco is a key contributor to the state’s Climate Change Research Program, as is Dr. Michael Anderson, a licensed civil engineer with DWR, who also serves as California’s official State Climatologist.



Clockwise from left; Marty Ralph, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Michael Anderson, State Climatologist with DWR, Jay Jasperse, Sonoma County Water Agency, and Jeanine Jones, Interstate Resources Manager at DWR, during a break at an October 2016 workshop on drought vulnerability in southern California. (Photo: Kelly M. Grow, DWR, used with permission)

### Box 5.3: California and the Sustained National Climate Assessment Process

During the development of the Third National Climate Assessment (NCA3, delivered in 2014), a new concept was developed – namely, the idea of a sustained national climate assessment<sup>[221]</sup>. The idea of a sustained assessment was in part a response to the “stop-and-go” approach to previous national climate assessments, mandated by federal law since 1990 to be delivered to Congress every four years, but for a number of reasons not delivered with this regularity<sup>[222]</sup>. At the same time, many information users and decision-makers increasingly ask for state-of-the-art data and usable, actionable knowledge syntheses, which were not being delivered through the national assessment reports.

Since then, the notion of a sustained assessment has been significantly developed further ([see also Moss 2018 webinar](#)). While assessments in California typically involve the production of new research, more commonly assessments serve to synthesize existing science and critically assess the state of knowledge so as to provide reliable guidance to decision-makers on what is well understood and what is less well known at a given point in time (examples of this approach include the NCA and the IPCC assessments).

The sustained assessment idea (although still evolving) describes an ongoing platform for interactions between researchers and science users, drawing heavily on partnerships of federal agencies, research institutions, science-based non-governmental organizations, professional societies and others to provide knowledge syntheses and assessments that are driven by user needs. If traditionally assessments focused only on the state of science, a sustained assessment could also include assessments of the state of practice that is of interest to practitioners (e.g., to support the search for innovative or best practices). Similarly, the traditional sector or regional focus could be augmented with an emphasis on implementation challenges (such as updating codes, assessing financial risks of different adaptation approaches or design challenges).

California could greatly benefit from actively participating in shaping and implementing the sustained assessment process. Opportunities include the following:

- **Active participation in the sustained assessment process:** As the sustained assessment consortium of civil society and State/local/tribal groups is launched, California should be actively represented in the consortium and process. The consortium will identify, develop and evaluate sources of reliable, relevant and actionable information to support action, and to contribute to integration of knowledge and scientific understanding. California will benefit both from ensuring its own research is included, thus illustrating its national leadership, and from learning from the work done by others.
- **Convene sustained conversations (e.g., communities of practice involving scientists, engineers and architects) about the challenges, opportunities and benefits of applying climate change science (broadly defined) in infrastructure design:** This could also involve direct engagement with professional societies to ensure a direct link into entities that shape standards and guidelines at the national level.
- **Foster innovation in the applied science/engineering community:** As this report shows, the engineering community is not only challenged to adopt new scientific information into its traditional ways of doing things, but – over time – to transform its ways of doing business. There are many dimensions of these novel practices and engineers and architects across the nation can and should learn about and from them. The sustained assessment process is one way to track and share innovative practices initiated in California and elsewhere.
- **Improve linkages between state-level assessments and NCA reports:** Many states are undertaking their own assessments, but when they are not aligned in time with the national assessment report cycles, much of what is being learned at the state level is not shared nationally and vice versa.<sup>2</sup> Thus, coordinating timing, ensuring regional representation and reducing overly burdensome demands on researchers participating in both assessments would improve state-national assessment linkages.

<sup>2</sup> California's Fourth Climate Assessment is concluded and released publicly one month after the deadline for inclusion of papers in the Fourth National Climate Assessment, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars of State-funded research not being able to be included in the NCA4. The Fourth Assessment reports that were accepted for publication prior to June 15 and personally brought to the attention of NCA4 author teams are an exception.



## What Makes Platforms Successful?

Based on a literature and web review and meeting discussions, the CSIWG identified the following five interconnected criteria that both build on each other and are equally critical to developing effective science-practice processes in support of building climate-safe infrastructure.

- 1. Establishing clearly defined goals and priorities.** Before commencing discussion via any means (tools, process or platform), the CSIWG felt that the critical first step is to identify the goals and priorities for the discussion and to have these bounded by specific outcomes. Working Group members agreed that any effort to create a Climate-Safe Infrastructure platform should have one or more specific products to work towards (see, e.g., discussion on a California-specific Manual of Practice below).
- 2. Engaging the right participants.** The CSIWG highlighted the importance of careful curation of platform participants and discussants. Experts from various disciplines must be included, as well as participants who are knowledgeable on the technical or practical details as well as those who can work well across areas of expertise and who can help facilitate conversation (these might not always be the same people). It is also important to ensure that all participants recognize that they both contribute to and get something out of the process (see discussion below on continuing the work of the CSIWG).
- 3. Sustaining a deliberative process and the funds to support it.** Identifying the process and requirements for developing climate-safe infrastructure is not something that can be accomplished in a handful of sporadic, ad-hoc meetings. The science is ever-evolving as are engineering methodologies. Thus, as goals are set, consideration of the timeline required to meet those goals should be commensurate. For ultimate success, these discussions must also include a sustained source of funding, which is especially important to ensure equitable social inclusion and participation for all relevant voices (see social equity discussions in [Chapter 4](#) and implementation needs in [Chapter 9](#)).
- 4. Being able to form robust and trusting relationships.** In the most successful examples, CSIWG members identified the development of trust among participants one of the most important components of successful collaboration, resulting in useful products and outcomes. This requires having the opportunity to engage with others on a consistent basis for a specified period of time, which will likely require commitment of funding from agency budgets, NGOs, philanthropic organizations, private sector,

professional or academic societies, or ideally some combination of all (Figure 5.4).

- 5. Prioritizing transparency.** Transparency builds trust. To many engineers, climate models are black boxes they do not understand. To many scientists and non-governmental outsiders, the same is true for government decision-making processes. As a result, data and decisions are suspect and less likely to be used or accepted. Transparency and trust-building in the co-creation of actionable scientific information for application in infrastructure design and planning is thus a critical pre-condition for use of data and tools.

The success of the DWR CCTAG example described above highlights many of these criteria<sup>[220]</sup>. DWR prioritized this work and provided some financial support via travel stipends for CCTAG members. The CCTAG members were also committed to the process and were willing to donate their time and effort to help advance the goals of the group, which were well-defined from the inception. Additionally, DWR highlighted the identification of the “right” mix of experts who developed a trusting relationship due to the sustained nature of the effort, which spanned three years.

The Working Group reviewed a number of existing platforms that have the goal of linking science to practical applications. Examples are shown in Table 5.3, yet none resolve the challenges discussed during the CSIWG deliberations. There was consensus among the CSIWG that continued opportunities for scientists, engineers and architects to interact was critical to advancing climate-safe infrastructure in California, but that development of a new platform was not necessary. Indeed, the CSIWG preferred building on existing platforms that could be bolstered to include dedicated time, effort and funding to address the recommendations identified in this report.



**Figure 5.4: Developing trust among diverse participants with different types of expertise and knowledges is one of the most important components of successful collaborations. (Photo: DWR, used with permission)**

**Table 5.3: Sample of Platforms Available for Exchange Between Scientists, Engineers and Architects**

<b>Data portals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cal-Adapt</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">USGS Coastal Storm Modeling System/Our Coast Our Future</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Climate Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">WeatherShift™</a></li> </ul>
<b>Tools platforms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Digital Coast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Resilience Toolkit</a></li> </ul>
<b>Interactive forums</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Thriving Earth Exchange</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Resilience Dialogues</a></li> <li>• Professional Society Meetings (e.g., AGU, ASAP, ASCE regional meetings)</li> <li>• <a href="#">California Adaptation Forum</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Adaptation Forum</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Academy of Sciences – Disasters Roundtable</a></li> </ul>
<b>Interactive forums</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">California Adaptation Clearinghouse</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Georgetown Climate Center Adaptation Clearinghouse</a></li> </ul>

While there are an increasing number of scientists who speak at professional society meetings and practicing engineers and architects who address scientific audiences, the CSIWG did not find any standing science-engineering/architecture platforms dedicated to addressing the infrastructure design challenges arising from climate change. Some of the data portals and platforms listed in Table 5.3 were not known to or are not regularly (if at all) frequented by engineers and architects, including Cal-Adapt. Thus, they should be viewed as opportunities that could be used to foster better and more frequent interactions across the science-practice interface. In addition, scientific data must be brought to those data portals that engineers and architects already use.

One example is to make better use of the California Adaptation Forum (CAF). That conference already attracts local and regional practitioners as well as a range of consultants grappling with many of the climate adaptation considerations the CSIWG discussed, but engineers, architects and climate scientists do not attend that event in significant numbers. Similarly, practitioners on their part, do not usually attend the technical conferences generally convened by professional societies and academic organizations. Yet, as witnessed by the important discussions elicited during Working Group meetings and

*Deliberate, enhanced and sustained engagement of scientists with professional societies is a critical area on which to focus.*

webinars that engaged a wide range of external experts with deep experience of working on the ground – this type of transdisciplinary dialogue is needed and critical. During future CAFs, the State could hold workshops specifically focused on discussions among state engineers and architects, physical and social climate scientists, local practitioners and professional societies to increase such transdisciplinary interactions and exchanges.

Deliberate, enhanced and sustained engagement of scientists with professional societies where engineers and architects already gather is another area on which to focus. Sharing the experience and process as well as outcomes of California’s CSIWG will be of great interest to professional societies and other states. As we described in [Chapter 1](#), this type of engagement has begun during the life of the CSIWG, but should be sustained and deepened over time.

## Tools in Support of Climate-Safe Infrastructure

In response to the AB 2800 mandate to “consider and investigate the information and institutional barriers to integrating projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design,” the CSIWG also discussed available tools – both throughout California, as well as nationally and globally – that provide climate science information. Tools identified during Working Group meetings and through external data-gathering are listed in [Appendix 5](#).

There are indeed many tools that have been developed that aim to connect practitioners to climate science, with the hope of advancing climate adaptation. As with the discussion on platforms and conferences from the previous section, however, these tools may not be the ones that state engineers and architects are likely to use. Moreover, there is at this point an overabundance of different types of tools that are variations of each other, with slightly different intended audiences and information. For instance, K. Baja pointed out during the [webinar on tools](#) that there are 4,300 green infrastructure tools and resources available to practitioners. Additional common challenges with regard to tools include:

- Most practitioners are unaware of available tools;
- Tools are ill-designed, difficult to use and there is typically no online or in-person support available to help practitioners use the tools effectively;
- Tools do not meet the specific needs of users (e.g., answer cost of action/inaction questions);
- Information available through tools does not connect to existing processes or reporting requirements;
- Tools do not help practitioners address real-life complexities;
- There is no way of knowing which tools are reliable or preferable to use over others; and
- Tools are for single purposes, without helping practitioners connect to the next step in the planning or design process.

While there remains considerable discussion on which data are available and if they are at the right scale for engineering projects (see [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#)), there was consensus among the CSIWG that development of new tools that are specifically focused on the climate science/engineering interface is not necessary, and maybe not even desirable. Rather, CSIWG members felt that existing tools could be modified and/or expanded to incorporate the level of information that would be most relevant for infrastructure-scale projects. One option is to modify Cal-Adapt to answer engineers’ and architects’ information needs.

Critical to the development and updating of any tool, however, is ensuring that tools meet the needs of end-users. To achieve this goal:

- Tools must be co-designed with the intended end user;
- There must be direct support and step-by-step guidance for using the tool appropriately; and
- The tools must effectively integrate social equity.

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*Existing tools could be modified and/or expanded to incorporate the level of information that would be most relevant for infrastructure-scale projects.*

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## Summary: Platform, Tools and Data to Support the Climate-Safe Path for All

As described above, with important State policies in place, the tremendous breadth of research that has been funded through the state’s climate assessments, as well as the conferences, platforms and tools already available or under development, key elements of an innovative and effective data and analytics system to support the building of climate-safe infrastructure are already in place and now must be tied together and augmented, not reinvented or replaced. Recommendation 3 intends to help the State put the pieces together.

Whether it is through a national scale connection to the Sustained Climate Assessment, or through augmentation of the state’s adaptation clearinghouse, including its Technical Advisory Group, or the better use of gatherings such as the CAF, formalized processes should be developed in which state engineers and architects have deliberate and sustained interaction with physical and social climate change scientists from diverse research institutions, as well as professional organizations and other experts and stakeholders (see, for example, [Chapter 8](#) for the engagement of financial experts).



## Recommendation 3

*Because of the diversity of State agencies, types of infrastructure and their vulnerabilities, and the specific needs for climate science, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all recipe for State agencies to engage with the climate change science community. That said, the State budget should provide full funding to State infrastructure agencies so they can dedicate time and support to their engineers and architects to substantively and collaboratively interact with climate scientists and other relevant experts in the creation of useful advice, guidance and tools on a regular and ongoing basis, in a way and at a level appropriate to their needs.*

***There are a number of steps the State can take in operationalizing this recommendation, including:***

1. Expand timely options for state engineers and architects to travel outside of California to participate in professional conferences. The knowledge and talent to address the complex issue of global climate change often lies beyond the borders of California.
2. Develop a prioritized and expedited process for State agencies to leverage the expertise at universities and other research institutions in order to engage climate scientists on specific projects and studies.
3. Building on emerging efforts, Cal-Adapt should become more useful to sectors beyond the energy sector. Through an engaged, user-needs driven and broadly inclusive process, Cal-Adapt – and sister tools – could be updated to provide California-specific physical and social science information at the scale and resolution needed by state engineers and architects. Concerted outreach will be needed to raise awareness of this information among state engineers and architects. In addition, common data portals used by engineers should create links to Cal-Adapt to further raise awareness of available data in those places that engineers and architects already frequent.
4. In addition, relevant international and national science products and data sets should be more easily accessible (i.e., linked to) through Cal-Adapt to bring them to the attention of California data users.
5. All state geophysical research results should be consolidated into a single location (e.g., the [State Open Data Portal](#)) and mechanisms should be created to regularly update these geophysical data (see Glossary). This would entail developing active data integration and consolidation policies and procedures to ensure users have access to all the state's best thinking on our changing geophysical environment. This should begin with linking all state-generated data sets and providing a common library to access and manage data. In the future, open data, data sharing and data quality policies should be developed that brings scientists' research results into the common platform, thus making continuously-updated information available to users.
6. Equally important to the quality of the data served up on Cal-Adapt, once the tool is established, tool developers (within academia, consultancies, or State agencies) should provide training to end users to help them become familiar with and supportive of innovation and best practices related to sustainability and resilience, including support for collaborative processes. This will be essential to its success and use by the engineering and architectural community.

# 6 Project Pipeline: Pre-Development and Prioritization

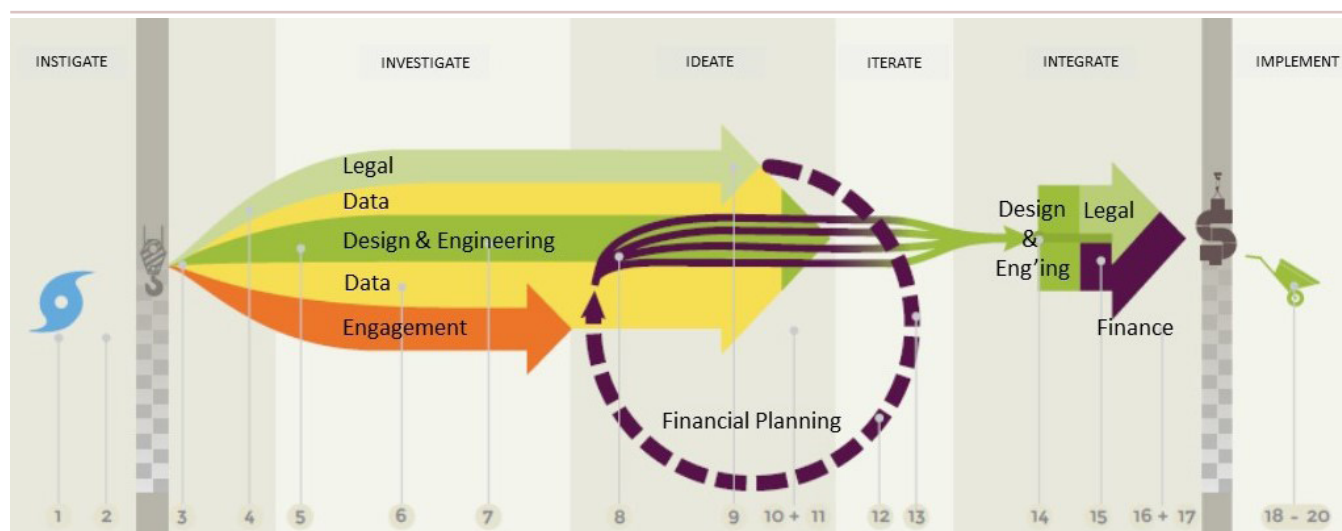
## Introduction

There are a number of critical steps that must be taken to develop a single, linked or bundled set of projects (i.e., a “project pipeline”), that can attract financing from lenders or investors. Only well-advanced (“shovel-ready”) and clearly-prioritized projects get implemented on the ground.

To realize the vision of The Climate-Safe Path for All introduced in [Chapter 4](#), it is important in the pre-development process to take forward-looking climate science, social equity and systems thinking into account. Calls for improvements in the pre-development phase are becoming widespread<sup>[223]</sup>, but the approach we rely on

here was proposed by re:focus partners in their Re:Invest Guide<sup>[224]</sup> <sup>1</sup> and has been adopted and recommended in the Financing Guide to project teams involved in the San Francisco Bay Area Resilient by Design competition<sup>[225]</sup>. While none of the analytical, design, financial planning or legally required steps (e.g., permitting, environmental review) are omitted in the re-envisioned approach, the sequence of steps and the systemic approach taken is far better aligned with the Climate-Safe Path proposed here than traditional approaches (Figure 6.1).

Pre-development is more than a technical planning and design exercise. If one broadens the focus from a single project to a statewide, sectoral or cross-sectoral and



**Figure 6.1: The six phases of the pre-development process are far better aligned with the systemic approach proposed in this report compared to traditional project development approaches (individual steps explained in re:focus partners 2015) (Source: adapted from re:focus partners 2015<sup>[224]</sup>; used with permission)**

<sup>1</sup> Readers interested in the full report and a detailed treatment of the steps in the proposed approach including case examples can access the guide at: [http://www.reinvestinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/RE\\_invest\\_Roadmap-For-Resilience.pdf](http://www.reinvestinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/RE_invest_Roadmap-For-Resilience.pdf).

systems-oriented infrastructure investment strategy that will be implemented in stages over time, with deliberate movement toward upgrading existing infrastructure and adding new infrastructure that accounts for climate change, then a prioritized line-up of well-integrated projects needs to be developed. And, if the goal is to create climate-safe infrastructure for all as this report proposes – a perspective that takes social equity seriously – then stakeholder engagement is not an add-on late in the project development process, but an integral part of pre-development from the conceptual start in meaningful and creative ways all the way to construction. The difference lies in what questions drive the planning and design process and what problems are being solved. The questions we ask either focus us narrowly or open up to more creative possibilities of solving infrastructure and related problems.

Similar opportunities exist for state infrastructure planning. Traditional single sector-driven projects tend not to be able to take advantage of multi-sector benefits; roles and responsibilities cannot be shared; financing opportunities are more limited; and communities tend to benefit less. While more complex and potentially more time consuming (especially when this approach is still new to participants), doing more of the same will result in more of the same: underinvestment, a high risk of negative unintended consequences and political resistance from those most directly affected. There are, in short, risks involved in both approaches, but only the former is aligned with the Climate-Safe Path for All.

## Recommendation 4

*During the all-important pre-development phase, projects are conceptualized, planned and designed. The State budget should improve this process by building staff capacity and greatly increasing project funding to better account for a changing and uncertain climate, by addressing social inequity, and by assessing and accounting for the true costs and benefits of integrated projects across their full life-cycle.*

Below we note the emerging shift in thinking in the engineering and architecture communities already underway that points to climate-conscious building in support of this overarching recommendation, then describe ways to operationalize it through a more systems-oriented project development process that takes stakeholder engagement and social equity seriously. In the latter part of this chapter we introduce and recommend that engineers and architects use a number of more sophisticated methodologies increasingly available to:

- Better account for the true costs and benefits of infrastructure over the entire life of the infrastructure along an adaptive but uncertain pathway;
- Screen for climate risks so as to determine the best assessment approach to use;
- Assess risks probabilistically and – where that is not possible – still arrive at a robust decision; and
- Design infrastructure in the face of uncertainty.



## Infrastructure Planning in a Changing Climate

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There is consensus among climate scientists that weather and climate stationarity is no longer a good predictor for the future (as discussed thoroughly in [Chapter 2](#)). All types of infrastructure in California (and in many other places) are now being exposed to record high temperatures, prolonged and more extreme heat waves, droughts, wildfires, unpredictable deluge rain events, sea level rise (SLR) as well as mud and debris flows. While these are acute extreme events, they serve as exemplars of what infrastructure in California will experience more frequently and for longer periods of time in the future. Existing and new infrastructure must be able to withstand this new future – a future that was not planned for previously. At a minimum, it is thus critical for forward-looking climate information to be included in updates of existing standards and guidelines while new standards are being developed so that new infrastructure can be designed to be climate safe, as we described in [Chapter 4](#).

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*At a minimum, it is critical for forward-looking climate information to be included in updates of existing standards and guidelines while new standards are being developed.*

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In recent years, there has been a growing recognition within the engineering and architecture community that, despite challenges with using forward-looking climate information, it is important to develop methodologies and practices for doing so. In 2015, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) published a report entitled *Adapting Infrastructure and Civil Engineering Practice to a Changing Climate*<sup>[178]</sup>. In this report, the society provides four recommendations to start moving in this direction:

1. Engineers<sup>2</sup> and climate scientists must engage in cooperative research;
2. Practicing engineers, project stakeholders, policy-makers and decision-makers should be better informed about uncertainty;
3. Engineers need a new paradigm for a world in which climate is changing; and
4. Critical infrastructure most at risk should be identified.

<sup>2</sup> While the ASCE report is geared primarily to licensed engineers, we view these recommendations as transferable to architects.

There is still, however, considerable resistance to, and questions about, doing this. A U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from 2016, entitled *Improved Federal Coordination Could Facilitate Use of Forward-Looking Climate Information in Design Standards, Building Codes, and Certifications*, identified several of these challenges. As the GAO<sup>[226]</sup>, pp. 18-19, notes:

“[Representatives from standard setting organizations indicated that] technical challenges include difficulties in identifying the best available forward-looking climate information and incorporating it into standards, codes, and certifications. For example, representatives from one organization said that climate models provide a wide range of possible temperatures that is difficult to use in their standards..., that they need forward-looking climate information for a site-specific project area rather than at the country or state level, which is what is available from climate models..., or that they needed additional detailed information, such as whether any projected increased precipitation would occur evenly throughout the year or in concentrated bursts.”

Moreover, as discussions among CSIWG members revealed, many engineers and architects do not feel confident enough to be able to defend climate science in debates with skeptical project sponsors.<sup>3</sup> Because cost is always an issue, arguing for potentially higher upfront outlays to protect against an uncertain (climate) future requires not only solid understanding of climate science but a considerable degree of mastery of approaches for decision-making under deep uncertainty, neither of which are standard components of engineers’ and architects’ professional education.

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*Many engineers and architects do not feel confident enough to be able to defend climate science in debates with skeptical project sponsors.*

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Below, we address some of these challenges (beyond the climate science already discussed in [Chapter 2](#)) to equip engineers and architects with concepts and tools that help address these obstacles.

<sup>3</sup> In early 2018, the ASCE published [Policy Statement 556](#), which recommends that public and private infrastructure owners incorporate sustainability principles (including resilience) into infrastructure projects; the policy also advocates for owners to become more aware and better educated about the need for sustainability with the intent to lessen climate and sustainability skepticism.

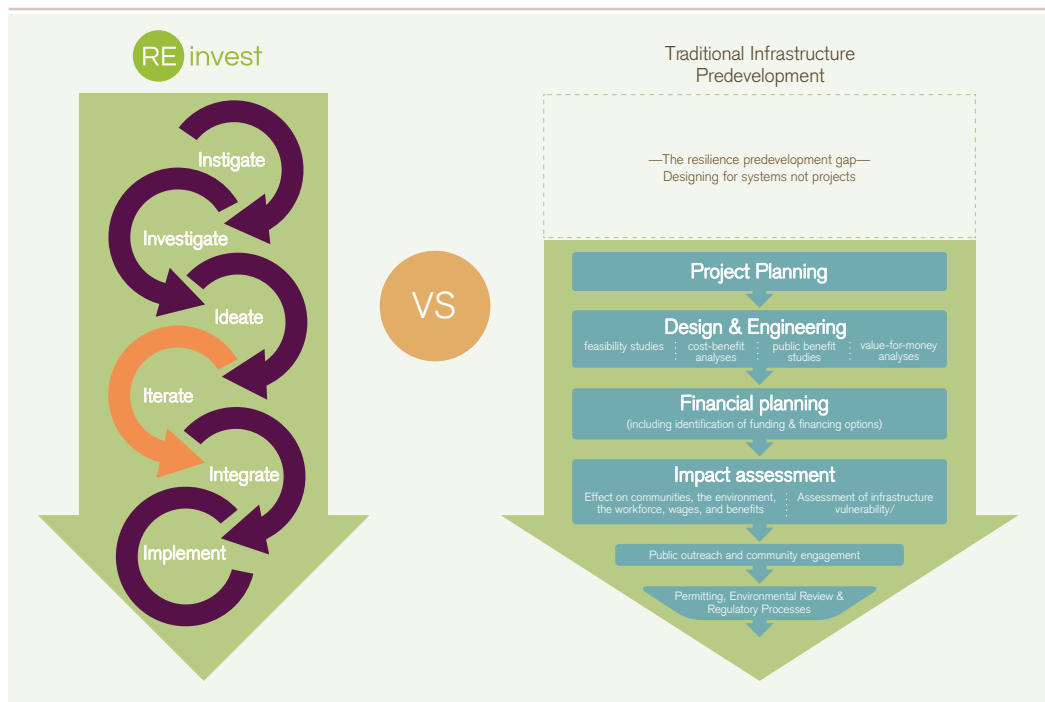


Figure 6.2: Comparison of a traditional versus Re:Invest's 6 I's infrastructure pre-development process (Source: re:focus partners 2015<sup>[224]</sup>, used with permission)

## Pre-Development

During pre-development, infrastructure projects go from being just an idea to being well-laid plans and designs ready to be built. Often supported by short-term funding from general funds and grants, pre-development determines the goals of the project, assesses their economic and technical feasibility, explores and decides among different design options, and involves all necessary components of project planning – including developing financial plans to make projects investor-ready. As Figure 6.2 illustrates, traditional approaches to project development tend to be narrowly project or sector-focused and do not make room for design choices with broad, multi-sector benefits. Stakeholders come late into the process, and typically only after design choices have been made.

The modified step-by-step process proposed by re:focus partners<sup>[224]</sup> reshuffles the order of steps, remains open to reiteration to ensure greater stakeholder engagement and satisfaction emphasizes cross-sector integration to solve multiple problems at once, opens up additional funding sources and reaps more benefits. “Examples of this approach include integrating broadband or fiber networks into water system upgrades, running utilities through new sea water berms, or finding ways to create new energy or water efficiencies. These approaches bring conventional revenue-generating infrastructure into a larger portfolio of resilience solutions to help fund project implementation”<sup>[225]</sup>.

## Effective Stakeholder Engagement

This reworked pre-development approach emphasizes the early building of “communities of benefit” as a source of ideas, funding and political support. Some partners will be directly affected, for example through job opportunities, environmental co-benefits of infrastructure investments, improved property values in neighborhoods with upgraded infrastructure (i.e., measurable benefits) and greater safety from climate-related risks (i.e., the absence of damages, a calculable benefit). In widening circles out from the direct beneficiaries, other partners may benefit in indirect, but still tangible ways such as from greater economic activity and hence greater tax revenues.

During the Climate-Safe Infrastructure [webinar series](#), numerous speakers reiterated the importance of engagement. Similarly, subject matter experts invited to CSIWG meetings emphasized this point. While the arguments are well known and often repeated, the fact that they were made so frequently suggests that early, repeated and meaningful stakeholder engagement is not common or sophisticated practice yet. Dr. Beverly Scott ([presentation at CSIWG meeting, June 2018](#)) in particular emphasized the importance of engagement of communities most directly affected by infrastructure projects. She emphasized that social equity should not be thought of as an “initiative” or an “add-on” to projects but as the heart of any project and the underlying policies and programs that drive them. Benefits to communities is what

## Recommendation 5

*Difficult decisions will have to be made and the impacts of potential policies or decisions on different stakeholder groups are complex and challenging to assess. It is critical therefore to engage all affected stakeholders in a meaningful way, from early on and throughout any decision-making process, using the seven principles of equitable planning and decision-making.<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Growth Council is well positioned to take a range of steps to encourage, improve and provide guidance on effective stakeholder engagement in the context of infrastructure development.*

Central components necessary to operationalize this recommendation to advance effective stakeholder engagement in state infrastructure projects include the following:

1. Create opportunities for timely and meaningful engagement by a wide range of stakeholders to help develop and evaluate potential policies and programs;
2. Develop guidelines (or even requirements) for effective stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects;
3. Encourage agency staff to attend relevant conferences and meetings to make their constituents aware of proposed guidelines and to solicit comments;
4. Hold trainings for stakeholder engagement facilitators; and
5. Track progress on social equity (e.g., by using the questions and indicators proposed in Box 4.2).

infrastructure should be about. In her words, “If you do not center what is important, it will not happen later.” She considered this necessary shift in thinking a “culture shift” in engineering.

If equitable climate safety is the outcome of the Climate-Safe Path for All, achieving it requires, as Chione Flegal put it, “shared decision-making that is rooted in transparency and a commitment to changing inequitable policies and practices, intended and unintended.” Engineers and architects and their project partners must thus see community leaders as experts in and of their communities. Failing to include them can result in unintended harm, while inclusion can create buy-in. She warned, however, that “community engagement and partnerships are necessary vehicles towards achieving equity, but in and of themselves, do not achieve equity.” To achieve equity requires tangible changes in policy, projects, decision-making processes and outcomes.

Identification of relevant project outcomes – through meaningful engagement – thus must begin by co-creating a shared, community-endorsed vision that is at once broad enough to matter and specific enough to shape decisions. Defining needs, identifying shared priorities, assessing opportunities and availability of resources as well as obstacles to access necessary resources, and joint

setting of priorities (different ones for different scales of action) are critical steps in the process. Starting small as part of bigger projects can satisfy immediate needs and build trust. Effective communication to link initial steps and small successes with the goals of the larger pathway to the shared visions is equally important as any one project alone may not achieve the shared priorities and vision, but multiple projects together can.

Public participation in State planning processes can be very time consuming and impact work and family schedules. In the development of the 2017 Safeguarding California Plan Update, the Natural Resources Agency benefited greatly from organized input from a coalition of environmental justice and community-based organization that were supported by philanthropic funding. The State should build on this model by both funding its own representatives to prioritize stakeholder engagement and by working with philanthropic funders to support funded participation of these organizations in infrastructure policy and project development. These external organizations often also provide the added and immeasurable benefit of being trusted by the impacted communities, which can lead to more efficient and effective engagement.

Importantly, training will be required on each of the above-mentioned principles and approaches to ensure that practitioners are employing these strategies appropriately.



## Climate-Screening Tool

In [Chapter 4](#) we articulated a way to prioritize infrastructure projects (Figure 4.6). One of the prioritization criteria was exposure to climate risks. How should this get operationalized?

It begins by requiring an assessment of how future changes in climate might affect the infrastructure. In some cases, it is relatively straightforward to assess the potential effects of climate and account for this in the design of infrastructure. For example, warming temperatures are not likely to cause a significant increase in additional heat stress of existing road materials in the coastal areas of California over the next 20 years (at which time they will be resurfaced and the assessment would be repeated). In other cases, the effects of climate may be complex, and the infrastructure design could be particularly sensitive to potential changes. Flood control infrastructure, for example, can be highly sensitive to changes in hydrology. Recognizing that different infrastructures need different climate vulnerability evaluations, we recommend that California develop a screening process that can be used to guide how much climate analysis is necessary in order to design climate-safe infrastructure in an efficient way.

Drawing on other screening processes in the literature and in practice<sup>[227-230]</sup>, the CSIWG proposes a simple, straightforward three-tiered approach (Figure 6.4).

The first level – Initial Screening – consists of two steps: (1) defining a performance threshold for infrastructure and (2) assessing qualitatively whether current or future climate change – both the average changes as well the potential projected extremes (particularly on the high-emissions scenario) – might degrade performance beyond thresholds. The result of a Level 1 evaluation could be a simple checklist indicating that different aspects of the infrastructure as designed would not be sensitive to plausible changes in climate over the lifetime of the infrastructure (i.e., lifetime = design life + reasonable period over which well-maintained infrastructure is expected to function). If the qualitative assessment reveals potential sensitivity, then the evaluation would move to Level 2.

The second level – Climate Stress Test – would involve some quantitative analysis. First, it would evaluate quantitatively the system performance over a wide range of plausible current and future climate parameters (again, averages and extremes from a range of global climate models), with particular emphasis – in concordance with the Climate-Safe Path – on climate impacts under a high-emissions pathway. Second, the analysts would compare any identified vulnerabilities to available climate information to ascertain how plausible the identified vulnerabilities are. If the identified risks appear low, then the evaluation would stop with a climate risk statement documenting the findings. If the risks are found to be high, then the third level of assessment would be required.

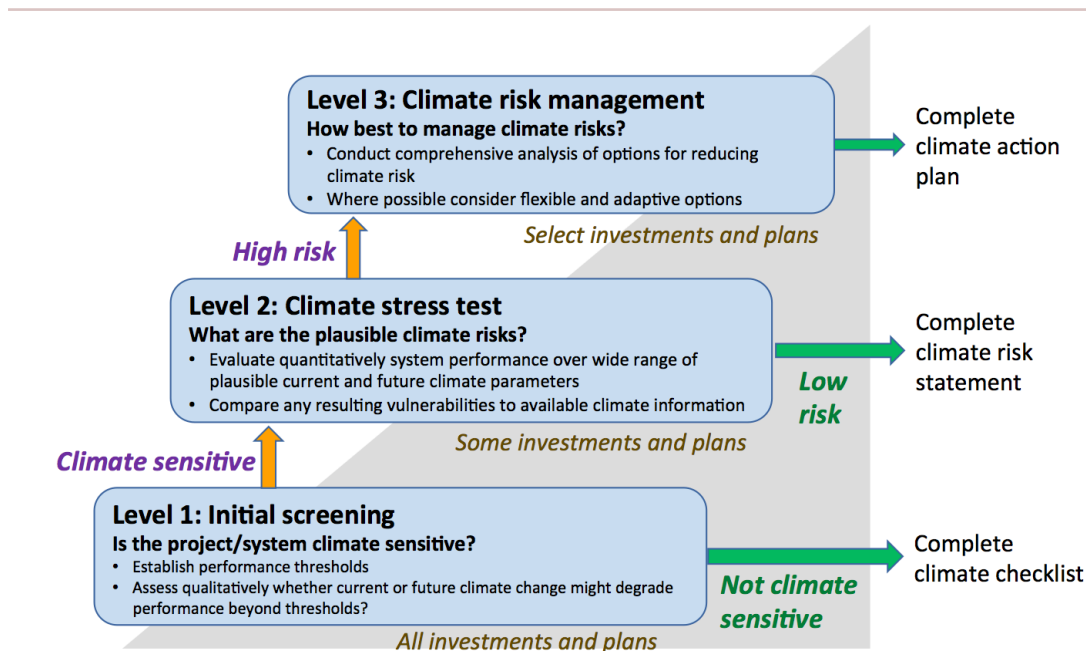


Figure 6.4 The proposed three-tiered screening process (Source: Robert Lempert, used with permission)

The third level – Climate Risk Management – requires a comprehensive evaluation of options for reducing the identified risks, including alternative designs that are flexible and adaptable (see further discussion below). As future climate is deeply uncertain, i.e., it is not easily described through probability statements, alternative methods for the analysis of options are required (see Box 6.1 below on decision-making under deep uncertainty). The results of the third level of analysis would be a climate action plan that describes a modified infrastructure design that is shown to be climate-safe through the combination of a number of different strategies (Box 4.1 in [Chapter 4](#)) over a wide range of plausible climate futures.

To further operationalize how California can move toward climate-safe infrastructure – both at an agency and at a project level, the CSIWG recommends that infrastructure planners, engineers and architects employ this climate screening tool to identify assets that require an extensive climate action plan. Together with the other prioritization criteria outlined in [Chapter 4](#) (infrastructure investment gap and potential to reduce social equity), this will help move toward a priority list of projects that will make a significant contribution to realizing the Climate-Safe Path for All.

### Project Feasibility: Calculating Cost Effectiveness of Climate-Safe Infrastructure

Assessing the economic feasibility of infrastructure projects is often the first step after a project has been proposed. As we argued earlier, the traditional approach has been too narrow, and often predetermines certain “solutions” before a more comprehensive analysis has been undertaken.

Over the course of the work of the CSIWG, members discussed and learned about a number of ways in which traditional benefit cost analysis (BCA) is limited. For example, BCA:

- Focuses on easily monetized costs and benefits, but externalizes or ignores many more difficult-to-assess benefits and costs;
- Often is carried out only for the initial cost (capital outlay) and does not consider operations and maintenance (O&M) costs over the entire lifecycle of the infrastructure;
- Significantly discounts the future (a values choice, often reflected in signals from capital markets);
- Is not well suited for infrastructure using adaptive design approaches over the course of many decades in order to better deal with uncertainty in scientific projections; and
- Is often narrowly project-focused, rather than system-focused and typically does not account for costs and benefits that accrue to other sectors.

Taken together, these problems result in upfront costs of protective measures being overstated while the systemwide benefits of taking them are underestimated.

There are better tools available, but these are not always widely known or appropriately applied. Over the course of CSIWG deliberations and webinar presentations, the Working Group learned of several more sophisticated alternatives:

- The life-cycle cost and benefit assessment tool developed by the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure at Harvard University (a compliment to the increasingly commonly used ENVISION tool<sup>4</sup> (see also<sup>[231]</sup>);
- Real Options Analysis – an economic cost-benefit approach that operationalizes the notion of adaptation pathways from an economic perspective by combining decision tree analysis with BCA;
- Robust decision-making – an iterative analytic process, often used in engagements with stakeholders, designed to support decision making under deep uncertainty by trying to identify strategies that work cost-effectively over a wide range of climate futures and other decision-relevant factors; and
- Triple bottom line analysis, which evaluates cost effectiveness based on social, environmental and economic criteria.

While by no means a complete list, these alternative approaches complement and enhance traditional BCA and illustrate that more sophisticated economic tools are available but not commonly used – to the detriment of the ultimate choices made and outcomes achieved. These tools must be brought to engineers’, architects’, and project managers’ attention, and those individuals must learn when and how to use such tools appropriately.

The CSIWG sees an important opportunity for the State to improve the benefit-cost assessment approaches it uses. Instead of conventional BCA, the State should use more sophisticated methods that account for:

- The full infrastructure life-cycle, not just initial capital outlays;
- The cost of inaction;
- The deep uncertainty in both climatic and non-climatic aspects of the future;
- Adaptation pathways and the adaptive implementation of design choices;
- Benefits and costs to systems, not just projects; and
- The social costs and benefits to ensure that equity is explicitly accounted for.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see: <http://economics.zofnass.org/> and: <http://sustainableinfrastructure.org/envision/>.

## Probabilistic Risk Management

In [Chapter 2](#), we explained the fundamental sources of uncertainties in making climate change projections. We also explained (see Box 2.2) that probabilistic climate change projections as developed for the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) SLR guidance<sup>[49]</sup> or the Fourth Assessment are only conditional probabilities: they provide the odds for particular outcomes under the assumption of a particular emissions pathway that society may or may not follow. OPR's State guidance<sup>[230]</sup> urges planners and decision-makers to consider projections using the high-emissions scenario for decisions with time horizons up to 2050; beyond that, OPR suggests assessing risks under both a mid-level and the high-emissions scenario, but emphasize the latter for high-risk infrastructure. In this report, we similarly urge the State to consider the high-end emissions scenario across all projects to be consistent with the legislative intent of AB 2800.

But even with just that one, high-emissions scenario, considerable uncertainties remain that must be accounted for. While probabilistic projections are increasingly being made available for this scenario at the temporal and spatial scales needed by engineers and scientists (see [Chapters 2](#) and [5](#)), how should engineers and architects use that information in project development?

Probabilistic risk management approaches are increasingly common and widely recommended for climate change planning, but many are not yet deeply familiar with them. The typical arguments for employing such approaches, include the following:

- The magnitude of potential hazards from climate change are both diverse and potentially large, but there is irreducible uncertainty as to their timing and likelihood of hazardous events;
- Risk management seeks to eliminate or reduce hazards, and then to mitigate the hazards that remain. For cases when hazardous events occur, risk management also involves absorbing or resisting damage, and when the magnitude is too great, accepting and spreading the burden from the harms that result;
- Risk-based approaches weigh the likelihood of a hazard and the severity of the potential consequences against a defined set of criteria that can be used to make high-level decisions about how to act; and
- The goal of a managed risk approach is to quantify the potential hazard severity and the likelihood and frequency of its occurrence to enable an agency to rank all the risks it faces and to make reasoned decisions as to where to focus efforts and limited resources.

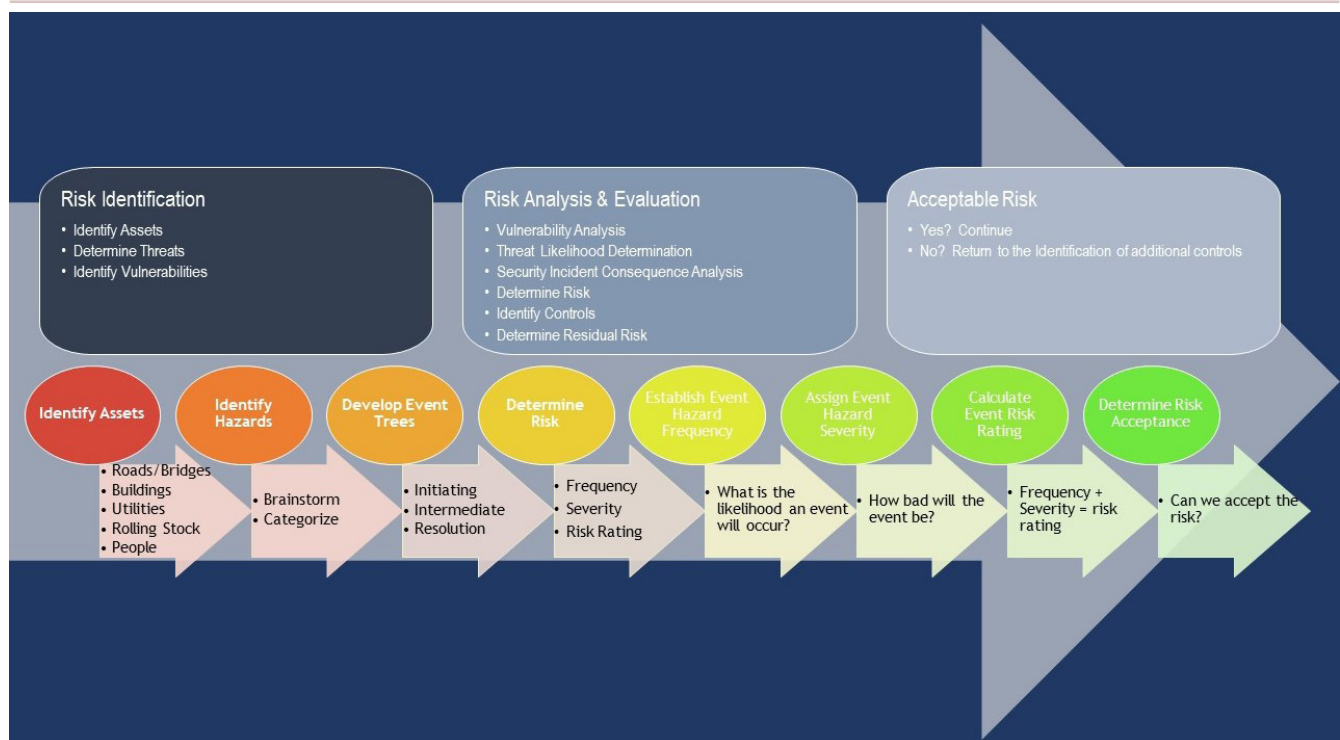


Figure 6.5 Steps in a probabilistic risk management approach to climate adaptation (Source: Image courtesy of James Deane, California High-Speed Rail)



The process to assess risk involves five critical steps (the complete process with additional steps is shown in Figure 6.5 using eight circles), to: identify hazards; determine frequency; assign severity; assign event risk ratings; and evaluate risk acceptance in light of the ratings. This basic approach has been used in a variety of contexts and cases; a useful one related to developing a climate risk management approach for infrastructure design is the assessment undertaken for New York City<sup>[232]</sup>. We include a case example of probabilistic risk assessment and management in [Appendix 7](#). The Working Group believes that the basic risk assessment approach illustrated by these examples is a helpful approach to infrastructure decisions and related risk management for time horizons of 20-30 years. Over time, infrastructure planners and operators should monitor and update their risk assessment to ensure observation and updated science continue to inform the risk calculus and needed updates to the risk management strategy.

Given the limits to providing probabilities for climate change impacts with confidence, however, particularly over long time horizons (i.e., for infrastructure expected to be functional past 2050), other approaches can be employed in tandem with traditional probabilistic risk management, helping to identify ideal project designs, given multiple sources of deep uncertainty (Box 6.1). [Appendix 8](#) offers a simplified example of considering climate change impacts when upgrading existing infrastructure.

## Innovative Design Choices

### Toward A New Paradigm for a Changing World

With actionable climate science in hand, improved approaches to project development that include deliberate and enhanced stakeholder engagement, more sophisticated economic feasibility analyses and risk analysis and management approaches, including those developed for DMDU, the final question during the project design phase concerns how to design for uncertainty.

As the ASCE noted in its 2015 report on adaptation<sup>[178]</sup>, there is growing recognition within the infrastructure community that “engineers [and architects] need a new paradigm for a world in which climate is changing.” While still (and necessarily) rooted in the world of standards, codes, regulations and guidelines, there are efforts underway now to transform traditional standard-setting processes. Many of the concepts that are starting to gain resonance across the engineering community today have already been circulating for years to decades, but in

different disciplines. Concepts such as “adaptive design” have emerged from the theory of adaptive management first proposed in ecology in the 1980s<sup>[240,241]</sup>. Core risk management concepts such as “safe-to-fail” versus “fail-safe” have long been established in areas ranging from environmental safety to hazardous materials management, from handling lawn mowers to operating big infrastructure projects like the Thames River Estuary barriers<sup>5</sup> (Box 6.1), and increasingly in the context of climate change<sup>[242-244]</sup>. The necessity to move to “safe-to-fail” becomes notoriously obvious when things go wrong, i.e., when things thought to be safe do fail (such as the BP oil spill or the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster)<sup>[245, 246]</sup>. We define these concepts below and provide recommendations for what California can do to implement the best of these approaches in developing climate-safe infrastructure.

### Adaptive Design

With the recognition that a changing climate will lead to not just one type or level of impact but shifting impacts to existing and new infrastructure over time, the engineering community is increasingly embracing the concept of adaptive design, or adaptive, flexible infrastructure. As most recently defined by Chester and Brady<sup>[247], p.10</sup>:

An adaptive infrastructure is one that has the capacity to perceive and respond to perturbations in such a way as to maintain fitness over time. Adaptive infrastructure have the capacity to recognize that stimuli or changes in demand are occurring or will occur including the effects of these stimuli, and have the socio-technical structures in place to change quickly enough to meet future demands.

Some examples of adaptive design can include:

- Levees with adjustable crests;
- Seawalls with adjustable heights;
- Structures that can be dis- and re-assembled;
- Floating structures;
- Non-permanent structures such as long-term campgrounds or temporary housing; and
- Movable structures.

While the ideas of adaptive management have been used by planners for decades, transferring these principles to infrastructure design and implementation by engineers and architects is still in the early days. While this may initially slow adoption of adaptive pathways and design, more research on effective adaptive design principles will help advance the field and provide information for wider support of this methodology. Important questions to examine include (among others):

- How and when should adaptive designs be applied?
- How should uncertainties in future climate projections be included in the context of adaptive design?

<sup>5</sup>In some cases, safe-to-fail approaches can be made adaptive in that failures serve as triggers to move to the next adaptive measure(s). This is the case with the Thames River Barrier.

## Box 6.1 : How to Make Good Infrastructure Decisions When Future Climate Change is Hard to Quantify with Confidence?

Traditionally, engineers and others manage risk by quantifying hazards such as flooding with a probability distribution. For instance, transportation engineers might look at historical records and observe the magnitude of the 100-year storm. Based on the resulting probability estimate, engineers would size culverts for a road to most cost-effectively meet desired performance goals. Such risk management approaches are called predict-then-act, because they start with predictions about the future and then recommend actions based on those predictions.

Engineers recognize that probability distributions may not be accurate, so sometimes they add a safety margin (see Box 3.3). But this can get expensive when, as described in this report, the imprecision in the probability distributions is large. For instance, OPC's *2018 Updated Sea-Level Rise Guidance for California*<sup>[49]</sup> provides a probability distribution that suggests an average of 2 ft of SLR by 2100 as well as an "extreme" sea-level rise scenario of 10 ft that has no probability attached. In most instances, the design of coastal infrastructure systems would be significantly different for 2 ft vs. 10 ft of SLR. State guidance recommends considering many contextual elements of projects in qualitative terms, but how should engineers develop a single approach that quantitatively addresses these different numbers?

In recent years, new risk management approaches have come into use that address this type of challenge. The approaches, which go under the broad label of Decision Making Under Uncertainty (DMUU), or more precisely, Decision Making Under Deep Uncertainty (DMDU)<sup>[227]</sup>, view the future as inherently uncertain, identify a wide range of plausible futures, and use this information to craft infrastructure designs and systems that perform well no matter which future comes to pass.

A variety of such DMDU approaches are commonly used but all share the following common elements. Rather than starting with predictions, they: (1) begin with a proposed infrastructure design; stress test that design over a wide range of futures, including projected extremes; (2) use this information to identify potential vulnerabilities in the design; and then (3) identify modifications to the design, or new designs altogether, that significantly reduce these vulnerabilities.

For instance, engineers might modify the design of a levee, making its base larger than currently needed so it might be more easily raised if needed in the future. An example of choosing an entirely new design, engineers seeking reliance against hurricanes of hard-to-predict future intensity, might replace a bridge over a river with bollards. The latter would flood more often, but only for a short while, and could not be destroyed by even the largest storm. We discuss these newer, non-traditional strategies in greater detail below.



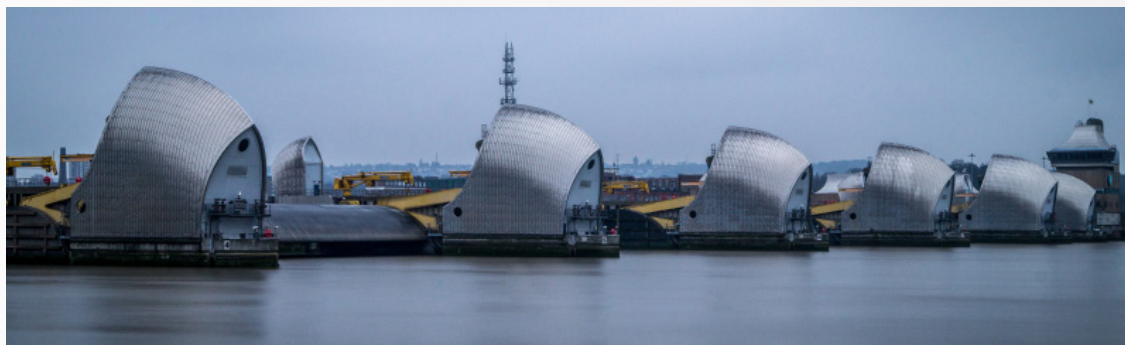
**AdaptLA Regional Sea Level Rise Planning Project stakeholders play Decisions for the Decade, a role-playing game developed by the World Bank, in partnership with RAND Corporation, to help practitioners learn how to make decisions under deep uncertainty. (Photo: Holly Rindge, used with permission)**

What are some of these alternative DMDU approaches? The most common include:

- **Scenario planning**, the most widely used DMDU approach, develops several internally consistent descriptions of the future<sup>[233]</sup>, often using participatory stakeholder processes or expert opinion to choose the scenarios. Engineers can seek designs that perform well in each of the selected scenarios;
- **Robust Decision Making (RDM)**<sup>[234-236]</sup> is a simulation model-based approach that combines scenario planning with more quantitative risk analysis and is often used in deliberative stakeholder engagements. RDM stress tests proposed infrastructure systems over myriad plausible paths into the future and then uses the resulting database of model runs to identify policy-relevant scenarios and robust adaptive strategies. As one important product, RDM and related approaches such as Decision Scaling<sup>[206, 237]</sup>, often generate scenarios that identify specific vulnerabilities of infrastructure systems due to climate change;
- **Adaptation (or adaptive) pathways**<sup>[238]</sup> provides a framework for developing, visualizing and evaluating plans that can adjust over time. The approach links the choice of near-term adaptation actions with identifying pre-determined threshold events. Observation of such threshold events would trigger subsequent actions in the planning or implementation stages of adaptation strategies. Often an adaptation pathway includes low-regret near-term actions that preserve future options to adjust if necessary; and
- **Flexible engineering design analysis**<sup>[239]</sup> uses tools such as real options analysis (see above) to help designers of complex, long-lasting projects – such as communication networks, power plants or hospitals – to abandon fixed specifications and narrow forecasts and build infrastructure system that can be easily adjusted as conditions change.

DMDU methods do use any probabilistic information that scientists can provide. But rather than start the design and planning process with probabilistic forecasts, DMDU methods use them to adjudicate among alternative designs. For example, imagine engineers designing infrastructure systems in a watershed in which the historic 500-year flood is becoming more frequent. With an RDM or adaptive pathways and design approach, the engineers identify two (or more) combinations of flexible design, green infrastructure and land use options that would meet performance goals. The first combination might meet those goals if the historic 500-year flood occurred as frequently as once every century. The second, more expensive than the first, would meet those goals if the historic 500-year flood occurred as frequently as once a decade. The engineers would then work with climate scientists to determine if there is any evidence that the historic 500-year flood could occur once a decade and, ideally, if there were any trends in climate indicators engineers could observe that would signal whether and when such storms are becoming more frequent in the future.

The use of these DMDU approaches is becoming more prevalent. For instance, the *2018 California Sea-Level Rise Guidance*<sup>[49]</sup> recommends communities choose a near-term coastal adaptation strategy consistent with current probabilistic SLR projections and also develop adaptive pathways that include contingency plans appropriate for the extreme SLR scenario if in fact, actual SLR turns out to be larger than projected.



While a massive structure, the Thames River Estuary Barrier uses failures to protect London from the growing risks of coastal flooding as triggers to deploy the next adaptive measures. (Photo: Phil Dolby, [flickr](#), licensed under the Creative Commons license 2.0)



- How should multi-model and multi-scenarios simulations be incorporated into adaptive design concepts?
- How should a cost-benefit analysis be conducted that accounts for the true costs today and in the future with these modular types of designs?

There are two important steps forward for the State to take in order to support the greater adoption of adaptive design:

1. To support applied research and testing of adaptive design for different types of critical infrastructure as well as developing rigorous economic methodologies for determining true cost and benefits of implementing adaptive design; and
2. Design policies that allow and encourage infrastructure which is either sufficiently “modular” or built with sufficient “safety buffer” to accommodate changing climate change risks over time.

## Safe-to-Fail

Traditional engineering design accounts for risk by including safety factors (also referred to as factors of safety, see Box 3.3). Given known and predictable conditions, safety factors provide the load carrying capacity of a system beyond the expected or actual loads. The goal is to make structures fail-safe – in that the safety factor presumably predicts accurately what can go wrong, and accounts for it, thereby reducing the risk that a structure will fail entirely. In a changing climate, where the past is no longer a reliable predictor of the future and the future has large uncertainties, the fail-safe paradigm may not be as dependable as before.

Safe-to-fail is an emerging design principle that assumes that the safety factors may not adequately protect an asset, and the structure is thus developed so that if some part of it fails, the damage is controllable or minimized. In fact, safe-to-fail “recognizes that the possibility of failure can never be eliminated”<sup>[195], p.9</sup>. As described by Kim et al. (2017)<sup>[248]</sup>, safe-to-fail infrastructure embody these characteristics in the following ways. They:

- Focus on maintaining system-wide critical services instead of preventing component failure<sup>[249]</sup>;
- Minimize the consequences of the extreme events rather than minimize the probability of damages<sup>[250]</sup>;
- Privilege the use of solutions that maintain and enhance social and ecosystem services<sup>[251]</sup>;
- Design decentralized, autonomous infrastructure systems instead of centralized, hierarchical systems<sup>[250]</sup>; and

- Encourage communication and collaboration that transcend disciplinary barriers rather than involving multiple, but distinct disciplinary perspectives<sup>[251,252]</sup>.

Modularity is one potential mechanism to design for safe-to-fail. As described by LA Metro in its 2015 *Resiliency Indicator Framework*<sup>[195]</sup>, modularity can be achieved by:

- System components having enough independence so that damage or failure of one part or component of a system has a low probability of inducing failure of others; and/or
- System components being constructed in a ‘modular’ manner that facilitates rapid rebuild/restoration following failure.

As with adaptive infrastructure design, this is a new concept with few implementation examples from which to draw best practices. However, LA Metro’s *Resiliency Indicator Framework* includes two safe-to-fail indicators (one for design approach and one for design guidelines) to assess a project’s potential resilience<sup>[195]</sup>. Given the newness of the approach, case examples presented in their indicator framework do not yet include safe-to-fail features. The framework, with guidance on how to use it, is a good example, however, of how to measure and track features that make infrastructure more robust and resilient in the face of greater demands, change and uncertainty.

It is also critical to apply a social equity lens with these new and adaptive approaches to ensure that any decisions are just, fair and equitable to all. With safe-to-fail, for instance, some part of the system may be down for the sake of preventing more widespread failure. Clear procedures must be developed to help infrastructure operators and regulators choose equitably which part will be planned for disruption or even failure, and how to compensate those affected in a fair manner.

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*With Safe-to-Fail, clear procedures must be developed to help infrastructure operators and regulators choose equitably which part of a system will be planned for disruption or even failure, and how to compensate those affected in a fair manner.*

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In [Chapter 7](#) we turn to governance, which should provide this sort of guidance and lay out requisite processes.

# 7 Governance: Changing the Rules to Enable Climate-Safe Infrastructure

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## Introduction

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How infrastructure is built is in large part determined not just by the available science, tools, assessment methodologies and design paradigms prevailing, but also by the rules that govern how infrastructure should be built. In this chapter we turn to these rules and how they need to change in order to accommodate a changing climate and create the conducive environment that supports the movement toward climate-safe infrastructure.

We use the term “governance” to capture these societal rules because governance consists of all the processes of interaction and decision-making that create, reinforce, change or maintain the affairs of society. Besides governments, governance is carried out through markets, networks and social systems (such as formal and informal organizations) using laws, regulations, standards, guidelines and less formal, but often powerful societal or professional norms, incentives, market signals and so on.

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*How infrastructure is built is in large part determined not just by the available science, tools, assessment methodologies and design paradigms prevailing, but also by the rules that govern how infrastructure should be built.*

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Following the mandate of AB 2800, we focus first on the existing standards and non-standard-based approaches that govern how infrastructure to date is being built. We

describe how standards are developed and changed and to what extent existing standards and guidelines help or hinder the ability to use forward-looking climate science. We close with exploring how current advances in engineering methodologies (professional paradigms, norms and principles) can be incorporated into infrastructure governance to support the transition to climate-safe infrastructure.

## Existing Approaches to Infrastructure Design

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### Traditional Approaches of Governing Engineering Design

Assuming a stationary world in which historic weather and climate patterns were good predictors of the future, the traditional approach for infrastructure design has generally yielded reliable infrastructure that provided the necessary functions, while also protecting life and safety. Engineers, architects, designers and contractors have an extensive suite of engineering standards upon which to design all different types of infrastructure (Box 7.1). Conforming to these baseline standards decreased the risk of catastrophic failure of a specific type of infrastructure and reduced the liability to the engineer, architect, designer or contractor.

Below, we discuss the traditional approach to standard-setting and then discuss how the field is already beginning to shift its practices to accommodate a non-stationary climate future. In [Appendix 9](#), we present a specific case example of the information needs required to update California’s Building Energy Standards.

## The Standard-Setting Process

Generally, standards are developed at the international or national levels through various standard-setting organizations. The most commonly recognized are the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Code Council (ICC), and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Professional organizations for individual sectors, such as the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), or the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) can also set new standards within their own organizations or initiate the updating of existing national and/or international standards. State or local agencies typically adopt these international, national or sector-specific professional standards as minimum standards and codify them in design guidelines, manuals and codes. Both states and local jurisdictions can – and often do – adopt more stringent codes and standards above and beyond those prescribed by the minimum standards developed at the national and international levels (Figure 7.1).



**Figure 7.1** Generally, standards are developed at the international and national levels through standard-setting organizations and states and local jurisdictions adopt them. Sometimes, states and local governments develop more stringent codes and standards that go above and beyond minimum standards. (Photo: Pipe installation at Jones Tract levee break in 2004; DWR, used with permission)

### Box 7.1: Definitions of Key Terms and Examples of How Infrastructure Design is Governed

- **Design Standards:** Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-119 establishes policies on the federal government's role in development and use of standards. It defines “standards” to include the common and repeated use of rules, conditions, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods. For example, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) issued a design standard that specifies minimum structural load requirements under various types of conditions, taking into account factors such as soil type and potential for floods, snow, rain, ice and wind.
- **Building Codes:** Building codes are laws or regulations that specify minimum safeguards to ensure public health, safety and general welfare of the occupants of new and existing buildings and structures, according to the International Code Council (ICC), a standards-developing organization. For example, building codes may ensure that exterior walls and roofs are resistant to the weather, such as by including flashing and drainage. Building codes may reference one or more design standards.
- **Specification:** A set of conditions and requirements of precise and limited application that provide a detailed description of a procedure, process, material, product or service for use primarily in procurement and manufacturing. Standards may be referenced or included in specifications. For example, a particular government agency may have specifications as to what type of material is to be used (and not used) for culverts.
- **Technical Regulation:** A mandatory government requirement that defines the characteristics and/or the performance requirements of a product, service or process.
- **Voluntary Certifications:** Voluntary certifications assess infrastructure across a spectrum of key criteria, including environmental performance, and recognize those that go beyond minimum code compliance. For example, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which offers four ratings levels - certified, silver, gold and platinum - depending on how many points a project earns in various categories.

(Source: Based on GAO (2016)<sup>[226]</sup>)



Updating existing standards, or creating a new one, generally follows a deliberately slow, empirically-tested and consensus-based process. To provide more detail beyond what is shown in Figure 7.2, the process can be described as following these general steps:

1. An entity suggests the need to update or create a new standard;
2. A standard-setting policy body initiates a committee and selects a chair;
3. The chair selects the committee membership from volunteering association members and obtains approval from the standard-setting policy body;
4. The Committee meets periodically – this could be either a public or private meeting process depending on the standard-setting body's rules;
5. Committee deliberations include seeking out necessary research or data or advice, which can take considerable time to conduct and be reported back to the committee;
6. The Committee drafts the standard;
7. When the draft is ready, the committee holds a consensus vote to release for public review;
8. The standard-setting policy body approves release, which can be followed by public review process (again depending on the standard-setting body's rules);
9. The Committee holds a consensus vote to publish the finalized standard;
10. The standard-setting policy body approves the publication/adoption of the finalized standard;
11. The standard is published;
12. The standard is disseminated or sold;
13. In some cases, a standard written in code-intended language is adopted into code by various jurisdictions; and, finally,
14. The standard is either put on continuous maintenance or a committee is periodically reconstituted to revise the standard, at which point the process repeats.

Some standards take 20 years to develop or change; others have been changed in much less time (1-2 years) but given the significant implications of changing the way things are built all over the world or in a particular nation, the approach is methodical and often time-consuming. Often, in addition to research, years of testing and in-the-field observations are required before a standard can be advanced to a vote with voting rules depending on the rules of the standard-setting organization. Engineering

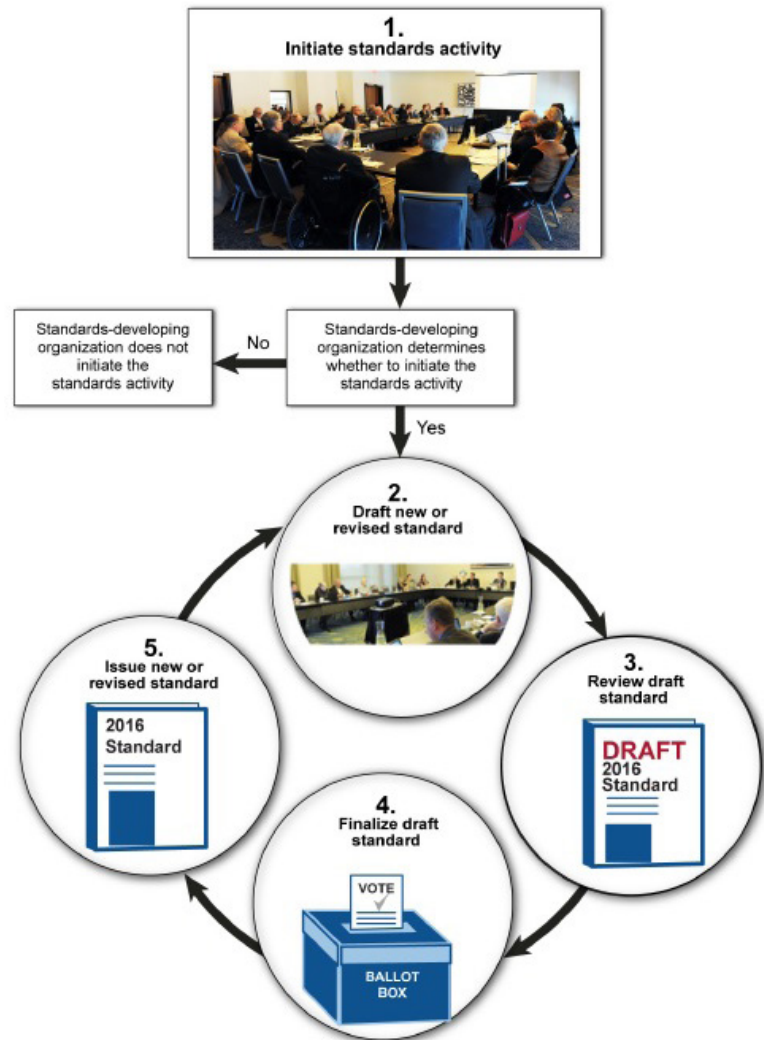


Figure 7.2 Generalized standards-developing process (Source: GAO 2016<sup>[226]</sup>)

standards setting is recognized as being a very conservative process that is resistant to change, since the potential for failure resulting from a poorly developed standard can have costly and – sometimes – tragic consequences.

Information utilized in developing climate-sensitive standards traditionally has relied on historic weather and climate information. Over time, the historical period used has changed, even if the basic standard did not. But as a general rule, structural standards have relied on backwards-looking data, not forward-looking climate projections. To address the gaps in the observational record and deal with the natural variability (i.e., uncertainty in historic information), engineers and architects have been trained to use and thus have methods for factoring in these uncertainties, through “safety factors” (see Box 3.3).

## Non-Standard Based Approaches

If standards – turned into prevailing code, rules and regulations – are the most stringent ways to ensure infrastructure is built a certain way, State and local jurisdictions can establish more ambitious guidelines if they see a necessity or if they wish to take leadership and action before a higher standard is adopted nationwide or internationally. California has a long history of doing just that. The State's energy efficiency standards have and still lead the nation and have demonstrated that such higher standards do not restrict the economy or well-being of its people and the environment. Some local jurisdictions, too, have chosen to go beyond minimum standards, by either adopting higher voluntary standards or by establishing other local guidance that those building infrastructure locally must adhere to.

The success, and eventual wider adoption, of these beyond-minimum approaches typically depend on being able to illustrate that the more stringent approach works, exceeds performance and is cost-effective. This requires establishing frameworks, indicators and metrics of “success” that can be tracked over time to make that convincing case. LA Metro offers a good example.

In 2015, LA Metro published its *Resiliency Indicators Framework*<sup>[195]</sup>, a guidance document that explains how the transportation agency understands resilience, what principles guide its work, what factors it sees as contributing to transportation resilience and how indicators of organizational and technical readiness can be tracked and combined to produce a quantitative and qualitative sense of progress toward greater resilience (Figure 7.2).

## California's Infrastructure Design Standards

As part of the work of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG), members compiled lists of standards, guidelines and other frameworks that guide how infrastructure in the state must be built ([Appendix 10](#)).<sup>1</sup> This compilation illustrates that there are dozens of standards, design manuals, bulletins, plans and specifications, design guidance, design criteria and references to rely on in any one infrastructure sector.

Simply identifying which standards need to be updated – and doing so – will not get the job done on its own, however. There is much more to building climate-safe infrastructure than simply updating standards, though that is an important process. The real change will come from using different types of standards and deploying them in practice throughout the infrastructure planning, design and operation and maintenance (O&M) process.

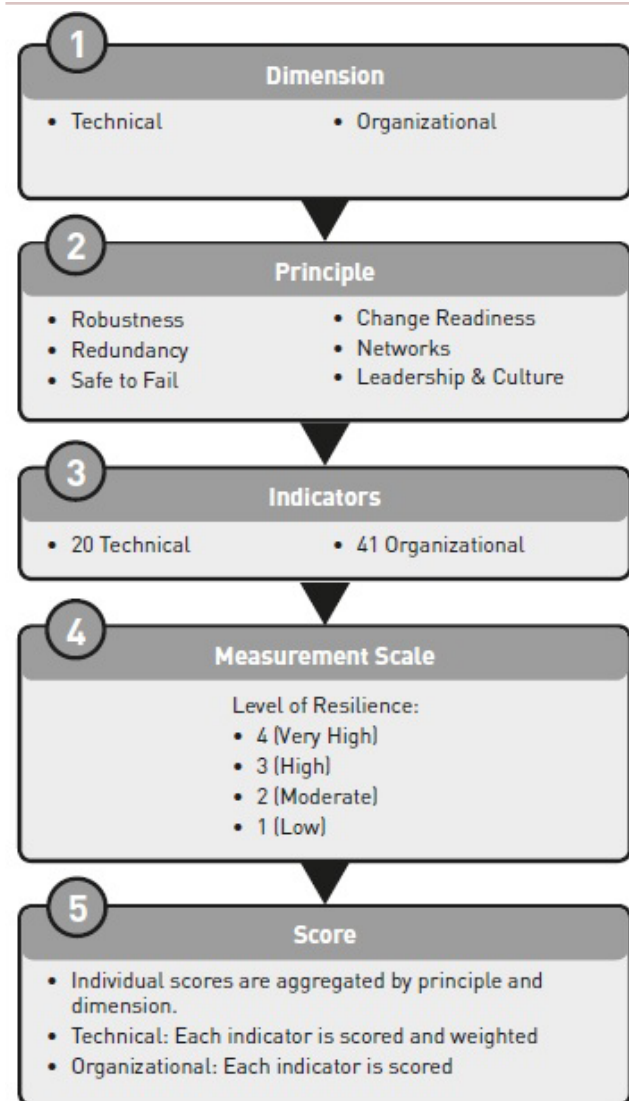


Figure 7.3 The process by which key dimensions and principles of resilience identified by LA Metro in its *Resiliency Indicators Framework* result in specific indicators and scores (Source: LA Metro, 2015<sup>[195]</sup>, used with permission)

Standards and other guidance and governance mechanisms used by State agencies are updated at different intervals (some annually, some once per decade, others irregularly) to reflect changes in codes and standards set elsewhere and experience with existing codes. In some instances, these standards and guidelines are adopted from national and international standard-setting organizations; in others, the State sets its own standards and guidelines. As described above, updating these standards can take considerable time, but the State has opportunities to take steps immediately (Box 7.2).

## Box 7.2: Small Steps Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure: The California Building Code

The California Building Code does not yet require that building envelope designs be capable of maintaining healthy indoor environments over a wider range of expected future climate conditions even when there is a power outage (see [Chapter 3](#)). To address this type of shortcoming, one step could be to direct the California Building Standards Commission to clarify its criteria that guide code development and updates. One of these criteria currently states that proposed standards must serve the public interest, including environmental considerations. To operationalize the overarching mandate to update State codes and guidance, this criterion could be clarified to state that proposed standards must also address climate resiliency, to the extent possible. The first and most important first step then is to direct State agencies to prioritize these types of efforts in all infrastructure-related planning with the goal of achieving Recommendation 6.



Clarifying the criteria that trigger standard and code updates can be an effective small step toward initiating updates to existing codes and advancing on the path toward climate-safe infrastructure for all. (Photo: Lawrence Scarpa, LEED-certified building in Hollywood, [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

The exercise of compiling the codes, standards and guidelines used in state infrastructure construction and O&M ([Appendix 10](#)) revealed many institutional barriers to integrating forward-looking climate science (even if it were available). We compiled those barriers in [Appendix 11](#). The exercise also offered a number of overarching lessons for the State, if it wishes to update its State-based standards above and beyond national and international minimum standards in order to enable the transition to climate-safe infrastructure:

- 1. A plethora of standards of varying stringency.** While potentially confusing, having more stringent standards in California than elsewhere, and/or more stringent standards at the state than at the local level in order to account for climate change, has precedent: already, there is a plethora of standards and codes in play. Side-by-side infrastructure built at varying times was built to the prevailing codes at the time of construction. There is nothing fundamentally new or more difficult about that if California wishes to update its standards now to account for climate change. However, structures built to standards and codes no longer sufficient for a changing climate constitute potential weak spots in infrastructure systems.
- 2. More stringent State codes can pave the way for more stringent local and national codes.** Often infrastructure systems under State ownership or regulation is placed in local contexts or involves local and/or federal partner agencies that have different prevailing codes than the State. State policy changes, translated into design standards and guidance can have a strong influence on what others do. It sets precedent, provides a model, and – through appropriate mechanisms – can incentivize others to follow suit.
- 3. Varying degrees of ease to change standards.** In some instances, standards and codes can – with appropriate policy guidance from above – be updated relatively easily. Updating base years on a rolling basis, moving the range of years forward over which averages and patterns of extremes should be assessed, extending the design-life length from 20 to 30 or 50 years, are examples that fall into this category. In other instances, the shift to using forward-looking climate science faces greater obstacles. Some code and standard changes require regulatory action, others can be implemented through administrative processes within agencies.
- 4. Standards and guidelines that are there vs. that aren't there.** Sometimes, existing standards present a barrier to the use of forward-looking science; other times they are agnostic, and ideally, they should allow, support or mandate the use of forward-looking science. But sometimes the barrier lies in the fact that relevant standards or guidelines are absent (see [Chapter 10](#) for a summary and [Appendix 11](#) for a detailed overview of these types of barriers).
- 5. Resources and technical capacity to change standards vary across State agencies.** While CSIWG members agreed that standards, codes and guidelines should be updated to help create the enabling environment for climate-safe infrastructure, State agencies differ in their technical capacity to make these changes themselves vs. awaiting standard-setting organizations to provide those updated standards, which the State would then adopt. Thus, while policy guidance should be unambiguous, the way to implement it at the level of standards and codes would need to be flexible to reflect this range of in-house capacities.



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## Recommendation 6

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*Consistent with Executive Order B-30-15 and AB 1482, State agencies should update all relevant (i.e., climate-sensitive) infrastructure standards and guidelines that they can directly affect. Alternatively, or in addition, they should develop new state-specific guidelines where there are gaps to address climate resiliency by incorporating forward-looking climate information in those standards and codes. Where State agencies rely on standards developed by standard-setting organizations, state engineers and architects should work through the relevant professional organizations to advance development of climate-cognizant standards. Until new standards and codes are in place, State agencies should develop guidelines that go above and beyond minimum standards and codes to meet the goals of the Climate-Safe Path for All. Where agencies don't have resources to fulfill this workload, they should be fully funded in the State budget.*

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### Moving from Structural Design Standards to Different Kinds of Standards

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Internationally and nationally, standard-setting organizations are exploring different approaches to standards that can accommodate the adaptive infrastructure and safe-to-fail approaches described above and build in flexibility in a heretofore very prescribed and inflexible process. The essence of what a standard is, and what guidance it should contain, is an equally important and active area of discussion and testing. Examples include performance-based standards and standards for professional practice.

#### Prescriptive vs. Performance-Based Standards

In common prescriptive standards, the goal is to specify required elements in a system design, assuming that if something is built with these elements, it will perform adequately in order to achieve policy goals for the standard. This often leads to a “least common denominator” approach to the design, using what is well known, tried and tested, including historical data. Less certain scenarios are not addressed, controversial or innovative measures are not included and changing climate conditions are not accounted for. Prescriptive standards are valuable in that they provide a simple approach to achieving desired policy outcomes. However, prescriptive standards are limited in that they discourage innovation. As integration of climate resiliency in design standards is an emerging issue,

both prescriptive standards and performance standards will be useful. Prescriptive standards will allow the integration of basic climate resiliency measures broadly in standard practice (the “no-regrets” opportunities), while performance standards will give designers the flexibility to devise the best way to achieve the desired outcome for a particular application without the State prescribing how to get there. California’s Title 24 Building Energy Code is an example of this. Title 24 includes a “prescriptive path”, in which mandatory measures are specified, along with a finite list of optional measures that can be traded off for one another, to accommodate different applications. This approach is simple but not frequently used, since it does not give the designer much latitude.

Performance standards, in contrast, identify a performance objective, and leave it to the designer to identify a particular design that will deliver that performance. Some of the advantages to performance standards are that they allow designers to innovate in their designs and be rewarded for clever designs. They also can be more successfully applied to non-typical situations. For a future that will not mimic the past, the flexibility inherent in performance-based standards is particularly promising.

The challenges to this approach are in defining performance metrics and mechanisms for demonstrating performance. Ideally, performance can be demonstrated through observation or measurement of actual system operation (i.e., not just performance of the asset, but

reflecting the goals of the larger, integrated system of interest; see [Chapter 6](#)). This can have limited usefulness because system compliance cannot be evaluated until after the system has been operating in the field for some period of time, at which point it may be too late to make modifications or deny approval. So, in practice some performance standards evaluate designs for their “potential” to perform adequately. The availability of modeling tools that capture a range of operating scenarios and accurately predict how a system with a given design will perform in the real world enables setting these kinds of standards. In those cases, ongoing monitoring and evaluation over time are critical, so that such performance standards can be updated on the basis of actual performance data.

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*Ongoing monitoring and evaluation over time are critical so that performance standards can be updated on the basis of actual performance data.*

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Future standards are now being contemplated that will provide an even deeper level of performance assessment. For example, air conditioner efficiency is reaching a theoretical maximum, so many of the remaining measures to implement in standards (such as unique operating modes or system configurations) must be carefully targeted toward specific applications. To support improvement to these existing standards, sophisticated modeling algorithms are being developed and validated so that a range of quite different system approaches can be used to meet a performance standard.

The CSIWG recognizes that performance standards are more complex to establish and to enforce, however, the sophisticated measures that will be needed to ensure system resiliency in the future may demand these types of approaches. As the State moves to implement Recommendation 6 above, the CSIWG urges that it consider performance-based standards, as opposed to narrowly targeted prescriptive design standards.

### Standards for Professional Practice

Another category of standard that should be considered are Standards for Professional Practice. Examples of this kind of standard are ASHRAE’s Standard 180 (standard for quality maintenance of HVAC systems) and ASHRAE’s Guideline 0 (standard for the building commissioning process).

As described above, simple prescriptive technical standards will likely not be sufficient to achieve the State’s goals for climate-safe infrastructure, and more sophisticated approaches may be needed in the future. ASHRAE Standard 180, for example, provides a lengthy checklist of items that a technician should check on a mechanical system (Figure 7.4). Because it is impossible to know ahead of time which of these items will be necessary in a particular building, however, the teeth of the Standard are in the provisions that establish the process for selecting the tasks and the accountability for carrying out the process. In this case, the process requires establishing performance objectives and identifying indicators of failures to perform. Once this has been completed, it is relatively straightforward to define the necessary observations, measurements and tests. Similarly, ASHRAE Guideline 0 identifies the process for commissioning a building or building system, including stating the Owner’s Project Requirements, developing a Commissioning Plan, developing Functional Performance Tests and Construction Observations and documenting the requirements for ongoing operation and maintenance of the commissioned system.



Figure 7.4: ASHRAE’s Standard 180 for quality maintenance of HVAC systems is a good example of a professional standard of care. It provides a lengthy checklist of items a mechanic must check and ensures accountability for carrying out the process. (Photo: Aaron Plewke, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

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### Box 7.3: Example of a Performance Standard

The ASCE is currently in the process of developing a Sustainable Infrastructure Standard, which will be a performance standard (Proposal to the ASCE Codes and Standards Committee by the ASCE Committee on Sustainability 2018; pers. communication by Cris Liban).

Achieving sustainability in an infrastructure project requires the balance of environmental, economic and social conditions – conditions that are unique in every project; as a result, the way sustainability is achieved will be unique to every project. Rather than develop a standard with prescriptive provisions, the standard currently in development will provide performance objectives which, when met, will result in sustainable infrastructure projects. The performance objectives will be written such that they are applicable across all infrastructure sectors.

Existing performance requirements (through various federal Executive Orders or voluntary standards such as the LEED Rating System) do not address infrastructure systems for communications, energy, transportation, and water, sewage and storm water and civil infrastructure projects that benefit the economy, environment and society. Thus, the ASCE standard that is currently being developed is anticipated to provide coherent and consistent performance objectives that can be included in procurement documents by owners, regulators, stakeholders, and policy makers committed to enhancing the sustainability of infrastructure projects.

Approaching sustainability from a performance-oriented perspective facilitates implementation of sustainability measures that are unique to projects; involve owners in establishing the “triple bottom line;” encourage the use of rating systems or tools to monitor and measure sustainability; foster creativity and innovation by the design and construction community to meet the performance objectives and provide for flexibility in how – sometimes conflicting – objectives can be met.

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Furthermore, some of the common elements of these standards for professional practice involve the owner or end-user in defining the ultimate objectives, establishing a plan, and identifying how the plan will be adapted over time. These steps ensure that the process has buy-in and will go beyond simply running through a checklist. Providing accountability for developing and applying the process is essential: codes or programs that apply these standards must recognize that the standards provide a measuring stick and they will only have an impact if accountability is enforced through the code or the program. Buy-in and accountability ensure that the standard generates ongoing and permanent savings.

### Building to More than One Number: The ASCE’s Manual of Practice

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Building on its 2015 *Roadmap*, ASCE is currently developing a Manual of Practice (MOP) for infrastructure that provides guidelines for how engineers – and architects – can incorporate forward-looking climate information in their infrastructure plans and designs<sup>[253]</sup>. The MOP is not a standard *per se* but helps those needing to account for future climate change in infrastructure design absent any standards doing so.

While still under review at the time of this report, the MOP provides guidance on how engineers can bolster the use of historic information with climate model-based future projections to get a more robust assessment of future risks. Rather than selecting one number as the definitive value to which to build and thus to measure the success of a particular piece of infrastructure, the MOP recommends adopting a range of numbers that capture the full complexity of risk. Using risk management and adaptive design principles, the suggestion is to build infrastructure for a particular design load (based on observations or future projection) but such that it can be adapted in the future upon observing changes in statistics of extremes. The ASCE MOP provides an important suite of implementable stepping stones for how engineers can begin to incorporate climate science into their practice.

California can build on this pioneering work by adopting the principles within the ASCE’s MOP and modifying or extending them to be California-centric. This would entail tailoring the suite of climate information included to address the state’s specific climate regimes and changing patterns of extreme events common across the state (with emphasis on the high-emissions scenario, particularly for vulnerable assets) and addressing all of the infrastructure categories outlined in this report.



Thus, another concrete step the State can take in moving toward climate-safe infrastructure is to:

1. Appoint a working group of relevant technical experts that develops a California-specific Manual of Practice. This Cal-MOP should build on the ASCE's MOP and
  - address all relevant infrastructure sectors in the state;
  - reference the climate science information that is most relevant to California, produced by and for the state; and
  - include experts on the various approaches described in this chapter, such as adaptive design and pathways, as well robust decision making under uncertainty, social scientists, economists, as appropriate.
2. Adequately support the work of this working group with in-house staff, external experts and commensurate funding.

## Advancing Standards in Support of Climate-Safe Infrastructure

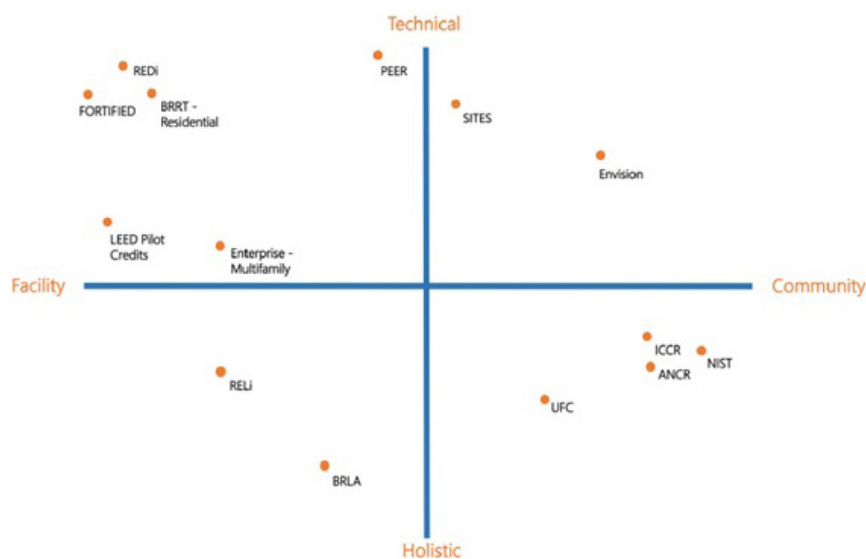
### Leadership Through Voluntary Standards

The discussion above presumes that creating new or updating old standards are the only – or maybe the most important – methods by which the State can ensure climate-safe infrastructure gets built. Through Working Group discussions and the [webinar series](#), the CSIWG also explored non-standard-focused approaches for building resilient and climate-safe infrastructure. Because climate adaptation measures will frequently involve incorporation of incremental measures or strategies that may add cost to a project design or retrofit (see [Chapter 8](#)), and because changing standards and codes will take some time, incentivizing voluntary approaches that go above and beyond existing minimum standards would be a way to rapidly start moving in the direction of climate-safe infrastructure.

Examples of voluntary programs in the building sector that might be appropriate candidates are LEED certification, Cal Green Tiers 1 and 2, Title 24 and various certifications from ASHRAE, Uniform Building Code (UBC), Unified Mechanical Code

(UMC), Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), the Living Building Challenge, and others (Box 7.4). Meister Consultants Group (2017)<sup>[254]</sup> compiled an overview of the different voluntary “resilience” standards currently available in the building sector and rated them on a four-point matrix from facility-specific to community-level and from technical (usually focusing on just one hazard and one type of infrastructure) to holistic (generally focusing on multiple hazards and applicable across a system) (Figure 7.5).

The combined use of mandatory standards and voluntary standards can help advance the development of climate-safe infrastructure. Indeed, in our [webinar series](#), the US Green Building Council (USGBC) provided an example of how the push-and-pull interplay of voluntary measures and building codes have served to increase the resilience in both (Figure 7.6). In this instance, as the LEED voluntary certification raised its standards, one observes the raising of the minimum building codes over time. The voluntary standards essentially provide field testing of nontraditional approaches; after demonstrated success, this allows time for the more conservative mandatory minimum standard-setting process to gain comfort and acceptance with these new approaches, which eventually become the new standard operating practice. Incorporating climate resiliency measures in voluntary standards such as LEED or Cal Green Tiers, will serve as a motivation for design engineers to incorporate climate resiliency in their building design because there are other benefits to them in achieving these levels of voluntary compliance.



**Figure 7.5: Voluntary standards in the building sector fall into a number of categories, here classified by whether they are technical or more holistic in focus, and whether they focus on a single facility or a community (Source: Meister Consultants Group 2017<sup>[254]</sup>, used with permission)**

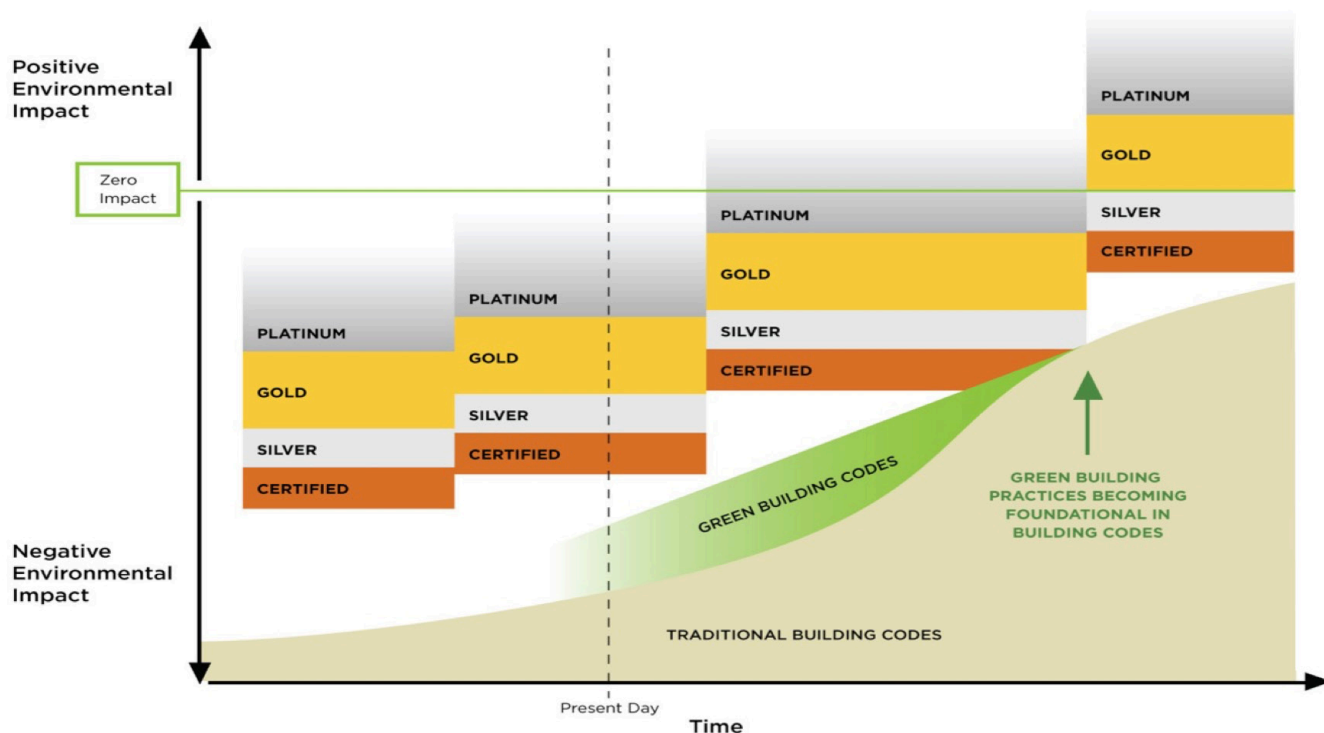


Figure 7.6 States can lead through adopting aspirational voluntary standards that over time raise the floor of mandatory/minimum standards (Source: adapted from US Green Building Council, used with permission)

#### Box 7.4: Examples of Voluntary Resilience Standards

- [The US Green Building Council's Building Resilience](#)—Los Angeles Project (BRLA)
- [The Insurance Council of Australia's Building Resilience Rating Tool \(BRRT\)](#)
- [The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision Rating System](#)
- [The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety's FORTIFIED Standards](#)
- [The US Green Building Council's LEED program](#)
- [The US Green Building Council's Performance Excellence in Electricity Renewal \(PEER\) program](#)
- [The RELi Resilience Collaborative's RELi Resiliency Action List & Credit Catalog](#)
- [Arup's The Resilience Based Earthquake Design Initiative \(REDi\)](#)
- [Sustainable Sites Initiative \(SITES\)](#)
- [Enterprise Community Partners' Enterprise Green Communities Certification](#)
- [Alliance for National and Community Resilience \(ANCR\)](#) (and its resilience benchmarking system, currently under development)
- [The Department of Homeland Security's Interagency Concept for Community Resilience \(ICCR\)](#)
- [The National Institute of Building Sciences' Unified Facilities Criteria \(UFC\)](#)
- [The National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\) Community Resilience Assessment Methodology \(CRAM\)](#)
- [Cal Green Tiers 1 and 2](#)

## The Need to Address Liability

One important governance issue – requiring further study – is liability and the protection against liability for building structures in certain ways, namely design immunity. Climate change will affect liability issues. There is a more general and a more specific issue at hand. The first and broader issue has to do with liability for climate change impacts in the first instances, in an attempt to link specific local impacts and the financial damages and costs incurred to local communities to those bearing significant responsibilities for greenhouse gas emissions. This has been the subject of a number of court cases, including one involving several California cities against several international oil companies. That particular case was recently dismissed on the grounds that such liability issues should not be decided in the court but in legislative bodies at the state and national levels (and through international law).

The second, and more specific issue, of considerable concern to the matter at hand in this report, is the liability of individual engineers, architects, developers, project sponsors, contractors, realtors and insurance agents for designing structures with or without accounting for climate change, and to what level of climate change. These liability concerns are the subject of a recent publication by the Environmental Law Foundation and should be taken very seriously<sup>[255]</sup>.

Licensed engineers and architects in private practice must carry professional liability insurance, which is tied to the requirement to adhere to prevailing professional standards and codes, which – after all – reflect consensually determined, best professional practice and widely-accepted professional ethics.

Deliberation with subject matter experts over the course of the CSIWG meetings pointed to the ways in which liability concerns among practitioners can stymie innovations that would go beyond well-established practice. It can also lead infrastructure designers to pass liability on to project owners, in that the engineering consultant might inform the project owner of the state of science and the range of design options, but then leave the decision as to which design to choose to the project owner, thus disavowing responsibility (i.e., liability) for that decision. This practice raises critical questions, including what the impacts of such transfer of responsibility has on coordinated planning and coherent levels of protection if infrastructure owners vary in their level of risk aversion. It is, at the very least, challenging to imagine how this approach would lead to coherent implementation of the Climate-Safe Path for All.

There is relevant case law<sup>[256]</sup> in California that could not be assessed at the level required in the course of this project, but liability and design immunity have critical implications for whether and in what ways infrastructure will be designed and how climate change can be accounted for from a legal standpoint (see also<sup>[255]</sup>). The CSIWG recommends that to further operationalize its recommendation on updating standards, State agencies work with legal experts and insurance experts to address these concerns.

Ultimately, establishing professional standards of care that affect liability and convey a responsibility to safeguard infrastructure and the people that depend on it in the face of climate change may be the most powerful influence on how practicing engineers and architects carry out their work. To enable professionals to carry out their work to appropriate levels of care, enhanced training, professional development and certification programs can support the effective implementation of this recommendation (see [Chapter 9](#) for additional detail).

Liability issues constitute a large and complicated enough challenge that a separate panel may need to be convened to address all the nuances and complexities; this group could then provide guidance and recommendations to infrastructure agencies.



**Figure 7.7:** Establishing professional standards of care that affect liability and responsibility in the face of climate change may be the most powerful way to influence how practicing engineers and architects carry out their work. (Photo: Dave Rauenbuehler, Chase Center, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## Institutions for Integrated Infrastructure Systems

The governance of climate-safe infrastructure discussed so far was mostly concerned with the rules that govern how infrastructure is built. But the governance challenge is in fact bigger than that. The current approach to infrastructure planning, design, financing, construction, O&M, and eventually decommissioning is siloed by sectors and frequently isolated, narrowly focused agencies within sectors.

As we discussed in the [Chapter 6](#) on pre-development and as we will discuss in [Chapter 8](#) on financing climate-safe infrastructure, developing infrastructure in the future should be more systems- and outcome-oriented to both reveal and take account of the multi-faceted challenges and multi-sectoral benefits that can be generated (Figure 7.8). This is not just a nice idea, but a critical necessity given the high degree of infrastructure interconnectedness and interdependence<sup>[165]</sup>. The current institutional set-up and common ways of working, however, are not conducive to this approach.

In deliberating these institutional barriers, the CSIWG recognizes that there is little taste and few resources for major government reorganizations. A “softer” approach to improving cross-sector coordination and integration that help operationalize the transition to climate-safe infrastructure might involve:

- Minimizing obstacles to collaboration;
- Experimenting with new forms of coordination (e.g., coordinated integrative budgeting for projects);
- Fostering standing cross-agency working groups for infrastructure;
- Ensuring wider and more effective stakeholder participation; and
- Fostering regular communication across silos.

A long and more specific list of suggestions for improving cross-sector coordination and collaboration was provided in Moser and Finzi Hart<sup>[165]</sup>.

In some instances, where infrastructure projects cross-jurisdictional lines, more formal institutional entities might need to be created. There is precedent for this, too, in the form of special districts. As we will discuss in [Chapter 8](#), such special districts (made up of local jurisdictions, but involving State funding) are often essential for complex infrastructure projects to go forward.



**Figure 7.8:** Integrated infrastructure development can create many synergies and co-benefits. This multi-family housing unit, known as Colorado Court, in Santa Monica was the first LEED “Gold” certified multi-family building in the U.S. It combines many sustainability features and provides affordable housing to lower-income residents. (Photo: Calder Oliver, [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

# 8 *Funding Infrastructure: Trends, Needs, Challenges and Tools*

## Introduction

In [Chapter 2](#), we described the status of state infrastructure and in many cases were able to capture in fiscal terms the size of the backlog that currently exists, even without consideration of climate change or the needs for new infrastructure given demographic trends, technological changes and the desire to maintain California as an attractive and vibrant economy. The multi-billion-dollar need across infrastructure sectors for deferred maintenance, ongoing operation and maintenance (O&M) and new investment is not a unique California story, however, but one that is a shared challenge across the nation<sup>[2,257-264]</sup>.



**Figure 8.1:** Over the past two decades, progress on infrastructure planning and investment has been made, but there is widespread consensus that spending has been insufficient. (Photo: State Capitol workers; John Chacon, DWR, used with permission)

For decades, California lawmakers and infrastructure experts have recognized the importance of state infrastructure for its economy and the health and well-being of its residents ([Appendix 12](#)). As recently as June 2018, in recognition of the nationwide Infrastructure Week, California Senate Concurrent Resolution 136<sup>1</sup> noted, among other things, that:

- “Decades of underfunding and deferred maintenance have pushed infrastructure across the state to the brink of crisis, with preventable failures occurring in some communities that impose financial costs to the public and government;
- ...California risks compromising its competitive advantage by failing to adequately invest in its infrastructure;
- ...California’s failure to invest in infrastructure systems is more than a drag on the economy, it can be harmful to health and safety, even though most tragedies resulting from infrastructure failures are preventable with adequate investment;
- ...Every dollar invested in infrastructure generates in excess of \$2 in economic output and jobs; and
- ... now, therefore, be it resolved, that despite fiscal challenges, it is important for the Legislature to dedicate sufficient resources to transportation, infrastructure and green investments in our community” (Figure 8.1).

This call to action to make the necessary investments in the future comes amidst and despite the fact that over the course of every legislative session, tens of bills are introduced into the Legislature, and over the past two decades, incremental progress on infrastructure planning and financing has indeed been made. And yet, there is widespread consensus – from the ASCE to members of

<sup>1</sup> The full text of SCR136: [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180SCR136](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SCR136).

the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG), from not-for-profits advocating for greater infrastructure investment to lawmakers across both houses of the California Legislature, and across party lines – that investment in infrastructure, and thus in the future of the state is insufficient.

## Recent Trends in Infrastructure Spending in the US and in California

### Federal Infrastructure Spending Trends

To frame California infrastructure spending trends, it is helpful to place them into the larger context of federal trends, which were analyzed within the last few years as the national debate over infrastructure spending heated up. These national trends are also important given the significant influx of federal dollars, particularly for transportation infrastructure.

Federal non-defense infrastructure investment rose sharply after World War II, particularly during and following the Eisenhower Administration, and has been increasing overall in gross terms. But when depreciation of the capital is taken into account, infrastructure investment has actually followed a declining trend (in constant/inflation-adjusted dollars) through 2015, the infusion of federal investment in the late 2000's notwithstanding<sup>[258,259]</sup>. This decline is particularly evident when tracing the federal investment as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or as a share of federal spending overall<sup>[258]</sup>. Most of federal infrastructure spending is in the transportation sector (particularly highways), followed by aviation, mass transit and rail and water resources<sup>[258,261]</sup>.

At the same time, State and local expenditures on infrastructure has always been significantly larger than the federal share and gross investment has grown faster than federal spending: over the past two decades, State and local governments have spent 7-9 times more on infrastructure than the federal government<sup>[261]</sup>. State and local investment took a sizable hit, however, during the Great Recession of the late 2000's and is recovering since, although trends for any particular type of infrastructure did not all follow the same pattern.<sup>2</sup>

Over the same period (1956-2015), private sector investment in infrastructure (particularly in the electricity sector, and to a lesser extent in water, transportation and communication) has increased, with the strongest increase seen since the mid-2000's, particularly in the power sector<sup>[258]</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on particular infrastructure sectors, see: <http://www.gov-erning.com/gov-data/state-local-government-construction-spending.html>.

### California's Infrastructure Spending Trends

In 2011, the California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) produced an analysis of infrastructure investment trends over the preceding ten years<sup>[262]</sup>. No comparable update has been produced since. However, the Five-Year Infrastructure Plans – by law to be prepared annually as part of the Governor's budget<sup>3</sup> – as well as independent analyses, provide some insights on recent trends in infrastructure spending across the state.

California's gross infrastructure investment trends – to the extent they have been studied longitudinally – appear to be quite similar to the national trends summarized above (data for 1957-2002<sup>[263,265]</sup>; data for 1998-2010<sup>[262]</sup>). After an early peak in infrastructure investment during the P. Brown Administration, and a steep decline in the 1970's and 1980's, infrastructure spending recovered to 1960's levels in the last decade of the 20th century and continued to increase into the early 2000's<sup>[263]</sup>. The proportion of spending on different infrastructure sector changed profoundly over these decades, with, for example, a much greater proportion spent on transportation early on, and a much bigger proportion spent on schools in more recent decades<sup>[263]</sup>.

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*Over the past two decades, State and local governments have spent 7-9 times more on infrastructure than the federal government.*

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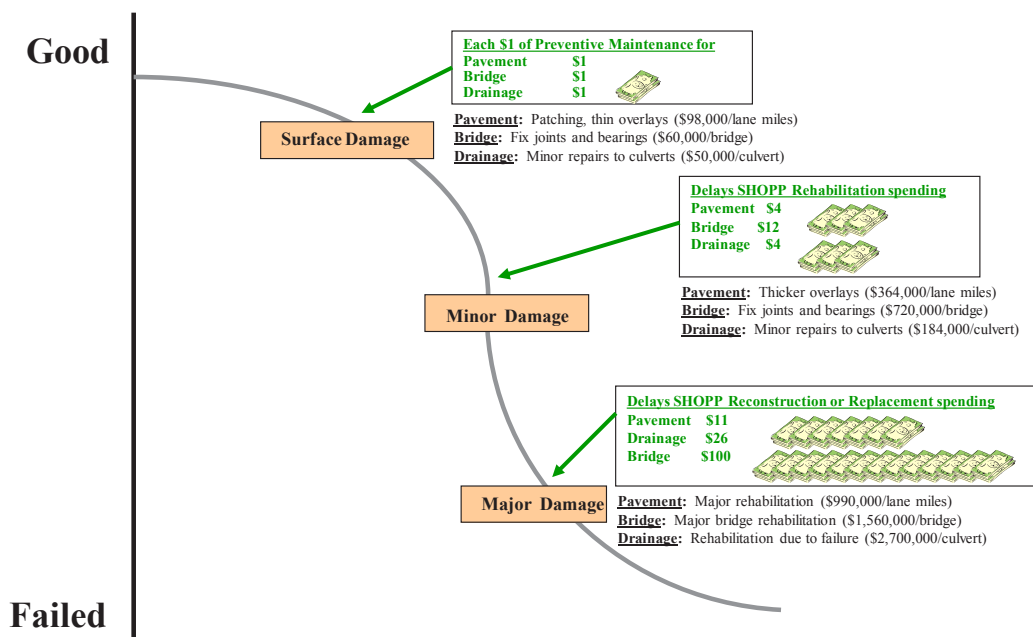
Drivers of infrastructure spending included the need to maintain existing infrastructure, build new infrastructure to accommodate growth, comply with State and/or federal mandates and fulfill new priorities and voter initiatives<sup>[262]</sup>. During the decade from 2000 to 2010, California spent \$102 billion on infrastructure<sup>[262]</sup>. From 2011-18, new general bond issuance was limited to \$24.1 billion. An additional \$36 billion of general obligation and lease revenue bonds that voters had authorized have not yet been issued to avoid increasing the debt burden, as California works to pay down pre-existing bond obligations<sup>[266]</sup>.

Bond funding cannot be used for regular maintenance. Thus, the growing share of bond-financed infrastructure investment obscures the fact that departments must draw on the General Fund to fund O&M. With every new investment that demand is increasing. At the same time, there is a persistent amount of deferred maintenance. Figure 8.2 illustrates – with an example from the

<sup>3</sup> While the law requires these plans to be prepared annually, this has not always been the case.



## COST EFFECTIVENESS CHART



**Figure 8.2** The cost-effectiveness of timely maintenance: Earlier maintenance keeps infrastructure in better condition and costs less than deferring maintenance to a later date. (Source: Caltrans 2015<sup>[267]</sup>, p.8; used with permission)

transportation sector – what the fiscal implications of deferred maintenance are: the longer infrastructure is not maintained, in a state of good repair, the more expensive the repair ultimately gets.

As recently as 2018, California’s LAO stated, “The State does not have a comprehensive inventory of the condition of its existing infrastructure. However, according to the administration’s 2016-17 estimate, the state has \$77 billion in deferred maintenance, most of which is in the transportation area”<sup>[6]</sup>. “In 2015-16 and 2016-17, the State provided almost \$1 billion for deferred maintenance, mostly from the General Fund (non-Proposition 98)”<sup>[6]</sup>.<sup>4</sup> The 2018 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan identified statewide deferred maintenance needs amounting to a slightly improved backlog of currently \$67.3 billion<sup>[6]</sup>, p.132 and \$383 million was actually allocated in the 2018-19 budget, an increase over previous years.

Estimates of future infrastructure funding needs vary widely by source, by year and for different time periods and infrastructure categories and it is unclear whether they include or exclude deferred maintenance. There is also no indication in any of these estimates that infrastructure spending needs account for climate change (Box 8.1).

### Box 8.1: Selected Estimates of Infrastructure Funding Needs

- 2007 First California Strategic Growth Plan<sup>[268]</sup>:  
\$500 billion over 20 years
- 2015 California Forward<sup>[269]</sup>:  
\$853 billion over 10 years for transportation, water and K-12 school construction
- 2016 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan<sup>[270]</sup>:  
\$55 billion over 5 years
- 2017 ASCE infrastructure investment need estimates for California<sup>[7]</sup>:  
\$78.75 billion (\$44.5 billion for drinking water; \$26.2 billion for wastewater; \$3.2 billion for schools; and \$4.85 billion for State parks)<sup>5</sup>;
- 2018 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan<sup>[266]</sup>:  
\$61.3 billion over 5 years (93% for transportation)

<sup>4</sup> On Proposition 98, see: [http://lao.ca.gov/2005/prop\\_98\\_primer/prop\\_98\\_primer\\_020805.htm](http://lao.ca.gov/2005/prop_98_primer/prop_98_primer_020805.htm).

<sup>5</sup> No estimates for other types of infrastructure and no timeframe given.

With the generally improved fiscal situation of the State as seen, for example, in its strong revenues and establishment of a State rainy-day fund, and recently approved bills and propositions providing additional funding for infrastructure (see [Chapter 1](#)), the State is in a better situation at this time than probably at any time over the past 20 years with regard to infrastructure funding. Between the widely recognized need for infrastructure investment and the (greater) ability to do so, California is in a strong position to have meaningful conversations about how to invest in its future and ensure that this investment seriously considers climate change.

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*The State is in a strong position to have meaningful conversations about how to invest in its climate-safe future.*

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## Structural Challenges to State Infrastructure Financing: The Pre-Existing Condition

To fully appreciate the added financial challenges posed by climate change, it helps to take a look at the ways in which California funds infrastructure at present. In general, “spending on infrastructure can be categorized as either capital spending or operation and maintenance spending. Capital spending consists of purchasing and modernizing new structures – [such as] roads and sewer systems - and equipment. Operation and maintenance include the cost of maintenance and upkeep as well as administration of public infrastructure – such as air traffic controllers. Associated education and research and development devoted to infrastructure is also included in this category of expenditure”<sup>[258]</sup>, pp. 10-11. Taylor<sup>[262]</sup>, p.6 counts local assistance by the State as an additional budget item related to infrastructure spending, and notes that infrastructure planning and design is included by some State agencies in their O&M budgets, but not by others.

The sources of money for these categories of infrastructure spending come – generally speaking – from two key sources: (1) so-called pay-as-you-go funding, which draws on the General Fund and fees collected in Special Funds; and (2) borrowed funding, which uses financial vehicles such as General Obligation (GO) bonds, Lease-Revenue or Traditional Revenue bonds (Figure 8.3). During the first decade of the 21st century, 35% of infrastructure spending came from pay-as you go funding and 65% came from bonds<sup>[262]</sup>.

Hanak and Reed<sup>[265]</sup>, in their 2009 report on needed financial reforms in the ways California funds its

infrastructure, note the following key structural challenges (reiterated by other analysts, including the J. Brown administration itself):

- An overreliance on GO bonds, which require only a simple majority to pass but which increase the debt burden and debt service expenditures (the capital and interest of GO bonds are paid back over several decades from the General Fund);
- A relatively high debt service burden can lead to downgrading of credit ratings and thus increase the cost of debt and/or demand cuts to other budget items paid for from the General Fund – the situation witnessed in the early 2000’s.<sup>6</sup>
- Since the passage of [Proposition 13](#) in 1978, local governments require a 2/3 (super) majority to increase taxes, i.e., to increase the revenue sources required to pay for local infrastructure investment. This has dramatically altered the funding situation of local governments. State bonds, by contrast, require only a simple majority to pass and thus are increasingly called upon to pay for infrastructure investment. (Since 2000 and the passage of [Proposition 39](#), local school bonds require only a 55% voter approval rate and are thus easier to get passed);
- Traditionally, the State has made insufficient use of generating revenue for infrastructure through user fees, which do not require voter approval. This is an option to improve funding streams in the water and transportation sectors in particular, and to increase efficiencies through demand management such as water pricing, gas tax increases, local development impact fees etc.; and
- Public-private partnerships (P3) with private equity sharing is still limited, obscuring opportunities for private sector investment in public infrastructure.



Figure 8.3: Bonds are often used for upfront capital outlays, but bond money cannot be used for operation and maintenance. (Photo: American Canyon High School; [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under the Creative Commons license 3.0)

<sup>6</sup> See also: [http://www.dof.ca.gov/Reports/Budget/documents/CompleteDebtsandLiabilitiesat2018-18GB\(Website\).pdf](http://www.dof.ca.gov/Reports/Budget/documents/CompleteDebtsandLiabilitiesat2018-18GB(Website).pdf)

Nearly a decade later, the 2018 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan still mirrors these observations, although some aspects have been improved in the intervening years, while others remain challenging for California to this day<sup>[266]</sup>. It adds to the understanding of the current infrastructure finance situation by illuminating some of the infrastructure financing tools traditionally used in and by the State and pointing to the fiscal implications:

“Budget challenges in the early 2000's resulted in a greater reliance on debt financing, rather than pay-as-you-go spending. From 1974 to 1999, California voters authorized \$38.4 billion of general obligation bonds. From 2000 to 2010, voters expanded the types of programs funded by bonds and authorized approximately \$111.9 billion of general obligation bonds.”(p.129)

“The [J. Brown] Administration has greatly tempered the use of debt, supporting \$24.1 billion of new general obligation bonds from 2011 to 2018 - including \$8 billion on the ballot for Natural Resources and Housing in 2018 - and strengthening oversight of bond spending for educational facility bonds enacted through initiative. Of all previously approved infrastructure bonds, debt obligations of \$73.4 billion in general obligation bonds and \$9.3 billion in lease revenue bonds remain outstanding. Additionally, there are \$36 billion of general obligation and lease revenue bonds (\$31.3 billion and \$4.7 billion, respectively) that are authorized but not yet issued, which represents a significant decrease from the 2011 reported total of \$48 billion. The bonds will be issued when projects are approved and ready for construction.”(p. 129)

“When the State borrows to pay for infrastructure, roughly one out of every two dollars spent on infrastructure investments pays interest costs, rather than construction costs. The amount of funds required to service the debt had increased steadily over past years, but that growth has slowed during this Administration. Annual expenditures on debt service grew from \$2.9 billion in 2000-01 to \$6.4 billion in 2010-11 - an average annual growth of 9.2%. Since that time, debt service grew more slowly to \$7.3 billion in 2017-18 - an average annual growth rate of only 1.7%.”(pp. 129-130)

As a result of recent efforts by the J. Brown Administration and the Legislature to work toward a balanced State budget, California's debt situation (measured, for example, as a ratio to personal income or as debt/capita) has significantly improved compared to the height of its debt crisis in 2011 but is still higher than the national average<sup>[266]</sup>.

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*When the State borrows to pay for infrastructure, roughly one out of every two dollars spent on infrastructure investments pays interest costs, rather than construction costs.*

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Figure 8.4 When the State borrows to pay for infrastructure, roughly one out of every two dollars spent on infrastructure investments pays interest costs, rather than construction costs. (Photo: three bridges; Justin Dolske, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## Recent Developments

In addition to efforts in reducing debt and ensuring the more efficient use of government funds, as well as a generally stronger economy, several other steps have been taken to ease some of the challenges noted in the Public Policy Institute of California's report calling for financial reform<sup>[265]</sup>. Maybe most notably, SB 628 (Beale), passed in 2014, and effective as of January 1, 2015, enables local governments to form Enhanced Infrastructure Finance Districts (EIFDs) – a special governance district empowered to collect tax increments (i.e., the additional taxes generated from the new development within the bounds of the EIFD) to finance infrastructure development. Voter approval is not required to form an EIFD, but a 55% majority is required to pass bonds<sup>[271-273]</sup>. While oriented toward local governments, this new financing tool is likely to ease local financing capabilities, indirectly reducing pressure on State funds to support local infrastructure projects.

Even more recently, Assembly Resolution ACA-21 (Mayes, Obernolte, an active bill, remaining in progress<sup>7</sup>) proposes to amend the State constitution by establishing a California Infrastructure Investment Fund. It would create a permanent fund in the State Treasury and require the Controller, beginning in the 2019–20 fiscal year, to transfer from the General Fund to the California Infrastructure Investment Fund in each fiscal year an amount equal to up to 2.5% of the estimated General Fund revenues for that fiscal year. The measure would require, for the 2019–20 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, the amounts in the fund to be allocated, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for specified infrastructure investments, including the funding of deferred maintenance projects.<sup>8</sup>

## Lack of Vision, Prioritization and Coordinated Strategy

While the fate of ACA-21 is yet to be determined, long-standing observers of state infrastructure investment argue that more than additional funds are needed to move California toward modern, climate-safe and sustainable infrastructure. For example, the Little Hoover Commission, in its 2010 Building California report<sup>[2]</sup>, warned – as the state was barely emerging out of years of fiscal deficits and the late 2000's Great Recession – that the state needed to profoundly reconsider its infrastructure investment thinking and approaches.

It bemoaned that the State seemed to lack a compelling vision and coordinated strategy to guide its infrastructure investment decisions. Since 1999, the legislature had mandated that an annual Five-Year Infrastructure Plan be submitted alongside the Governor's budget, summarizing state infrastructure needs compiled by department staff in collaboration with the Department of Finance (DOF). It was mandated to be considered by the legislature during its deliberations and budget decisions.<sup>11</sup>

"If California is to emerge from the recession more economically competitive, State leaders must develop an infrastructure strategic plan that prioritizes the state's most pressing needs and identifies new ways to pay for the billions of dollars of infrastructure the state will need. This plan must integrate the state's existing strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving sustainable development. A smart infrastructure strategy can help the State meet its environmental goals as well as foster a healthy economy. Likewise, the transformation envisioned by AB 32<sup>9</sup> and SB 375<sup>10</sup> only can be achieved with a growing economy, one supported by strategic infrastructure investments." (para. 2, Letter to Governor and Legislature)

Twenty years after passage of the Infrastructure Planning Act, however, the Little Hoover Commission remarked,

"What governmentwide planning exists – collated in the administration's annual Five-Year Infrastructure Plan – is segmented by department without a view to overarching goals or a ranking of projects by relative need or the value they would deliver economically or environmentally. Though the plan is delivered to the Legislature, lawmakers have yet to engage the administration in a discussion about which projects are most important or how California can use existing state assets more efficiently." (para. 4, Letter to Governor and Legislature)

Discussions during the CSIWG meetings made clear that this situation has barely improved since. Little significance was given to the Five-Year Infrastructure Plan, as it lacks coordination across agencies and an integrated vision that would allow for prioritization. Moreover, while the

<sup>7</sup> See: [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180ACA21](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180ACA21).

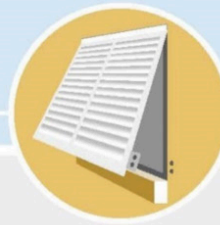
<sup>8</sup> The CSIWG provides information on this pending legislation to provide the full context of activity at the State level. It states no opinion on whether or not this legislation should be approved.

<sup>9</sup> All past Five-Year Infrastructure Plans and other reports related to infrastructure financing are available from the California Department of Finance at: [http://www.dof.ca.gov/Programs/Capital\\_Outlay/](http://www.dof.ca.gov/Programs/Capital_Outlay/).






<sup>10</sup> See: [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/05-06/bill/asm/ab\\_0001-0050/ab\\_32\\_bill\\_20060927\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/05-06/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_32_bill_20060927_chaptered.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See: [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=200720080SB375](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200720080SB375).

# Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves



## Natural Hazard Mitigation Provides the Nation \$6 in Benefit for Every \$1 Invested

National Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) Per Peril <small>*BCR numbers in this study have been rounded</small>		Beyond Code Requirements	Federally Funded
<b>Overall Hazard Benefit-Cost Ratio</b>		<b>\$4:1</b>	<b>\$6:1</b>
 <b>Riverine Flood</b>		<b>\$5:1</b>	<b>\$7:1</b>
 <b>Hurricane Surge</b>		<b>\$7:1</b>	Too few grants
 <b>Wind</b>		<b>\$5:1</b>	<b>\$5:1</b>
 <b>Earthquake</b>		<b>\$4:1</b>	<b>\$3:1</b>
 <b>Wildland-Urban Interface Fire</b>		<b>\$4:1</b>	<b>\$3:1</b>

**This Interim Study quantified a number of benefits from mitigation, including reductions in:**

- Future deaths, nonfatal injuries, and PTSD
- Repair costs for damaged buildings and contents
- Sheltering costs for displaced households
- Loss of revenue and other business interruption costs to businesses whose properties are damaged
- Loss of economic activity in the broader community
- Loss of service to the community when fire stations, hospitals, or other public buildings are damaged
- Insurance costs other than insurance claims
- Costs for urban search and rescue

Figure 8.5 A recently updated comprehensive study undertaken by the National Institute for Building Safety (NIBS) in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other partners illustrates that pre-disaster investment in hazard mitigation pays manifold. For every dollar invested, the nation saves \$6 (avoided damages and other benefits) (Source: FEMA, based on NIBS 2017<sup>[275]</sup>)

J. Brown Administration set forth funding priorities, and mentioned that Executive Order B-15 – which demands that State agencies account for climate change in long-term investment decisions – is being implemented, the statement about implementation is vague and the priorities list does not reflect any overt consideration of climate change.

And while California's credit rating has improved steadily in recent years as a result of the improvements in its fiscal situation<sup>12</sup>, making State borrowing more affordable, the debt burden of the State – as shown above – is still significant. Given tax rules in the state, voters would need to be convinced that higher taxation is needed to increase revenues for infrastructure rather than borrow more money (which they have tended to approve at a greater rate than

bonds have been issued) (Figure 8.5). Previous studies suggest the public has only limited understanding of how bonds affect State finances<sup>[263,265]</sup>, but the comparatively high success rate of fiscal measures in the June 2018 election suggests it is not impossible to make a convincing case for why Californians should invest in their own communities, economy, education, quality of life and their future<sup>[274]</sup>.

*The State lacks a compelling vision and coordinated strategy to guide its infrastructure investment decisions.*

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ratings/current.asp>.

## Recommendation 7

*Because improving resilience is not a zero-sum activity, adding resilience in one area cannot be balanced by relaxing resilience requirements somewhere else. Adding requirements for resilience will come at a cost, so unfunded mandates are not feasible. The true costs over the full life-cycle of infrastructure projects should be assessed broadly, and the State should make efforts to help policy-makers and the public better understand the necessity of bearing these costs. Educational, promotional and other outreach should be conducted to generate support for the expenditures.*

A concrete way forward with implementing this recommendation is for the Strategic Growth Council and other State agencies to launch serious engagement (persistent and creative education and outreach) efforts to help Californians more fully understand why investment in climate-safe infrastructure is necessary, why the Climate-Safe Path for All is the safest and – in light of observed climate trends and already-experienced catastrophic impacts – likely a highly cost-effective way forward (Figure 8.6). This will help make the case for continued financial reforms that remove some of the structural obstacles to a more reliable and affordable approach to infrastructure financing (see Stakeholder Engagement discussion in [Chapter 9](#)).



**Figure 8.6** The State must engage elected officials at all levels and the public to help them better understand the necessity for paying for resilience and generate the necessary support. (Photo: In the streets of Oakland; Thomas Hawk, [flickr](#), licensed under the Creative Commons License 2.0)



## The Added Challenges of Infrastructure Financing in the Face of Climate Change

### Greater Damages and New Costs to Infrastructure Due to Unmitigated Climate Change

First, it is important to understand how climate change can cause greater damages and higher costs to infrastructure if the impacts of climate change and related extreme events are not prevented or mitigated. Possible cost increases from unmitigated climate change fall into several categories:

#### Increased damages to existing infrastructure and related increases in the costs for operation, maintenance and repair.

- Gradually increasing stresses may depreciate infrastructure more rapidly than previously estimated, requiring more frequent maintenance, repair or earlier-than-expected replacement (such as higher temperatures affecting the need for road resurfacing);
- Gradually increasing stresses may also increase operating costs (such as extreme heat requiring more air conditioning in state buildings);
- Due to more frequent and/or more intense climate-related extreme events, wear-and tear will increase, resulting in shorter expected lifespans of infrastructure or require more frequent repairs (such as the need to replace culverts more frequently);
- More intense or concurrent extreme events may lead to premature failure of infrastructure (such as the scour from concurrent coastal and inland flooding, as occurred in Hurricane Katrina<sup>[276]</sup>);
- As climate change increases the occurrence of extreme events – in California and beyond – there is empirical evidence that the cost of materials and of labor increases due to the higher demand for both in post-disaster times. If infrastructure were built back to pre-disaster conditions, and thus insufficiently prepared for the next (and possibly worse) extreme event, replacement needs/costs would incur more frequently;

#### Increased costs of new infrastructure and retrofits.

- Higher material and labor costs also affect new infrastructure. Labor shortages during such times may add to potential cost overruns. The CSIWG deliberations revealed how the disasters in 2017 and 2018 resulted in such cost increases to current projects in California (particularly in the Building

sector). Thus, estimates made today of the cost of new infrastructure without considering the spill-over effects of increasingly frequent climate-driven disasters may well be too low;

- To the extent new construction takes climate change into account, upfront costs for infrastructure may be higher than construction without doing so (e.g., by laying the foundation now for adaptive design), but over multiple decades may be significantly more cost-effective than overestimating or underestimating what kind of infrastructure is ultimately needed over the course of its lifetime;<sup>13</sup>

#### Increased indirect losses from failing infrastructure.

- Whenever infrastructure fails, there are significant indirect damages to life and safety of communities and to the economy, as the lack of functional infrastructure can severely disrupt and delay the return to full economic activity<sup>[277,278]</sup>;
- Given that infrastructure funding comes from all levels of government and the private sector, lack of funding from local and federal levels or failure of the private sector to take climate change into account can increase the economic vulnerability of the state, for example by more frequent demands on disaster recovery funds, supply-chain disruptions or slowed local recovery and hence diminished economic returns to the State treasury;

#### Increased R&D costs but also opportunities for significant return on investment (ROI)

- Earlier sections pointed to significant needs for investment in the relevant science, tools and platforms to make actionable climate science available to engineers and architects. This type of investment requires sustained support;
- Because adaptive design is still in its early stages of development, there is a need for increased investment in applied engineering science; and
- Investment in Research and Development (R&D), however, is likely to pay off as the need for such knowledge is global and rapidly growing, providing a significant opportunity to generate a return on investment over time. Put differently, failing to invest in this area may be a significant lost opportunity.

<sup>13</sup> There is no example – anywhere in California or in the United States – of ever having structurally “over-protected” against a natural disaster such as floods, wildfires, storms, earthquakes and so on. There are examples of having taken sufficient precautionary measures and, sadly, many examples of having not protected ourselves enough, either because we did not believe certain extremes would be possible to occur or because we believed ourselves safe, ignored best hazard management practices or stopped short of making adequate investments in our safety (the disasters of the 21st century alone suffice to underscore this point).

A selective literature review conducted as part of a study for the Fourth Assessment revealed that the state has no comprehensive or reliable estimates of what climate change impacts and adaptation would cost at the state or local level<sup>[279]</sup>(Figure 8.7). A range of factors make such estimates difficult, but significant opportunities for filling knowledge gaps and improving on existing partial assessments are possible. This is why we suggested earlier – as a concrete step forward to realizing the Climate-Safe Path for All – to invest more heavily in research that assesses the economics of climate change impacts and of different infrastructure adaptation options, as well as seriously evaluates different financing vehicles to support building adaptive infrastructure.

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*There are as yet no comprehensive or reliable estimates of what climate change impacts and adaptation would cost at the state or local level*

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### Distribution of Damages and Costs

At present, the (mostly) increased damages and costs listed above are not adequately known, nor accounted for in the finance systems at any level of the public or private sectors. One reason for it is that it is not easy to determine how, when, where and to whom these costs and damages accrue. Geography, changing climate patterns and past patterns of infrastructure investment (or, as the case may be, dis- and underinvestment), however, guarantee that they will accrue unevenly. Moreover, it is not easy to determine what a fair distribution of the added economic burden should be. Questions of responsibility, liability and capability are a long-standing feature of greenhouse gas mitigation policy debates and are now also emerging in public debate around adaptation. We expect them to become more pronounced in the future.

Credit rating agencies, such as Standards & Poor's and Moody's, recently announced that they will take climate change into account in assessing the credit worthiness of local government entities<sup>[280,281]</sup>. As rating agencies move to assessing climate risks, and these risks show up in the interest rates and insurance costs paid by localities, the benefits from climate-safe infrastructure can be monetized upfront. Over time, all financing becomes climate financing. However, this places a strong onus on local governments to get serious about addressing the growing risk from climate change. Given the significant constraints local governments face, however, in funding



**Figure 8.7: A study conducted for the California's Fourth Climate Assessment revealed that the state has no comprehensive or reliable estimates of what climate change impacts and adaptation would cost at the state and local level, yet that is where most of the costs will be borne. (Photo: Stakeholder workshop on adaptation finance challenges in Los Angeles; Robert Kay, used with permission)**

adaptation<sup>[279]</sup>, not to speak of major infrastructure upgrades, given the tax-limited nature of California local governments and the growing burden on local budgets from pension obligations, it is not to be taken for granted that local governments can face this challenge without significant help from higher levels of government. It is particularly unlikely that low-income communities will have the necessary fiscal capacity to do so. Thus, in addition to the increased outlay to make state infrastructure climate-safe, the demands on State budgets may grow as local governments require additional help.

At the same time, federal willingness to invest in infrastructure is unclear at present. While the Trump Administration has promised greater infrastructure investment and streamlining of the infrastructure permitting process<sup>[282]</sup>, the source of funding is far from clear<sup>[283]</sup>. A greater involvement of the private sector is expected, but there is no clarity or any standardized procedure for how to draw in private financing. Further, because the federal Administration has reversed most positions, guidance and priorities related to climate change, it is not clear to what extent expenditure of federal infrastructure funding coming into the state can explicitly account for climate change. State-federal consistency requirements, however, may allow the State to put those dollars to good use, i.e., toward climate-safe infrastructure investment, if it raises the bar through design guidance and sets strong regulatory requirements.

Against the backdrop of historical patterns and complexities in infrastructure funding, taking climate change into account from a fiscal perspective is thus everything but straightforward. In a fiscally constrained and uneven environment, with little clarity on the relative roles of private and public sectors, many questions arise. These include:

- How will climate-safe infrastructure projects be funded (i.e., what is the source of revenue) and/or financed (i.e., how can additional money be borrowed) and what is the proper deal structure?
- How will costs be distributed across different infrastructure owners and different levels of government?
- What role can or should the private sector play?
- What improvements are needed to allow for effective P3s?
- What can or should finance seekers do to attract investment funds?
- What do investors need to come to view infrastructure as a viable place to invest?
- How should the cost-benefit analysis be calculated?
- How will social equity in the access to and distribution of funds be ensured?

A follow-on activity to the work of the CSIWG should explore them in detail.

## Accounting for Climate Change in Infrastructure Financing

Many analysts and practitioners call for the development of new financial tools (see review in Moser et al. 2018<sup>[279]</sup>) to generate new funds for adaptation, including for forward-looking, climate-safe infrastructure investment. Some, however, recognize that the financial tools alone will not suffice<sup>[225,279,284]</sup>. Instead, an integrated financing system needs to be built instead, and this report follows this advice, with Chapters 5-9 constituting the elements of such a system.

There is important precedent for developing complex financing systems in many areas of public responsibility. In climate adaptation there are now many financing experiments and development of innovative financing instruments underway, but they do not yet constitute a “system.”

A more fully developed “system” would have standardized complex transactions so they can be predictably executed on a routine basis (Figure 8.8). It would entail (1) strong data and analytics to support economic assessments and financial transactions, including an assessment of the performance of climate-safe infrastructure (see [Chapter 5](#)); (2) a pipeline of well-developed projects ready for investment (see [Chapter 6](#)); (3) clear governance processes and structures that allow moneys from various sources to be received, integrated and applied toward properly designed climate-safe infrastructure (see [Chapter 7](#)); (4) a range of readily available and proven financing tools (this chapter); and (5) a variety of efforts that enable appropriate implementation (see [Chapter 9](#)). Figure 4.8 in [Chapter 4](#) illustrated these five components as well as the need to integrate them across scales of governance.

Below, we highlight more specific needs to realize the finance-related needs. The CSIWG considers progress on each essential to actually get climate-safe infrastructure built on the ground.

## Data and Analytics in Support of Climate-Safe Infrastructure Finance

[Chapter 4](#) provided an overview of what data is already available and what more is needed to assist engineers and architects in the planning and design of climate-safe infrastructure. In addition, however, there are several non-climate science information needs that are essential to make the economic case for adaptation investment.



Figure 8.8 An integrated system of skills, capacities and mechanisms is needed to analyze, design, plan, govern, finance and implement infrastructure projects. (Photo: San Francisco Main Public Library; Thomas Hawk, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



An assessment of the economic feasibility of a project is commonly the first step in the infrastructure development cycle but assessing costs and benefits in the face of both climate and societal uncertainties is not trivial. What is commonly lacking are:

- **Appropriate benefit cost analysis tools** deployed in robust decision-making in the face of deep uncertainty, risk management and adaptation pathways contexts, applied over the entire life-cycle of a project, along with the necessary capacity of many analysts to use these tools appropriately (see also [Chapter 6](#));
- **Adequate data on costs** of non-traditional designs as well as well-established methodologies for assessing costs over the entire life-cycle of an infrastructure project, not only its upfront costs;
- **Adequate data on benefits** to the project owner and to society, including trusted methodologies for assessing difficult-to-monetize benefits such as ecological or cultural values; from an investor's perspective, this also requires performance data on the environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors that would satisfy green and/or climate bond requirements; and, last but not least,
- **Defensible metrics of “success” of adaptive infrastructure projects**, which would give infrastructure owners and investors/lenders the confidence that the chosen adaptation pathway is viable and well-considered, and progress toward climate safety is being made.

At the moment, none of these approaches are standardized, and for some types of projects, such as nature-based infrastructure, they are only in development. This lack of established approaches and metrics of success makes it difficult for investors to assess with confidence whether a project is a good investment or not.

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*The lack of established approaches and metrics of success makes it difficult for investors to assess with confidence whether a project is a good investment or not.*

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<sup>14</sup> This might be a possible opportunity for collaboration with the Sustained National Climate Assessment (see Box 5.3).

A number of practical steps forward can help implement the overarching recommendation on developing the funding and public support for investment in a climate-safe future:

1. The State should include economic analyses of the costs and benefits of climate-safe infrastructure as an explicit focus in the next update of the Climate Change Strategic Research Plan to develop better estimates of the fiscal challenges and opportunities;
2. With available and improved methodologies in hand, State agencies should carefully evaluate expected costs and benefits of current and proposed policy approaches to infrastructure planning and design, including via interdependencies with other agencies and policies. They should also publicly and transparently disclose those costs, benefits, interdependencies and related climate-risks. This evaluation should include consideration of factors such as:
  - Timing (life-cycle);
  - Equity (who bears the costs and who enjoys the benefits);
  - Appropriate cost-benefit tests (such as participant costs, total resource costs, and full accounting of externalities); and
  - Second-order effects (such as the impacts of adopting one policy on the success of another).
3. The State should find ways to compile and critically assess economic valuation methodologies, particularly of difficult-to-assess costs and benefits, that are available in the literature<sup>14</sup> and update outdated State economic valuation practices, so that the environmental and social benefits can be more effectively integrated into feasibility studies; and
4. The Technical Advisory Council of the State's Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program's (ICARP) has begun investigating indicators and metrics of adaptation success. This is also subject to ongoing research in the research community<sup>[285]</sup>. The TAC or a subset of the TAC, in cooperation with relevant State agency staff, external researchers, stakeholders representing social equity interests and financial experts should develop a suite of metrics that are meaningful to all parties – funding seekers and funding providers.

## Pipeline of Investment-Ready Projects

As discussed above and in [Chapter 6](#), California does not currently have an integrated vision and clearly prioritized strategy of how to modernize its infrastructure. Each agency puts forward its own set of projects and budget priorities get made in a non-transparent fashion. The legislature has its own priorities and does not appear to follow the Five-Year Infrastructure Plans. Voter initiatives reflect popular demand (or at least popular support) but again, do not constitute an integrated strategy.

Private-sector investment is sometimes seen as an additional option to supplement State or federal funds. With private-sector funding, however, traditional models to deliver enough return-on-investment to motivate investors could be undermined by climate change variability, resulting in potentially increased costs or shifts in how project liability is shared between the State and the private investor.

P3 authorizing legislation does not exist for every infrastructure sector in California (it is available for highways, the high-speed rail and courthouses)<sup>[1]</sup> and is thus still relatively rare compared to the use of such approaches in other countries. In the few instances in which California State agencies have engaged in P3s to date, the public-private partnership was hampered by lack of project selection criteria, lack of clarity whether the P3 was actually the best procurement approach, limited oversight from the State's Public Infrastructure Advisory Commission (PIAC), and uneven expertise in procurement<sup>[286]</sup>.<sup>15</sup> Many consider P3s to be complex arrangements that require considerable expertise to carry out appropriately<sup>[223,287]</sup>. As we will discuss in [Chapter 9](#), workforce development for procurement staff on how to re-orient toward climate-safe infrastructure investment is a critical aspect of realizing climate-safe infrastructure.

These complexities notwithstanding, P3s are commonly invoked as potential vehicles to attract more funding to infrastructure, particularly in light of the need for growing investment due to climate change. This potential should only be realized, however, if rules and accountability mechanisms have been clarified, and if there is a series of projects lined up (see [Chapter 6](#)), ready for investment and in final costs to the taxpayer are sufficiently prudent as compared to traditional government financing.

<sup>15</sup> The California legislative authority (Section 143 of the Streets and Highways Code) for P3 projects expired on January 1, 2017. See additional information on P3s used by DOT at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/innovfinance/public-private-partnerships/PPP\\_main.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/innovfinance/public-private-partnerships/PPP_main.html).

## Dedicated Climate Funds vs. Climate Accountability in All Infrastructure Finance

Proposition 68<sup>16</sup> (a ballot measure deciding the fate of SB 5, De León<sup>17</sup>) was approved in the June 2018 election. It approved the issuance of general obligation bonds for parks, natural resources protection, ocean and coastal protection, water quality and supply, including groundwater management, flood protection, climate preparedness/adaptation and resiliency projects<sup>[266]</sup>. While Prop. 68 is one of several bond measures and \$4 billion dollars is indeed significant, it has many intended purposes, climate adaptation being one, and it only begins to make a down-payment on the estimated funding needs for infrastructure cited above. How much of the \$4 billion will actually be spent on adaptation – and on state infrastructure specifically – remains to be seen.

Another bill is currently making its way through the Assembly (AB 733, Berman)<sup>18</sup>, which would explicitly allow EIFDs to be used for local climate change adaptation projects. While it is awaiting action from a concurrent Senate bill in the next legislative session and it focuses on local rather than state infrastructure funding mechanisms, Prop. 68 and AB 733 are examples of how voters and the legislature try to improve the availability of funding for climate-safe infrastructure through dedicated funding sources.<sup>19</sup>

The alternative – or rather, additional – approach particularly promoted in this report is to ensure that all new or retrofitted infrastructure accounts for climate change, which requires changes in standards, codes, guidelines and planning processes (see [Chapter 7](#)). If such changes are made, all available funding mechanisms – not just a limited dedicated source – provide a pool of resources to make the state's infrastructure climate safe.

The two complementary approaches point to the different demands of effective governance systems required to put climate-safe infrastructure financing in place. In the case of dedicated funds, infrastructure project owners may claim adaptation benefits but accountability mechanisms would need to be established. EIFDs might constitute critically important governance structures for projects that cross jurisdictional lines (as is often the case with infrastructure projects). Moreover the 55% voter approval

<sup>16</sup> See: [https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_68,\\_Parks,\\_Environment,\\_and\\_Water\\_Bond\\_\(June\\_2018\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_68,_Parks,_Environment,_and_Water_Bond_(June_2018)).

<sup>17</sup> See: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180SB5](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB5).

<sup>18</sup> See: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB733](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB733).

<sup>19</sup> Here again, the CSIWG only provides information on pending legislation to provide the full context of activity at the state level. It does not state an opinion on whether or not this legislation should be approved.

of bonds issued through EIFDs makes it easier to obtain financing compared to taxation requiring a super majority. Yet, as with dedicated funds, what is being built with those funds does not have to follow strict codes or standards unless they are established by the State.

### Innovative Climate-Safe Financing Tools

Another set of governance issues relates to the design of financing instruments that reduce the barrier of upfront costs versus O&M costs over the course of the project's entire life cycle. An example from the building sector illustrates the point: arguably, climate adaptation strategies can be more easily incorporated into new construction as the building is being planned and designed. Existing facilities pose a greater challenge on many fronts. Major retrofits to an existing facility are a significant investment in time and resources that will need to provide clear value to the building owner.

Upfront capital, in particular, is limited, in the public sector. To avoid the need for upfront funding in energy retrofits, building owners often enter into arrangements with energy service companies (ESCOs), whereby the ESCO provides an energy savings guarantee and the building owner secures a loan from a lender based on the guaranteed savings provided. From the owner's perspective, the savings from the retrofits will offset the loan payments. From a lender's perspective, the savings guarantee provided by the ESCO gives the lender confidence that the project will generate a positive cash flow.

Climate adaptation strategies could conceivably be integrated in existing buildings, in a similar fashion. Either as part of an energy retrofit or as a stand-alone effort, financing options to offset the initial costs would relieve a key barrier to implementation. However, unlike energy retrofits, climate adaptation strategies may not result in immediate short-term financial benefits such as utility bill reductions. Therefore, financing products may need to be structured to recognize the longer-term benefits such as reducing risks from extreme climate events like wildfires, flooding, high heat and so on.

Similar ideas have led to the creation of "resilience bonds"<sup>[224]</sup>. Resilience bonds combine the benefits of catastrophe insurance (also called "cat bonds" – namely, to have insurance coverage for the unlikely case of a catastrophic event)- with the benefits of investing in resilience which aims at reducing losses - namely, to

reduce catastrophe insurance premiums and the risk to the principal (i.e., the cat bond holder). Resilience bonds put a price on the risk reduction that would be achieved from a resilience project, turn it into a rebate on the catastrophe insurance policy, and return that rebate as financing to the resilience project.

Resilience bonds were created as one way to ensure that the financial value created by public investments in resilience is returned to the public sector. While still in the pilot phase, interest in resilience bonds is rapidly growing in part due to the growing climate risks and expected losses, partly due to the requirement for many infrastructure projects to carry insurance and partly due to the pressure to find financing for upgrades/retrofits or new infrastructure projects. Resilience bonds can fill project funding gaps for upfront costs, funding future project phases, cover O&M costs or buy additional insurance; they can help meet insurance obligations; and they enhance project design integrity.

A number of other innovative finance instruments have been developed or are being proposed (e.g., project cost overrun insurance<sup>[288, 289]</sup>; green bonds<sup>[290,291]</sup>; climate bonds; environmental performance bonds<sup>[292,293]</sup>; and social impact investment<sup>†[294,295]</sup>). For many, however, these novel instruments are still too risky because they are unproven, certification and/or accountability is lacking, or existing governance structures present obstacles. Thus, to realize the full potential of these innovative finance instruments, these governance structures and components need to be reworked, revised or invented and users must become familiar and skilled in using them. For example, finances are often handled within departmental budgets but benefits of multi-faceted infrastructure projects may accrue to other sectors. Thus, to enable those benefits to be counted against the costs incurred, financial accounting must be able to "bust" governance silos (see the discussion at the end of [Chapter 7](#)).

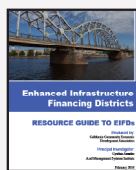
Over the course of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure webinar series, three webinars were dedicated to infrastructure finance. Those webinars were some of the best attended. Similarly, the Third California Adaptation Forum has a stronger-than-ever focus on funding and financing. These observations suggest the growing interest and need for infrastructure designers, planners, consultants and not-for-profits to learn more about adaptation finance, particularly for large infrastructure projects (Box 8.2).

To advance innovative financing for state climate-safe infrastructure projects, additional concrete follow-up steps would include:

1. Building greater in-house technical know-how on innovative financing mechanisms; and
2. Working closely with financial advisers from the private and public sectors, including philanthropy, to explore and implement innovative funding mechanisms.



## Box 2.2 Selected Resources on Funding and Finance Relevant to Climate Adaptation and Infrastructure



Amador, C. 2016. [Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts: Resource Guide to EIFDs](#). Los Angeles: California Community Economic Development Association.



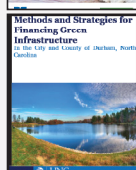
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Build America Investment Initiative. 2015. [Federal Resource Guide for Infrastructure Planning and Design](#). Washington, DC: Build America Investment Initiative



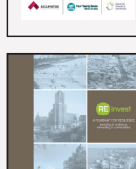
Fairchild and Rose. 2018. [Inclusive Procurement and Contracting: Building a Field of Policy and Practice](#). Oakland, CA: PolicyLink & Emerald Cities Collaborative.



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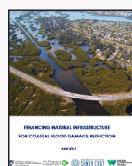
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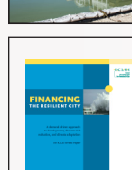
Hacke, Wood and Urquilla. 2015. [Community Investment: Focusing on the System](#). Troy, MI and Initiative for Responsible Investment, Harvard. and Cambridge, MA: The Kresge Foundation



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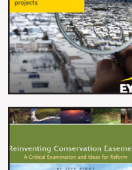
Brugmann. 2011. [Financing the Resilient City: A Demand Driven Approach to Development, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Climate Adaptation](#). Bonn, Germany: ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability.



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Pidot. 2005. [Reinventing Conservation Easements: A Critical Examination and Ideas to Reform](#). Policy Focus Report PF013. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.



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## Conclusions

In this chapter, we have reviewed infrastructure funding trends, challenges and the needs and opportunities to put in place finance systems that can make further progress on improving infrastructure finance in the state, and address the growing cost of infrastructure in the face of climate change. This review illustrates that California has long grappled with infrastructure funding, has made incremental progress, and, in fact, is probably in a better position today than at any time in the past 20 years to make more strategic moves and investments in a climate-safe future. Our report makes clear that integration of forward-looking climate science is not only a necessary ingredient in the planning and design stage of infrastructure but is also needed as an integral part of a comprehensive system required to finance climate-safe infrastructure. Climate data, demographic, land use and economic data,

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*Metrics to measure adequate progress and success of adaptive infrastructure projects are required to secure the necessary funding.*

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a variety of metrics of the environmental, social and governance performance of traditional and innovative funding mechanisms and additional metrics to measure adequate progress and success of adaptive infrastructure projects are required to secure the necessary funding (Figure 8.9).

In [Chapter 10](#), we will turn to additional conditions that will help or hinder the implementation of the Climate-Safe Path for All.



Figure 8.9 Metrics of the environmental, social and governance performance of infrastructure and related funding mechanisms are needed to attract funding and to evaluate progress and effectiveness over time. (Photo: Full moon over wetlands; Alice Cahill, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

# 9 Implementation:

## *Steps Toward Realizing the Climate-Safe Path*

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### At the End of the Day...

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The final component of the framework to action introduced in [Chapter 4](#) – which aims to chart the way to implementing the Climate-Safe Path for All proposed in this report – is to focus on a number of implementation challenges after all other pieces – data, projects, governance and finance – are in place. While an overall vision – and policy to give it prominence – were seen as critical, one phrase was used maybe more times than any other over the course of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group's (CSIWG) process – by members, expert panels and invited webinar speakers: and that is, “at the end of the day.” This phrase reflected the urgency and impatience felt by many to get on with making climate-safe infrastructure a reality yet pointed to common “last mile” challenges of getting such infrastructure actually built on the ground. Such challenges include:

- Having sufficient well-trained staff who know how to do it;
- Having mechanisms for coordination to move the Climate-Safe Path vision forward across administrations, across government silos and beyond government; and
- Having incentives, means and know-how on how to turn State-level policy into meaningful action at local and project levels.

In this chapter then, we address key implementation challenges that were raised over the course of the CSIWG's work and recommend ways to address them.

### Training, Capacity Building and Other Workforce Issues

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Over the course of the CSIWG's work, a reoccurring theme was the need to have the skilled workforce to actually get climate-safe infrastructure appropriately designed, built, operated and maintained. This is far from a new theme in infrastructure discussions, neither in the state<sup>[187,296,297]</sup>, nor across the nation<sup>[188,189, 192,193,223]</sup>. But with regard to the central concern of this report, namely how to account for climate change in infrastructure engineering, the workforce issues take on a unique flavor.



**Figure 9.1** California needs a skilled workforce to actually get climate-safe infrastructure appropriately designed, built, operated and maintained. (Photo: Solar installer lays a photovoltaic module; Department of Energy)



The CSIWG encountered the following 11 specific training and skills gaps and needs during its deliberations:

- **Climate skepticism:** CSIWG members reported regularly encountering and/or working with colleagues who do not know about the degree of scientific consensus on climate change or who overtly share the skepticism about predominantly human-caused climate change that can still be found in some parts of the American public<sup>[298]</sup> ([Chapter 5](#)).
- **Lack of understanding of climate science:** Among some in the workforce, this skepticism of climate change is rooted in a lack of deep familiarity or comfort with climate science – something that is still not regularly included in engineers' and architects' education<sup>[299]</sup>. Similar discomfort and lack of climate science understanding can be found among procurement staff, investors and financing experts, elected officials and planners who are now asked to prepare for climate change or account for it in their area of expertise. Some, even if they generally accept the scientific fact of climate change, do not feel solidly enough anchored in the science to defend it with skeptical audiences. Doing so would make them vulnerable to looking professionally incompetent ([Chapter 5](#)).
- **Lack of familiarity with sophisticated risk and uncertainty assessment tools and approaches to decision-making under deep uncertainty:** There is a similar situation arising from the lack of training in risk and uncertainty assessment methodologies, and how to make decisions in the face of uncertainty, all of which go beyond the traditional compendium in their professional trainings ([Chapter 6](#)).
- **Lack of familiarity with sophisticated economic analysis methodologies:** Traditional benefit-cost assessment methodologies, narrowly focused on easily quantifiable project costs and outcomes are well established, but they are inadequate for the systemic, silo-busting, integrative approach promoted throughout this report ([Chapter 8](#)).
- **Lack of knowledge of and disconnect from the adaptation literature and field:** Most engineers and architects are professionally anchored within their fields, disciplines and professional societies, which still have very small overlap with multiple decades of adaptation science and an emerging, but still small field of adaptation professionals<sup>[300]</sup>. Concepts like adaptive management, adaptation pathways, building adaptive capacity and so on are only slowly being integrated into the thinking of those who build our infrastructure.

- **Lack of familiarity with many available tools and platforms:** The webinar series and literature review unearthed a number of tools and platforms. While some had heard of some of these tools and platforms, most were unfamiliar – even among the experts on the CSIWG. Meanwhile, there is an overwhelming number of tools with little guidance as to which of them are most useful for what purposes. Platforms and processes for scientists to engage regularly and on an ongoing basis with engineers and architects are rare, and none were found that focus on exchange around climate change *per se* ([Chapter 5](#)).



Figure 9.2: Workforce development must reach into all segments of California society, and particularly open doors to minority, women and otherwise previously disadvantaged workers. (Photo: Workers erecting a telephone pole; Russ Allison Loar, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

- **Lack of comfort with performance standards:** Engineers and architects are most familiar and comfortable with targeted structural design standards and technical specifications. As the tried and true standards of their respective fields, they give clear instructions on how to build and come with the trust of having been approved by standard-setting bodies through a consensus-based process. Performance standards, by contrast, entail far more flexibility and creativity, but also professional uncertainty, as to how to achieve desired outcomes ([Chapter 7](#)).
- **Lack of familiarity with adaptive design approaches and techniques:** Adaptive design is only an emerging paradigm and only few examples exist yet on how to build in ways that allow infrastructure to be built in stages and in modular ways over time. Practices are not yet well established and guidance is limited, leaving practicing engineers and architects with little know-how to go on ([Chapter 7](#)).

- **Resistance to integrative and systems thinking that crosses silos:** Broadening out from individual assets or structures to infrastructure systems embedded in social, ecological and economic environments, where there is a demand to account for costs and benefits across sectors and where disciplines, interest groups and jurisdictions need to come together to agree on a shared vision, engineers and architects are asked to step out of the comfort zone of traditional ways of doing things. Some welcome this opportunity, while other feel ill-prepared to do so effectively. Numerous institutional and educational barriers hinder effective collaboration.
- **Lack of skill in effective stakeholder engagement and communication:** From the start of this project, CSIWG members emphasized the need to effectively communicate climate change and to engage stakeholder communities. They asked for resources to improve these practices, as these skills, too, are not yet widely taught in their professional training. This is as true for climate scientists as it is for architects and engineers ([see also webinars series](#)) ([Chapter 6](#)).
- **Lack of cultural competency in working with diverse stakeholders to address long-standing legacies of social exclusion and inequity:** Finally, where infrastructure planners and designers need to address historical legacies of underinvestment in low-income communities and communities of color, there is inadequate skill and experience in practices of inclusive and transparent forms of visioning, deliberation and decision-making. Limited appreciation for the legacies of systemic racism,

the need to (re)build trust and address immediate concerns such as health, economic opportunity and safety alongside infrastructure rehabilitation or expansion, all too often lead to contentious or unsatisfying interactions.

Many of these gaps in knowledge, skill and professional

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*"People readiness" must include  
"climate readiness."*

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training were a stumbling block during the development of the State's *Sustainability Roadmap*, where The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) staff requested, for the first time, that climate risks be taken into account ([L. Bedsworth presentation to the CSIWG 2018](#)). Against the backdrop of the already well-recognized workforce challenges facing California (and the nation), it is essential that workforce development include a concerted effort to ensure that the existing and future workforce is prepared to deal with rapidly changing technologies, industry changes and climate change. "People readiness" thus must include "climate readiness." Importantly, as California engineers and architects become comfortable and proficient in the issue areas listed above, the state's infrastructure will benefit irrespective of the emissions pathway on which humanity finds itself.

## Recommendation 8

*The Strategic Growth Council should coordinate with the Government Operations Agency, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and other relevant agencies to develop a work plan on how to address the training and professional development gaps of its infrastructure-related workforce as identified in this report, and begin to implement that work plan as soon as feasible. Because the Strategic Growth Council does not currently have the staff capacity and funding to implement this task, it would require adequate funding to do so.*

Workforce development of the magnitude and scope required is not a short-term program, and it cannot be accomplished through State agencies' efforts alone. Workforce development, as is already widely understood, requires partnerships with professional societies, universities, philanthropy, labor unions and the private sector<sup>[299,301]</sup>. It should not be narrowly disciplinary<sup>[302]</sup> and embrace the challenges over the entire course of the infrastructure lifespan. Workforce development efforts that are climate-cognizant must recognize that with an increasing number of disasters, the labor shortage can become acute quickly. Workforce development should clearly have a dedicated focus on benefiting youth, women, minorities and low-income populations already in need of well-paying jobs<sup>[303]</sup>. It does not begin only after high school but must reach back into K-12 for adequate STEM education and developing a pipeline of engaged and interested young women and men who have the breadth of skills needed to build the California of the future. Education, maybe like no other investment, is a form of "paying it forward" – as this report suggests.

According to a National Academy of Engineering 3-year project on engineering education on climate change<sup>[299]</sup>, two challenges however persist in the education of engineers (and architects):

- Climate change remains largely absent in engineering curricula (except renewables engineering); and
- Few, if any materials, fully engage the integration of climate, society and engineering.

Through collaboration with professional societies and universities, professional training and education curricula and related materials must be developed as well as mechanisms through which practicing engineers and architects can obtain the necessary skills and competencies (Box 9.1).

A focus on engineers and architects, however, will not suffice to effectively and efficiently address the workforce issues. Societal decisions about climate change will involve a wide range of experts, decision-makers in various sectors and different publics. Climate scientists are not usually trained in effective engagement, human concerns, ecology and governance issues, hindering their ability to communicate fluently with practitioners. Likewise, social scientists are not usually trained in engagement with publics or with physical/natural/engineering scientists. None (engineers, architects, scientists and practitioners) are sufficiently trained in matters of finance and law that have emerged as crucial over the course of the CSIWG's exploration.

### Box 9.1: Hard Engineering Skills and Professional Skills Required to Implement the Climate-Safe Path for All

#### "Hard" engineering skills:

- The ability to **apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering, including a solid footing in climate science and climate impacts science**;
- The ability to **design and conduct experiments**, as well as to **analyze and interpret data**;
- The **ability to design a system, component, or process** to meet desired needs within realistic constraints such as economic, environmental, social, political, ethical, health and safety, manufacturability, and sustainability;
- The **ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems**; and
- The **ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools** necessary for engineering practice.

#### "Professional" skills:

- The ability to **communicate** and connect across boundaries effectively;
- The ability to **function on multi- and transdisciplinary teams**;
- An understanding of **professional and ethical responsibility**;
- **Cultural competency** in working with diverse stakeholders;
- The propensity and skill in **systemic, integrative thinking**;
- The broad education necessary to understand the **impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context**;
- A recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning; and
- A **knowledge of contemporary issues**.

Source: Adapted from<sup>[304-306]</sup>



The CSIWG clearly recognizes the magnitude of the infrastructure workforce challenge in California. It also recognizes that the State has taken the first step already by recognizing what is at stake due to climate change. As concrete next steps in operationalizing the recommendation to foster a “climate-ready workforce,” the Strategic Growth Council and other State agencies should:

- Engage with professional societies, state-based engineering schools and universities, the American Society of Adaptation Professionals, private sector engineering and architecture firms and others deemed relevant in the development of the recommended workplan. As we suggest in the next section, a coordinating body at the state level could lead this effort;
- Incentivize – through the State’s existing research programs – a rapid and substantial expansion of end-to-end, multidisciplinary climate change research, education and application programs;
- Set expectations through professional standards, qualification and continuing education requirements etc. of state engineers and architects as well as those receiving State funding; and
- Expand and institutionalize the State’s internal decision support capabilities, including a professional development pipeline of well-trained professionals by requiring staff to engage in ongoing professional development in the areas found to be most in need of advancement.

## Statewide Coordination at the Highest Level

In [Chapters 6, 7](#) and [8](#), we repeatedly highlighted the need to coordinate across government silos in order to design better integrated projects, align policies and goals, appropriately assess multi-sector costs and benefits and develop adequate finance mechanisms. These are complex, often novel and thus unfamiliar tasks that are no one’s explicit task. Mission agencies, while often responsible for a broad portfolio of issues, have agency-specific, not cross-agency coordinating missions. In 2010, the Little Hoover Commission, as pointed out earlier, criticized the lack of an integrated statewide infrastructure strategy and little has changed since. While the State now has the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program (ICARP) to support integration of adaptation across State agencies and coordinate better with local government entities (and a Technical Advisory Council to support that effort), ICARP is not solely focused on climate-safe infrastructure, and simply tasking it with adding that on, may overwhelm

existing capacity or sideline coordination around the Climate-Safe Path for All and climate-safe infrastructure issues to being one of many equal priorities.

Meanwhile, this report makes a number of recommendations and suggests many concrete follow-up steps to operationalize them with no single entity providing coordination or oversight, or even just a mechanism to deepen the work begun over the short period in which the CSIWG completed its tasks. Without some entity singularly focused on the implementation of the recommendations offered in this report, there is legitimate concern that the Climate-Safe Path for All will go nowhere.

*Without some entity focused on the implementation of the recommendations in this report, the Climate-Safe Path for All will go nowhere.*

## Recommendation 9

*The State should establish a Standing CSIWG to devise and implement a process for coordinating and prioritizing Climate-Safe Path-related resilience policies and actions at the highest level. This panel would provide a needed forum for agencies to coordinate their policies, take advantage of synergies, address potential conflicts and learn from one another. As AB 2800 is slated to sunset in 2020, the work of a standing CSIWG would require an extension of AB 2800 and adequate financial support to conduct its business.*

## The Foundations Are Already in Place

Over the last decade and a half, the State of California has led the nation in climate change mitigation, with key strategies initiated in 2006 with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signing EO S-3-05<sup>1</sup>, which, in part, eventually was codified as AB 32<sup>2</sup> – the *Global Warming Solutions Act*. Recognizing the need to put as much attention on adapting to climate change, the State has since also strengthened its focus on preparedness. From these initial actions, the State has recognized the importance of ensuring climate-safe infrastructure – though it did not bear that name until AB 2800.

In 2009, the State released its first Climate Adaptation Strategy (CAS)<sup>3071</sup>. This was intended to be a companion to the bold mitigation efforts of AB 32 several years before. The CAS laid the foundation for much of the work the State has done since, including two updates (in 2014 and 2018). The plan was renamed the *Safeguarding California Plan*. Annual implementation reports to the Legislature on the status of actions identified in *Safeguarding California* are required by statute (AB 1482)<sup>3</sup>.

These strategies and related efforts were precursors to AB 2800 and the discussions of the CSIWG. The initial CAS recommendations in 2009 mandated that State agencies begin planning for climate change and initiated thinking about infrastructure adaptation. The most relevant subset of these recommendations stated:

- **Recommendation 4:** All State agencies responsible for the management and regulation of public health, infrastructure or habitat subject to significant climate change should prepare as appropriate agency-specific adaptation plans, guidance or criteria by September 2010;
- **Recommendation 6:** The California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) will collaborate with CNRA, the [Climate Action Team] CAT, the Energy Commission, and the [Clean Air Action Plan] CAAP to assess California's vulnerability to climate change, identify impacts to State assets and promote climate adaptation/mitigation awareness through the Hazard Mitigation Web Portal and My Hazards Website as well as other appropriate sites; and
- **Recommendation 10:** State fire-fighting agencies should begin immediately to include climate change impact information into fire program planning to inform future planning efforts.

The State has also developed an *Adaptation Planning Guide* (APG), first published in 2012<sup>3081</sup>, and is currently slated to be updated. The APG presents the basis for climate change adaptation planning and introduces a step-by-step process for local and regional climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategy development. It is intended as a resource primarily for local governments and provides specific guidance on infrastructure:

- Incorporate consideration of climate change impacts as part of infrastructure planning and operations;
- Assess climate change impacts on community infrastructure;
- Facilitate access to local, decentralized renewable energy; and
- Use low-impact development (LID) stormwater practices in areas where storm sewers may be impaired by high water due to sea-level rise or flood waters.

Finally, Governor Brown's 2015 EO B-30-15<sup>4</sup> mandated for how the State should plan infrastructure under a changing climate. The EO is specific in places, preceding some of the suggestions reiterated in this report:

- State agencies shall take climate change into account in their planning and investment decisions and employ full life-cycle cost accounting to evaluate and compare infrastructure investments and alternatives;
- State agencies' planning and investment shall be guided by the following principles:
  - Priority should be given to actions that both build climate preparedness and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
  - Where possible, flexible and adaptive approaches should be taken to prepare for uncertain climate impacts;
  - Actions should protect the state's most vulnerable populations; and
  - Natural infrastructure solutions should be prioritized.
- The State's Five-Year Infrastructure Plan will take current and future climate change impacts into account in all infrastructure projects; and
- [State agencies shall] update the APG, to identify how climate change will affect California infrastructure and industry and what actions the State can take to reduce the risks posed by climate change.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: [https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2014/08/governor\\_state\\_california.pdf](https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2014/08/governor_state_california.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> For more information see: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ab32/ab32.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB1482](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1482).

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2015/04/29/news18938/>.

Pursuant that EO, a Technical Advisory Group – comprised of 50 members – met from March 2016 to January 2017 to develop a guidebook for State agencies, entitled *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*<sup>[230]</sup>. The *Guidebook* provides five resilient decision-making principles, which align well with the CSIWG’s recommendations and implementation suggestions:

1. Prioritize actions that promote integrated climate action;
2. Prioritize actions that promote equity and foster community resilience;
3. Coordinate with local and regional agencies;
4. Prioritize actions that utilize natural and green infrastructure solutions and enhance and protect natural resources; and
5. Base all planning and investment decisions on the best-available science.

This report and its specific recommendations on more detailed science, easily accessible tools and platforms for interaction, training and workforce development, engagement, financing and so on are intended to build directly on this State guidance and inform and enable its implementation in concrete ways. As experience both in California and elsewhere shows, without ongoing interaction with those who are expected to use information and tools or implement guidance, action can be stymied.

In addition, several State agencies – largely in response to the original CAS – are providing internal guidance for their own (agency-specific) operations and decisions and external guidance to the entities and communities that manage resources the State agencies oversee.<sup>5</sup> Since 2011, the California Coastal Commission (CCC), the Coastal Conservancy, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) have worked jointly to help identify the most up-to-date sea-level rise (SLR) projections and develop guidance to communities on how to use forward-looking climate information in their coastal planning and decision-making, notably through the updating of local coastal programs. The first *OPC Sea-Level Rise Policy Guidance* was developed in 2011, updated in 2014, and again recently updated in 2018<sup>[49]</sup>. The CCC has a longstanding concern about sea-level rise (since 1989), issued previous guidance on how to account for SLR in Local Coastal Programs and released an update in 2015<sup>[309]</sup>. The CCC is currently updating its guidance based on the 2018 *OPC SLR Policy Guidance* update.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> As an example, DWR developed such agency-specific guidance documents: [The Climate Change Handbook for Regional Water Planning](#) (2011) and how to use climate change information in the [Water Storage Investment Program](#) (2016a and 2016b, see also [Appendix 13](#)).

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/climatechange.html>.

This brief review of past and ongoing State efforts on adaptation make clear that the deliberations of the CSIWG are not new conversations. Many of the state engineers and architects, as well as the social and physical climate scientists on the Working Group, have incrementally advanced their respective agency’s missions for many years. The Climate-Safe Path for All is intended to ambitiously push efforts even further and to provide an integrative vision and frame that unites the state’s mitigation and adaptation efforts.

### The Role of a Standing CSIWG

The Climate-Safe Path for All is thus not a new or extra process that communities or State agencies must understand and subsequently align with other State policies. It is not another series of meetings that are to be added to already overcommitted schedules. It should certainly not be another unfunded mandate. Rather, the Climate-Safe Path for All is intended to serve as the vision for connecting all of the State’s disparate, but ultimately interconnected, climate adaptation and mitigation actions on infrastructure and related systems. It also prominently integrates the importance of social equity across these efforts and gives it a central and coherent place.



**Figure 9.3:** The role of a future Standing Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group would be to coordinate infrastructure-related efforts across State agencies, provide a central point of contact and forum for learning and exchange, and provide leadership in implementing the recommendations of this report (Photo: Joseph Wraithwall, used with permission)



As a concrete next step, the current CSIWG recommends the formation of a standing CSWIG panel to ensure that this vision is carried forward, that integration happens, and that the many challenges unearthed during this CSIWG's efforts are being addressed. The standing CSIWG would have the following roles:

- **Coordination:** The standing CSIWG would provide a central coordinating mechanism. The group would be comprised of State agency representatives who would devise and implement a process for coordinating and prioritizing potential resilience policies at the highest level. This panel would have no authority other than to require agencies to address conflicts and coordinate their policies.
- **Central point of contact for infrastructure:** In addition, the standing CSIWG should be considered a central point of contact whereby other existing planning and coordinating efforts (such as ICARP and its Technical Advisory Council, the Strategic Growth Council's Infrastructure Workgroup, the Climate Change Strategic Research Plan, future California Adaptation Forums (CAF) and so on) have a go-to place for infrastructure issues.
- **Forum to advance climate-safe infrastructure questions:** The panel should also function as a forum for exchange to foster internal learning and to solicit input – as needed – from outside subject matter experts and stakeholders, particularly in areas where State agencies' in-house capacity is more limited (social equity, financial tools etc.). It could coordinate engagement efforts to ensure fair and equitable social inclusion. As such, it could be responsible for ensuring – as we emphasized in earlier chapters – that climate-safe infrastructure is being planned *with* communities, not *for* communities.
- **Leadership in incorporating forward-looking information in engineering standards:** With this initial work and the proposed development of a California Manual of Practice (CA-MOP), there is an important opportunity for the future CSIWG to encourage and drive the integration of climate resiliency measures into the code-setting processes in California. Their deliberations and products can also serve as a national and international model as other communities, states and nations struggle with the same challenges.

## Recommendation 10

*The State Budget should provide full funding to State agencies to make deliberate efforts in reducing or eliminating the barriers that hinder or slow down adoption of State-level climate-safe infrastructure policy into practice. Key focus areas include the translation of Climate-Safe Path policy into practice manuals and contracting language, providing incentives to account for climate change in infrastructure projects, identifying metrics of success for monitoring and evaluation and developing a best-practices compendium.*

### Linking State Policy and Guidance to Project-Level Action

Ultimately, the best policy statements and guidance documents need a path to implementation if they are to make it off the shelves of agency bookcases. The CSIWG sought to make its recommendations actionable by providing concrete next steps to operationalize them. “At the end of the day”, however, CSIWG members thought it was critical to ensure that high-level policies would become integrated into project-level action. This included discussions on the best way to incentivize climate-safe infrastructure development, translate policies to individual contractors and develop success metrics.

*It is critical to ensure that high-level policies become integrated into project-level action.*

## Translation from State Policy to Local Decision-Makers to Individual Contractors

In general, infrastructure design at the scale at which AB 2800 is concerned, is driven by international standard-setting organizations, large federal entities such as the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and professional organizations such as the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). But states always have the option of going above and beyond international and national standards and practices. By doing so, states often become the initiators and drivers of higher standards everywhere.

As California and other governments stand at the threshold of a new era, in which climate change is taken into account in infrastructure design, the State inevitably must hold the tension between leading and following. So, while some State agencies await clarity from standard-setting organizations, others move beyond existing guidance and develop their own manuals of practice, codes and/or guidelines to drive climate-cognizant design for their respective agencies. Caltrans, while also adhering to standards from the American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and FHWA, also develops Design Manuals that run the gamut from design to construction to maintenance. As another example, the California Building Standards Commission oversees and updates Title 24 to guide building codes every three years. However, for the many reasons described throughout this report, standards, codes and guidelines used in California are not yet where they should be in incorporating forward-looking climate information. On the policy precedent recalled above, the State now has the opportunity to make the Climate-Safe Path for All statewide policy which must be translated to on-the-ground contractors.

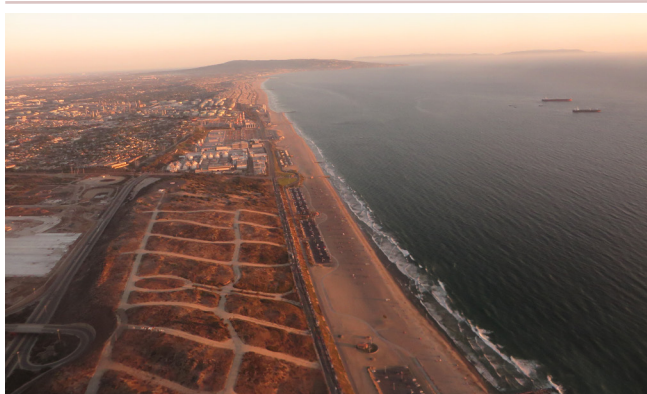


Figure 9.4: A California-specific MMOP should address all infrastructure types and the unique hazards they face across the state. (Photo: Different types of development along the El Segundo shoreline; Ken Lund, [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

There are two steps the State can take to move forward.

**Developing a California Manual of Practice.** The first is the previously recommended development of a California-focused infrastructure design Manual of Practice (Cal-MOP) for each infrastructure type and for all relevant climatic hazards. Advanced tools and methods introduced in [Chapter 6](#) should be integrated into this step-by-step guide. With input, coordination and assistance from the recommended standing CSIWG, state architects and engineers, along with relevant external subject matter experts, and inclusive and effective stakeholder engagement (per Recommendations 4 and 5), this technical working group should develop infrastructure-specific guidance that incorporates the best available climate-information and the many innovative strategies outlined in [Chapter 6](#) (e.g., systems thinking, climate screening, risk management, adaptive design for a range of plausible futures). This type of focused but coordinated attention to each infrastructure type will allow for a unified approach across the State and provide necessary impetus for moving forward.

**Advancing Procurement Approaches.** With a state engineer and architect-developed Cal-MOP for each infrastructure category, the second step then becomes more straightforward, i.e., the translation of State-level policy and guidance to on-the-ground contractors. The two most common procurement methods (in addition to the increasingly considered public-private partnerships (P3s) discussed in [Chapter 8](#)) that are used to get to project delivery are: Design-Bid-Build or Design-Build<sup>[310]</sup> (Figure 9.4). Design-Bid-Build is the more common of these approaches for project development and implementation. According to the Legislative Analysts Office<sup>[310]</sup>, “The main difference between these approaches is which project phases – such as design, construction, maintenance, and funding – are performed under a single contract and which ones are performed separately. For example, under the design-bid-build approach, the State typically contracts with one firm to design an infrastructure project and a separate firm to build it. In contrast, under the design-build approach, the State typically contracts with one firm to design and build the infrastructure project.” The latter shifts the responsibility of project delivery to the contractor. As described, “design-build, with its single point responsibility carries the clearest contractual remedies for the clients [in case of faults leading to liability claims] because the design-build contractor will be responsible for all of the work on the project, regardless of the nature of the fault”<sup>[311]</sup>.

## State Procurement Approaches

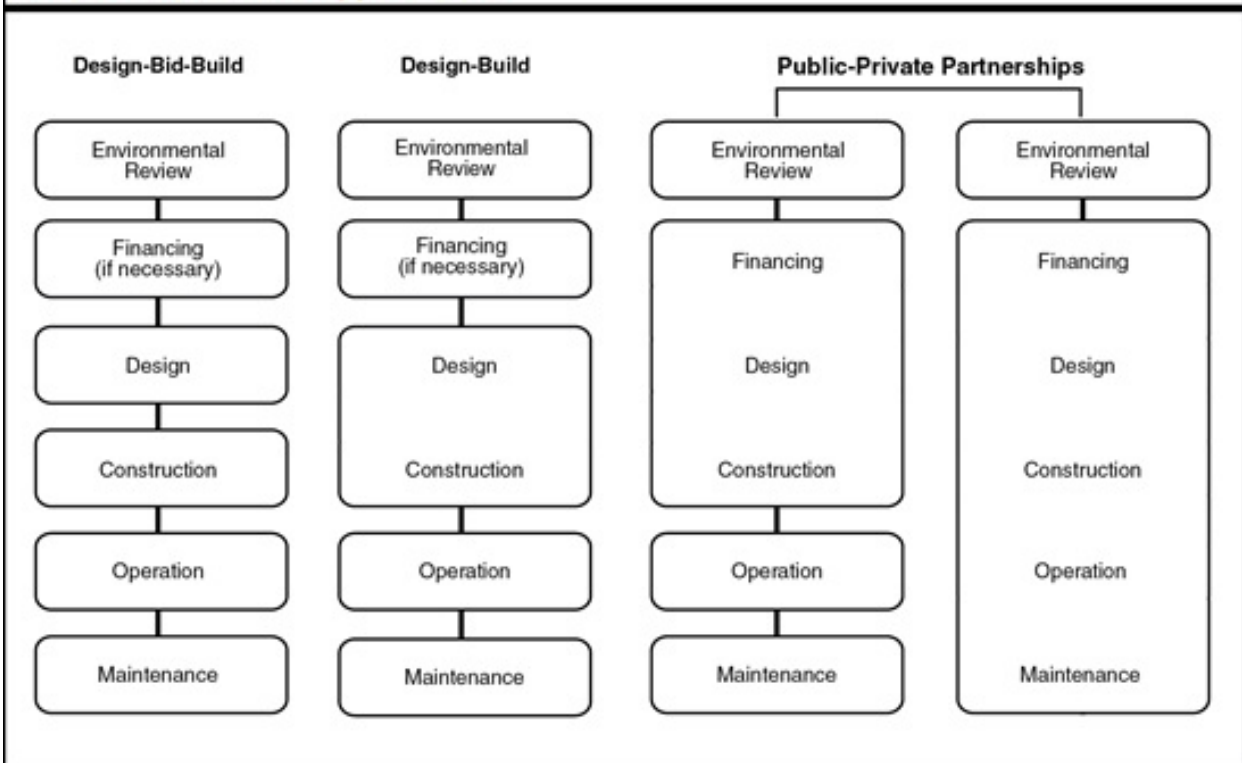


Figure 9.4 California's basic procurement approaches differ in how many contractors are involved from project initiation to construction and operation and maintenance. (Source: Legislative Analyst's Office 2018<sup>[310]</sup>, used with permission)

There are various pros and cons to either of the three procurement approaches, although it was beyond the scope of the CSIWG to examine in detail the advantages and disadvantages of each vis-à-vis planning, designing and building climate-safe infrastructure. This should be undertaken by a future working group made up of relevant experts and interest groups. There are likely to be benefits and drawbacks to using one or the other for certain types of projects.

*Infrastructure owners need help turning overall policy guidance into contractual language and clear statements of work.*

Regardless of the procurement method chosen, infrastructure owners need help turning overall policy guidance into contractual language and clear statements of work. The Cal-MOP will help, but the CSIWG recommends several important follow-on steps from its work:

- Once procurement approaches have been thoroughly assessed by a future working group for their advantages and disadvantages for differing types of climate-safe infrastructure projects, guidance should be developed for infrastructure owners for writing different types of bids;
- Effectively assessing and managing bids, design proposals and contracts requires adequate training of staff in infrastructure agencies. Thus, the workforce development plan proposed above should explicitly include modules for evaluating design proposals; and
- The standing CSIWG or a designated working group should engage with legal and financial experts as well as engineering and climate change experts to develop model contract language and other support to assist with linking policy to project-level contracts.



To align the procurement and contracting process with the overall intent of the Climate-Safe Path for All, however, it is not enough to work only on integrating climate concerns. The social equity component needs to be carried down to the procurement and project level as well. A recent report on inclusive procurement<sup>[197]</sup>, p.5 noted,

“State and local governments are the most important venues for advancing inclusive procurement and contracting policies in the infrastructure sector. Federal infrastructure investments are blended with local public funds, and a great deal of infrastructure investment is exclusively derived from State and local revenue.”

The State of California generally follows a “race-neutral” procurement approach, which has helped women and minorities but has not overtly supported them<sup>[197]</sup>. Deliberate efforts are needed to ensure minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged business entities (MWDBEs) have access to and are able to bid on climate-safe infrastructure projects. This would be in line with the centrality given to social equity in this report.

According to Fairchild and Rose, “There is [however] no “one-size-fits-all” inclusion policy. The policy levers, revenue streams, business motives, historical precedents, and strategies to strengthen inclusive procurement differ for transportation, water, energy, public housing, health, educational institutions, and other sectors”<sup>[197]</sup>,p.5. They note the following challenges:

- Disconnect between inclusive procurement policies and their realization in practice, including lack of enforcement;
- Lack of readiness on the supply side and lack of awareness and competency on the demand side of procurement;

- Public-sector practitioners operate in silos with a wide range of disparate approaches and policies, creating inefficiencies, duplication, burdensome procurement processes and suboptimal outcomes;
- Lack of tools and processes for proactively monitoring the compliance and enforcement of inclusion policies, and lack of resources and capacity to find them;
- Large-scale infrastructure projects are using sophisticated project delivery methods to address risk and capital needs, increasing the size and time horizon of projects; and, thus, diminishing opportunities for MWDBEs to effectively participate in bids;
- Lack of technical assistance for MWDBEs to help them effectively participate in larger projects;
- The movement in the construction industry toward “green”, modular approaches is shifting work toward a supply chain involving pre-fabrication; historically, however, there are few MDWBEs in the prefabrication supply chain, further excluding them from contracts;
- An aging MDWBE workforce and lack of succession planning among MDWBEs (see above); and
- The legacy of discrimination.

The CSIWG thus recommend a number of best practices and steps (Box 9.2). The CSIWG recommends as a practical follow-up step to its work, that the standing CSIWG or a designated working group systematically examine the hurdles and opportunities for improved inclusive procurement practices as it transitions to building more climate-safe infrastructure and develop the inclusive procurement practices toolbox (Recommendation 3) called for in Fairchild and Rose<sup>[197]</sup> (Box 9.2).

### Box 9.2: Best Practices for Inclusive Procurement

- Strengthen the community constituency for and advocacy efforts around MWDBEs;
- Increase the capacity of local and state elected officials and agency staff to implement legal (race-averse and race-conscious) and effective inclusive procurement policies;
- Develop inclusive procurement policy toolkits by sector;
- Proactively engage the private sector;
- Use triggers in tax credits and Community Reinvestment Act requirements to build regional capital pools that can provide lines of credit and bonding capacity to help grow participating MWDBEs; and
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure policy goals are met, including assigning 1% of project costs to support capacity building of MWDBEs.

Source: Fairchild and Rose<sup>[197]</sup>

## Incentives

If the development of a Cal-MOP provides the technical guidance required to design and implement a climate-safe infrastructure project, and improved procurement approaches help with the legal and financial translation of such projects, incentives – financial or otherwise – provide the inducements to break from traditional and well-trodden paths and try the innovative approaches. Eventually, such incentives will help spread the new practices and foster the paradigm shift necessary to move infrastructure design into this new climate-changed era. As the State works to update its own codes and standards to incorporate forward-looking climate science, incentives can encourage design above minimum standards, providing a bridge between the infrastructure work that needs to happen today to deal with decades of deferred maintenance, with the engineering standard and code updates that will take some time to develop.

**Financial incentives.** Financial incentives are the most likely to gain immediate attention, and while State agencies do not have “extra” funds, there is considerable funding available already for infrastructure projects in the immediate and near future through bonds. Embedding climate change language in Request for Proposals (RFP) and establishing transparent proposal selection criteria that favor projects that are consistent with the Climate-Safe Path for All proposed here are ways to make use of available funds toward climate-safe infrastructure. State regulation and oversight of different infrastructure sectors and activities is already used to incentivize preferred actions by the entities overseen (e.g., incentives for energy efficiency measures, incentives for consideration of climate change in disaster preparedness plans). Similar mechanisms could be used to foster climate-safe

**Non-financial incentives.** There are non-financial incentives that should also be considered and may be more feasible more quickly. They would not require added expenditures from agency budgets and they all have to do with speed and time (which, in fact, translates into money).

- **Expedited permitting.** The most promising incentive identified by the CSIWG is the concept of expedited permitting for infrastructure projects that meet climate-safe infrastructure goals and are resilient. This can be achieved at the local and state level. It can also help to address permitting bottlenecks between State and federal agencies. For instance, if a State-funded project encroaches into federal jurisdiction, federal rules and regulations can impede project progress. Moreover, combining an expedited permitting process with the use of a rating system (e.g., LEED or Envision, see [Chapter 7](#)) can further incentivize and encourage climate-safe designs and practices. There are, of course, limitations to rating systems. Notably, they are generally not mandatory and cannot be enforced and meeting rating systems require financial outlays, leading to further potential exacerbation of inequities. These challenges notwithstanding, rating systems and voluntary standards have been demonstrated to continuously raise the floor of mandatory building standards (see [Chapter 7](#); see also [Sullen 2018 webinar](#) and [Georgiakoulis 2018 webinar](#)).
- **Pre-disaster planning and code changes.** The unprecedented natural disasters in 2017-18 created the need to rebuild damaged and impacted infrastructure throughout California – from removing mudflow debris from freeways, to rebuilding public structures burned down during the wildfires that ravaged the state. Fires in 2018 appear to continue this trend. Generally speaking, however, recovery



**Figure 9.6** In a crisis, expedited permitting is crucial, but rebuilding with climate change in mind must become part and parcel of permitting and waiver guidance. (Photo: Bonds Flat Road near the Don Pedro Dam spillway, February 23, 2017; Dale Kolke, DWR, used with permission)

funding for public assets require building back to exact pre-disaster specifications unless prevailing codes allow for “building back better.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, washed out culverts would need to be built to the old-size requirements; burnt buildings would be rebuilt without sprinkler systems; a wood utility pole gone up in flames would be replaced with another wood utility pole, rather than a steel pole that may be more resistant to future fire, unless codes had been established well before the disaster to require otherwise. Inquiries with State agency staff yielded no known examples, except possibly L.A.’s cool-roof ordinance. Systematic tracking of state and local adaptation actions such as climate-cognizant code changes would help the State know whether adaptation plans are being translated into binding code and thus whether infrastructure will be built back better after a disaster. This would have the added benefit of providing case studies and examples throughout the state for peer-to-peer exchange.<sup>8</sup> The significant resources available post-disaster cannot be used toward adaptation to climate change nor the transition toward climate-safe infrastructure without pre-disaster code changes and may in fact be squandered on projects that – based on the best available scientific understanding and even best available engineering knowledge – must be considered maladaptive.

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*The significant resources available post-disaster cannot be used toward adaptation to climate change nor the transition toward climate-safe infrastructure without pre-disaster code changes.*

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<sup>7</sup> With respect to public infrastructure specifically, FEMA’s Public Assistance (PA) funding program provides federal assistance to government organizations (and certain private nonprofit (PNPs) organizations) following a Presidential disaster declaration. PA funds can be used for repair, replacement or restoration of disaster-damaged publicly-owned facilities including roads and bridges, water control facilities, buildings and equipment, utilities, parks, recreational and other infrastructure. FEMA covers no less than 75% of the costs and CalOES covers 75% of the remaining 25% non-federal share. FEMA provides PA funding to restore facilities on the basis of pre-disaster design and function and conformity with current applicable codes, specifications and standards.

<sup>8</sup> AB 2516 (Gordon, Sea-level rise planning database) established one way to track sea-level rise related adaptation measures. This approach might constitute a model for ongoing monitoring, but any statewide, cross-sector monitoring system should build on lessons learned from this pioneering effort. (For more information, see: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140AB2516](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB2516) and the link to the database through the adaptation clearinghouse).

- **Clarification of policies on waivers.** In crisis situations such as after disasters or for projects under time pressure, infrastructure builders often seek waivers to allow for more rapid (re)building and recovery. This is understandable, as it is in everyone’s interest to help communities get back on their feet quickly after major events. These waivers, however, may have negative consequences. These can range from impacts to the environment such as insufficient accounting of toxins inadvertently released in an attempt to quickly clean up debris, to impacts to people such as disregarding environmental justice concerns in an effort to get critical services back online. However, if managed and incentivized properly, waivers could be used to advance climate-safe principles. For instance, following an event:
  - infrastructure managers could receive waivers that expedite permitting if they meet the most climate-safe voluntary standards or rating systems;
  - they would not receive waivers if they do not use climate-safe infrastructure principles.

Because waivers set precedent, granting them should be considered systematically prior to the urgent time when they are sought. For example, clarifying liability issues (see [Chapter 7](#)), developing waiver guidance to regulators (e.g., if x is replaced, replace it with a climate-safe asset, i.e., attach an infrastructure requirement to getting exemptions), developing statewide maps which rank the future likelihood of climate extremes under different emissions scenarios, particularly the high-emissions scenario, and not granting waivers in regions expected to experience such extremes frequently or making waivers contingent on good pre-disaster infrastructure management are just some of the ways in which granting waivers can be done in a

- **Improving the permitting process.** The State should examine common patterns as to where or when waivers and exemptions are sought. Many waiver requests are about speed. Such a systematic exploration may reveal patterns and identify priorities for where the permitting process can be streamlined, so that they are not needed or less frequently.
- **Pre-certification of contractors.** Pre-disaster, infrastructure managers should develop lists of pre-certified contractors (with an eye to inclusive practices) and put permitting structures in place to allow for the opportunity to “build back better.” These certified contractors can also be used to update hazard mitigation plans. These pre-disaster plans (at the state and local level) should be developed in concert with CalOES to ensure that they would comply with State and federal funding requirement mandates.



## Develop and Monitor Metrics for Success/Performance

A repeated theme throughout the work of the CSIWG was the question of measuring success. What is the level of performance the State should aim for? What are meaningful metrics to investors that would attract them to invest in climate-safe infrastructure projects? How can State agencies show progress along the Climate-Safe Path for All, both for internal planning, budgeting, prioritization and design purposes, and for external communication to Californians, who are asked to pay for and bear the impact of infrastructure renewal.

As noted by one of the [AB 2800 webinar series](#) presenters: “Measurement is a fraction of the cost of restoration or mitigation and saves money over time by defining best practices for a changing world.” Metrics for success, and the monitoring protocols necessary for measuring these metrics, are critical at every stage of the infrastructure life cycle – from design, to planning, to construction, to maintenance and to decommissioning. Evaluation at every stage should be considered. While the issue of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is widely discussed in the adaptation literature and is increasingly recognized in California (e.g., in discussions of the Technical Advisory Group of the ICARP), more attention – through applied research and changed practices – is required to advance the conversation.

The CSIWG thus believes that developing metrics for success and performance will play an important role in achieving many of the objectives and recommendations within this report and are thus a critical next step for the State to take. There are at least five fundamental reasons (based on<sup>[194]</sup>) why a concerted effort in establishing effective M&E mechanisms would aid the State in implementing the Climate-Safe Path for All. They include:

- **Enabling deliberate planning and decision-making.** Setting clear goals (e.g., performance standards or desirable outcomes related to the Climate-Safe Path for All) and aligning planning, design approaches and needs to those outcomes enables internal consistency. It also provides external consistency by providing transparency of goals, allowing other infrastructure or resource managers to better understand how their infrastructure fits in the larger system and ensures that State policy goals are not at odds.
- **Providing a mechanism for accountability and evidence of good governance.** When the CSIWG discussed what they found important in developing or participating in any State process that leads to climate-safe infrastructure, accountability and linkage to definable goals was identified as the most important.

Recommendation 9 calls for the establishment of a standing CSIWG to provide coordination among the various components of State government that will need to work in concert to achieve climate-safe infrastructure. This group could play a central role in coordinating an agency-cross-cutting effort in developing metrics. While accountability would need to be anchored in rules, professional standards of care and liability policies, achievement of these metrics offer important opportunities for communication with the public and could serve as a clear mechanism for the State legislature to track progress toward State goals.

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*Developing metrics for success and performance will play an important role in achieving many of the objectives and recommendations within this report and are thus a critical next step for the State to take.*

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- **Supporting adaptive design, management and performance-based standards.** As described in the ASCE MOP<sup>[253]</sup> – and expected in a California-specific MOP – adaptive design requires identifying the triggers or thresholds at which the next set of adaptive measures gets implemented (see [Chapter 4](#) and Figure 4.2). Both climate patterns and the infrastructure itself must therefore be monitored to determine when/if those triggers or thresholds are expected to be crossed to ensure readiness for the next phases of adaptive design implementation. Moreover, determining whether or not an asset meets the metrics pre-identified will support learning and adaptive management. Adaptive management assumes that learning is critical. With critical infrastructure there is little room for catastrophic mistakes, but combining multiple strategies ([Chapter 4](#), Box 4.2) and implementing equitable safe-to-fail design options ([Chapter 6](#)) can help ensure that there is room for flexibility and deliberate learning, and that those lessons are taken seriously as adaptation progresses.

- **Justifying adaptation expenditures.** Whether true or not in the final accounting, there is a perception that climate-safe infrastructure will cost more – at least at the outset if adaptive design principles are implemented. Full life-cycle analysis as recommended in this report will help make the case, however, that building climate-safe infrastructure is not only economically smart but has many other benefits. This must be shown – with measurable metrics – to State policy-makers, to investors and to the public. Providing clear accounting of the different expenditures and how they are achieving the pre-defined metrics for success will be critical for effective demonstration of the success of innovative strategies that perhaps run counter to more traditional methods and cost-benefit accounting.
- **Supporting communication, public engagement and, ultimately, public support.** Public infrastructure is in place to serve the public good; moreover, it is publicly funded. Climate-safe infrastructure is there first and foremost to protect the people of California and support their well-being and lives. Accountability to this ultimate goal must be paramount. In a socially-inclusive process, in which infrastructure is developed with a common vision shared by diverse stakeholders, illustrating progress and success is critical to demonstrate that state infrastructure is both meeting the needs of constituents as well as a wise use of financial resources. Public support is arguably the most important tool in engineers and architects' toolbox. It is only with public support and demand that climate-safe infrastructure will be prioritized and will be able to receive the ongoing financial commitment required to safeguard climate-safe infrastructure into the future.

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*Engineers and architects enjoy an immense level of public trust. This trust can't be squandered as we move into a more volatile future.*

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### Develop Compendium of Best Practices

Finally, measuring progress and success will provide the evidence basis on which we can argue that certain practices are better or “best practices.” We conclude this chapter with a call for developing such a compendium because of what is at stake for practicing engineers and architects.


Engineers and architects enjoy an immense level of public trust. We drive over the bridges they build, not even thinking about whether they will hold. We live and work

in buildings trusting they will withstand the vagaries of nature. This trust can't be squandered as we move into a more volatile future.

Like all individuals, engineers and architects rely on each other to do high-quality work, and in this rapidly changing climate, there is simply no way to replace the trust that comes from sharing experiences and learning from peers. As the field moves together to build more climate-safe infrastructure, having a compendium of best practices, vetted by practicing engineers, will provide an invaluable resource that practitioners can turn to for support, inspiration and on-the-ground guidance. The California Adaptation Clearinghouse ([www.CAresilience.org](http://www.CAresilience.org)) could be one important point of access to such a compendium as it already contains case studies and resources for other aspects of adaptation planning. This has the dual benefit of pulling engineers and architects into the budding adaptation community and for the thinking embedded in the best practices compendium to reach a broader audience. It also links directly to the [Cal-Adapt](#) platform available for sharing climate science. Rather than creating an entirely new compendium or clearinghouse that runs in parallel to these already existing State efforts, resources should be directed to incorporating climate-safe engineering practices for California at these central sites.

Recognizing that engineers may not yet be familiar with these sites, however, a multi-pronged outreach approach should be used to bring engineers to the compendium and the compendium to engineers. In other words, it is critical to link to wherever they already go for the information and best practices they need. State agencies should partner with professional societies, existing platforms (see Table 5.3 in [Chapter 5](#)) in promoting the available resources. They should also reference them as key resources to contractors and partner entities in RFPs and statements of work. Such compendiums should be – in the spirit of adaptive design – be living documents that are regularly updated. Projects employing them could become case studies from which others can learn and be included in the Adaptation Clearinghouse.

In this way, peer-to-peer learning from trusted sources, combined with a continually updated scientific data basis, performance-based standards, and evidence-based evaluation of what is working, will – in time – change the way we think, and what we do.



# 10

## Summary: Barriers and Recommendations

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To close this report, we return to the mandate of AB 2800, which asked to identify the informational, institutional and other barriers that stand in the way of integrating forward-looking climate science into all aspects of infrastructure planning and decision-making. We have discussed them throughout the preceding chapters and compiled them systematically in [Appendix 11](#). We use the synthesis of this work below to set up a high-level summary of our recommendations, which address the challenges the CSIWG identified and answer the call of the enabling legislation.

### **Barriers: Informational, Institutional and Other Hurdles to Building Climate-Safe Infrastructure**

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AB 2800 stipulated, in Section 2 (c), that “[t]he Working Group shall consider and investigate, at a minimum, the following issues: (1) The current informational and institutional barriers to integrating projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure design.” The topic of barriers was considered throughout the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group’s (CSIWG) deliberations and was also an integral part of the webinar series that supported the CSIWG’s work.

Here we summarize and discuss the barriers we have identified throughout this project. [Appendix 11](#) lists the full list of barriers that were discovered, organized by the stages in the adaptation process<sup>[312]</sup> (which are similar to the stages in an infrastructure lifecycle) and by type of barrier (for example, informational, institutional, financial and so on).

We discuss these barriers at a higher level of synthesis by type, but caution against seeing barriers in an isolated

manner. For example, informational barriers such as not having a particular type of data can be reinforced by financial barriers such as lack of investment in relevant research; similarly, institutional barriers such as being tied to or lacking a particular standard or process can be reinforced by lack of capacity/skill or by particular attitudes around thinking about the future or inclusionary, meaningful stakeholder engagement. In other words, barriers are interrelated to create persistent obstacles that stymie progress on integrating forward-looking science into infrastructure planning and design.

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*Barriers of all types are observed across the entire life cycle of infrastructure design and operation and across every stage of the adaptation process.*

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Importantly, barriers of all types are observed across the entire life cycle of infrastructure design and operation and across every stage of the adaptation process. While they are fairly evenly distributed across types, overall most barriers are encountered in the Planning and in the (prior) Understanding phases of the adaptation process, with fewer currently noted in the Implementation phase. This is not so much a reflection of the severity of these barriers, but of the greater familiarity with barriers in those early stages of adaptation as most climate preparedness efforts across the state and elsewhere in the U.S. are still in the early stages<sup>[279,313]</sup>. As earlier barriers are successfully overcome, other (not-yet-recognized) barriers may emerge as adaptation progresses to implementation.



## Synthesis of Barriers

We describe each type of barrier, including subcategories, prevalence and their overall significance. [Appendix 11](#) and the discussion on sector-specific issues throughout this report provide additional detail (Figure 10.1).

**Informational and knowledge barriers.** Informational and knowledge barriers are significant, particularly as they are tied to the institutional ones, namely to design standards. Traditionally, engineers and architects have relied on design standards that are based on decades of empirical data of environmental conditions which were statistically constant, both regionally and seasonally. Using those standards (and data), engineers and architects designed civil infrastructure with confidence, believing that the public is protected. Because of climate change, environmental conditions now deviate significantly from the previous statistical norms and those conditions continue to change in ways that are not predictable for specific places with high confidence. As a result, the standards still used are no longer reliable. Shifting toward performance standards and the use of risk management approaches and decision-making frameworks for deep uncertainty still requires the best available science, however. The CSIWG identified a large number of specific information needs, which fell into six categories. The specific information needs and knowledge barriers (detailed in [Appendix 5](#)) vary by sector and require different interventions to overcome them.

- Lack of knowledge and understanding in certain areas, requiring more research (e.g., in methods, adaptive design, trade-offs, value/benefits of resilient design) or cross-disciplinary education on existing knowledge;
- Lack of investment in certain types of research, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (e.g., no benchmarks, no M&E, hence no understanding of performance; lack of metrics);
- Existing knowledge and approaches are contested, i.e., experts do not agree on what is most credible or reliable; as a result, practitioners avoid new/contested approaches or rely on outdated information and methods (e.g., traditional cost-benefit analysis);
- Lack of information in usable/actionable/standardized formats (including incomplete or missing information, inconsistent information (e.g., flood risk information from FEMA vs. other sources) or information is not available at the right temporal/spatial scale (e.g., precipitation data);
- Lack of (easy) access to information either because the data is proprietary, developed by individual researchers or not in a centralized repository; and
- Lack of guidance on, and familiarity with, how to use data/information/tools/methods appropriately (e.g., lack of guidance on decision-making under uncertainty).



**Figure 10.1:** A wide variety of barriers make the use of forward-looking climate and other science challenging in infrastructure design. (Photo: Dismantling of a drought barrier along the West False River which served to block salt water from pushing into the central Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from San Francisco Bay; Florence Low, DWR, used with permission).

**Capacity/skill barriers.** Capacity barriers can be understood in the sense of adequate numbers of staff and adequately trained and skilled employees to do the necessary work of planning for, building and operating climate-safe infrastructure. This category was among those with the greatest number of individual barriers mentioned. Together, the barriers in this category paint a consistent picture of inadequate training and skill-building to date to enable both the scientific and engineering workforce to take on the challenge of building climate-safe infrastructure for all.

- Inadequate/narrow/siloed disciplinary or sectoral perspectives on what are, in fact, systemic, interconnected challenges;
- Widespread lack of engagement of scientists, engineers and architects on climate change issues;
- Lack of sufficient knowledge about climate change, climate models and lack of expertise in or guidance on how to appropriately use climate data;
- Lack of training in and guidance on assessing and interpreting uncertainty and making decisions under uncertainty;
- Lack of awareness of or education about resilient, adaptive and sustainable designs (including green/nature-based infrastructure options);
- Lack of skills and staff capacity in tracking performance, assessing non-monetary benefits;
- Insufficient capability of translating policy and guidance into standards and codes;
- Lack of training in and guidance on effective stakeholder engagement and other professional skills;
- Lack of awareness, familiarity and skill in considering social equity issues in infrastructure planning and decision-making from the start (Figure 10.1).

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*The barriers paint a consistent picture of inadequate training and skill-building to enable both the scientific and engineering workforce to take on the challenge of building climate-safe infrastructure for all.*

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**Attitudinal barriers.** Attitudinal barriers were among the most frequently mentioned barriers overall, but they are difficult to synthesize (e.g., whose attitudes? attitudes about what?). Some pointed to attitudinal challenges among engineers and architects, such as:

- Abiding skepticism of global climate models and sometimes even the reality of climate change;
- Lack of acceptance of citizen science as valuable input to monitoring performance;
- Neglect of social equity as a central concern, integrated from the start of infrastructure planning;
- Perceived incompatibility of green/nature-based infrastructure with prevailing professional norms (Figure 10.2);
- Strict adherence to established professional norms resulting in resistance to innovation and experimentation; and
- Premature narrowing of the range of options considered due to assumptions about their public acceptance.

But engineers' and architects' attitudes were not the only barriers identified in this category. Decision-makers' and stakeholders' attitudes were also discussed:

- Lack of leadership, a pervasive lack of urgency about climate change and lack of commitment to invest in infrastructure;
- Culturally prevalent attitudes that do not favor long-term thinking;
- Lack of willingness to pay for resilience (resulting from the above-mentioned attitudes);
- Lack of trust among stakeholders partly due to divergent values and priorities, partly due to past experience; and
- Varying levels of risk aversion/risk tolerance.

Finally, scientists often are less interested in applied problem solving and there are disciplinary prejudices that can prevent active and frequent multi- and transdisciplinary interaction and collaboration.

**Political barriers.** While fewer in numbers, political barriers were often seen as being of ultimate importance for progress to be made toward climate-safe infrastructure. Some of those barriers do not originate from within California but reflected the current lack of leadership at the federal level. Others referred to politics with a "small p" – the politics in the room or at the local/state level.

- Lack of federal political leadership on climate change in general, resulting in de-prioritization at best and unhelpful controversy at worst, as well as inadequate progress on federal infrastructure investment;
- Against a background of politicized debate and near-term priorities absorbing limited funds, lack of political will to prioritize climate change and commit to climate preparedness and adaptation;
- Lack of support for novel infrastructure designs (e.g., green/nature-based infrastructure);
- Lack of political will to address past legacies of institutional racism, neglect of certain communities and to redress those infrastructure inequities now;
- Inability to generate public support for infrastructure investment, including lack of skill and willingness to effectively communicate costs and benefits; and
- Lack of commitment to aspects of infrastructure operation and maintenance (e.g., monitoring) if they don't generate political benefits.



**Figure 10.2:** Attitudinal barriers – such as the perceived incompatibility of green or nature-based infrastructure with prevailing professional norms in engineering – can pose significant hurdles to moving toward climate-safe infrastructure designs. (Photo: Tree-planting in urban area; USDA)

**Financial barriers.** Another category of barriers that weighed heavily not by the number of unique barriers identified but by the overriding importance to actually getting infrastructure built. Many of the types of funding challenges are not unique to infrastructure<sup>[279]</sup> but are often magnified due to the large price tag on infrastructure. Financial barriers are the substance of a nationwide debate over the past several years, and the need for infrastructure investment was a leading priority in California's June 2018 primary election cycle. But, again, the more specific categories of barriers identified point to different foci and intervention points.

- Lack of funding for every stage in the infrastructure lifecycle, including inadequate resources for infrastructure-related research, lack of funding for strategic planning; lack of funding for infrastructure in general and for green/nature-based infrastructure in particular; difficulty of keeping infrastructure in state of good repair (high maintenance costs); and lack of funding for monitoring systems and for long-term, ongoing data collection;
- Higher upfront cost, particularly of climate-resilient infrastructure;
- Long-term funding uncertainty;
- Limited funding options available or considered;
- Lack of coordination among funding agencies; inability to coordinate or combine funding sources and types due to disconnected timing or other factors; and lack of funding for coordination;
- Unfunded mandates;
- Lack of monetary incentives to plan for climate change;
- Restrictions on use of funds (e.g., disaster recovery funding) or constraining eligibility criteria;
- High discount rates that devalue the future; and
- Difficulties related to valuing risks and benefits and thus with making the economic case for infrastructure investment.

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*Financial barriers weigh heavily due to their over-riding importance to actually getting climate-safe infrastructure built.*

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**Legal/regulatory barriers.** We distinguish legal and regulatory barriers from other institutional barriers (discussed next) due to the weight that regulatory issues have in how and where infrastructure is built. As with the political barriers, legal and regulatory issues did not only

arise from within State jurisdictions, but sometimes were related to different regulatory requirements at different levels of governance. In general, however, the large number of barriers in this group arose predominantly from the lack of relevant and needed or useful regulation and – in a smaller number of cases – from the existence of a law or regulation that constrained consideration of climate change and alternative designs.

- Lack of policy guidance on what to plan for and difficulty of translating existing (high-level) guidance into action;
- Lack of rules and regulations that would foster/require consideration of climate change (e.g., no requirement to assess exposure to climate change; no requirement to use certain data, no requirement to do a full life cycle assessment);
- Lack of design criteria, standards, performance goals/targets and guidelines for inclusion of climate change in infrastructure design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Lack of clarity on liability (via a standard of care) with regard to considering climate change in infrastructure design;
- Lack of professional standards related to climate change;
- Lack of regulatory incentives (e.g., accelerated permitting);
- Rating systems are not adopted as code leaving them without regulatory power;
- Lack of code enforcement, including exemptions after disaster or in other special circumstances, and lack of accountability for inadequate designs or maintenance;
- Existing laws, regulations and standards/codes that could be or have already been experienced as limiting the consideration of climate change, even if infrastructure owners have been willing to do so (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements; regulations pertaining to the preservation of historical buildings and cultural resources; codes that prevent rebuilding after disaster taking climate change into account);
- Unclear jurisdiction where infrastructure crosses jurisdictional lines (including the possibility that different jurisdictions have different priorities, capacities and needs); and
- Different or even contradictory standards and risk assessment approaches (e.g., FEMA's recognition of certified levees only; the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) exemption of historical buildings from flood protection requirements even in high-hazard zones).





**Figure 10.3:** Institutional barriers, such as differences in planning horizons, lack of long-term planning and lengthy permitting processes can delay the transition to climate-safe infrastructure being built. (Photo: Port of Oakland waterfront; 1FlatWorld, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

**Institutional barriers.** Institutional barriers identified by the CSIWG frequently affected or interacted with other barriers, but most commonly these types of barriers related to siloed governance of infrastructure, even though there are many cross-sectoral, cross-lifecycle, cross-jurisdictional interdependencies (Figure 10.3). These barriers result in delays, miscommunication, lack of coordination, inefficiencies, missed opportunities and disjointed planning. Common subcategories included the following:

- Differences in planning time horizons across levels of government or types of infrastructure;
- General lack of longer-term planning;
- Lengthy time from initiation to complete implementation of infrastructure projects (up to 20 years), (e.g., due to lengthy reviews and permitting);
- Lack of cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional communication, coordination and partnerships (e.g., due to siloed management, zoning inflexibility, lack of awareness of other sectors' concerns and resources; lack of a State "infrastructure czar" overseeing integration of systems; loss of coordination through and power of Community Redevelopment Authorities);
- Lack of processes for comprehensive valuation, evaluation, assessing the quality of risk assessment, risk management or evaluation approaches;
- Competing rating systems (mandatory, voluntary) and competing standards (backward-looking/static standards, forward-looking standards); and
- Externalization of certain consequences from systemic assessment;

**Other barriers.** The final (smaller) category of barriers contains a variety of barriers that did not fit the other seven categories but were mentioned as having played or as potentially playing a significant role. For example:

- Repeated extreme events and disasters across California in recent years, particularly in 2017 and 2018 (extended drought, multiple record-breaking wildfires, landslides and flooding) are now garnering significant media, public and political attention. Prior to these events, California lacked the catastrophic weather-related events of the magnitude of Hurricanes Katrina (2005), Sandy (2012) or Maria (2017). Without swift yet thoughtful policy initiatives that use such windows of public and policy-makers' attention, the State will miss the opportunity to advance policies to move toward greater climate-safety;
- Physical limitations related to existing infrastructure, i.e., the greater difficulty of integrating climate change considerations in retrofits than in new infrastructure;
- Industry lag time in adopting new practices in design and construction; and
- A general lack of demonstration projects, including monitoring of their effectiveness.

## Summary of Recommendations

### From Vision to Implementation

In this report, we have charted a path – the Climate-Safe Path for All – that starts out from the challenges and pre-existing conditions to a vision of climate-safe infrastructure via a framework to action. We have described our current infrastructure and the challenges faced from climate change today and in the future. We have discussed the best-available climate science, highlighting where our existing science can be bolstered to best suit the needs of state architects and engineers. We have outlined the current paradigm for planning, designing and building infrastructure and have demonstrated how that old path is not robust enough for a future under changing climate conditions. Through the development of the Climate-Safe Path for All, we have provided a vision for how state engineers and architects can take the knowledge that exists today and use it to build the climate-safe infrastructure of tomorrow – infrastructure that is accessible and available to everyone. We have identified the institutional and information gaps and barriers, and we have developed a suite of recommendations to address each (Table 10.1).

Below, we pull together the 10 major recommendations, which, when taken in concert, provide a clear pathway from vision to implementation. They answer the mandate of AB 2800 and more, and we view them as essential to realizing the vision. We also highlight the initial first steps the State can take to start its journey along the Climate-Safe Path for All.

# Recommendation 1

*The State Legislature should establish as official State policy “The Climate-Safe Path for All”, which is a flexible adaptation pathway realized through a variety of strategies, in multiple stages over the course of decades. The Climate-Safe Path for All accounts for the full life-cycle costs of infrastructure and uses a multi-sectoral, systems approach. It prioritizes infrastructure investments based upon the greatest risks and investment gaps, as well as where investment can most reduce inequality and increase opportunity. For highly vulnerable, long-lived infrastructure, State agencies should consider climate change impacts associated with a high-emissions scenario while continuing to implement all applicable State laws related to stringent greenhouse gas emissions reductions.*

## Adopt the Vision

As with the State’s bold greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals, the Climate-Safe Path sets out an equally bold path to plan, design and build new and retrofit existing infrastructure to be safe for all. With the Climate-Safe Path, the State recognizes that to do this, future infrastructure projects must assume a high-emissions scenario future (currently RCP8.5), where infrastructure will be exposed to severe levels of climate impacts. Initial first steps include:

- All state infrastructure agencies should establish as a matter of agency-wide policy an adaptation and resilience requirement, namely that all investments in new and existing State-owned, -funded and -regulated infrastructure employ the five sets of strategies of robustness, resiliency, redundancy, adaptability and avoidance/retreat/removal to work toward increasing climate-safety.
- State agencies should furthermore establish formal and readily implementable guidelines at the agency/programmatic level and at the project level as to what it means to “incorporate climate change” into infrastructure planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance.
- Development of guidance will often require workload and expertise beyond what is available in current budgets. To achieve this recommendation, agencies should have adequate funding and efficient ways to leverage similar activities from other agencies and solicit outside scientific and technical expertise.
- State legislation, propositions and State agency policy directives related to infrastructure should direct infrastructure investment where it is needed most as determined by a rating of climate risks, the infrastructure investment gap and the potential to reduce social inequities.

## Take a Systems Approach

Following the “It Takes a System” approach, the remaining recommendations discuss how best to advance the state’s collection of existing and needed data and analytics (Recommendations 2 and 3), their imminent projects and project pipeline (Recommendation 4 and 5), existing and needed governance structures and mechanisms (Recommendation 6), financing tools (Recommendation 7) and implementation aides (Recommendations 8, 9 and 10) necessary for building climate-safe infrastructure for all.

## Recommendation 2

*In the past, the State's financial support for its various climate science efforts and decision-support tools has been uneven and insufficient. At a minimum, the State Legislature should provide a permanent source of funding for the State's mandated Climate Change Assessment process, the State's ongoing Climate Change Research Program, and decision-support tools and other assistance that disseminate their findings, so as to meet the needs for improved understanding and forward-looking science information.*

Through the pioneering work of several State agencies such as the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the State already has an impressive compendium of publicly-funded, state-of-the-art climate science that can be used to support state engineering and architectural projects. The CSIWG identified these valuable resources and identified critical gaps in the available information. Once a sustained source of funding is developed, an important next step is to convene a follow-up panel or process to prioritize information gaps identified by the CSIWG into high, medium and low priority. Some of the highlighted research and science needs identified by the current CSIWG include:

- Produce statewide IDF curves with associated uncertainty for future climate conditions;
- Continue to invest in high-resolution climate modeling to better define spatial and temporal structure of extreme events;
- Prioritize funding for inclusion of traditional knowledges and paleoclimatology;
- Building on the State's previous investment in USGS's CoSMoS model<sup>1</sup> for sea-level rise and storm surge, determine where exactly in the state even more fine-scaled hydrodynamic modeling is needed and focus additional resources there;
- Invest in research that merges case studies, ensemble modeling and forecast experiments to investigate the likelihood, mechanisms, joint probabilities and predictability of climatic extremes that pose significant threats to California's infrastructure;
- Develop fine-spatial scale historical demographic information as well as information on infrastructure use and foster a detailed understanding of the factors that drive those use patterns so as to inform projections of future changes in these trends; and
- Produce projections of changes in technology and infrastructure use.

*A monitoring program is an essential companion to future research in support of climate-safe infrastructure.*

With the help of the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the CEC, future renditions of the Strategic Climate Change Research Plan should incorporate the identified research priorities, including the most appropriate agencies and outside partners capable of addressing them. Moreover, DWR, working with other State agencies as well as a diverse group of stakeholders, has recommended formally establishing and funding a California Climate Science and Monitoring Program. Monitoring of how both the climate and existing infrastructure is responding to the climate is critical for ensuring adaptive approaches to maintaining safe infrastructure; a monitoring program is thus an essential companion to any future research. Finally, the State should provide modest and stable additional funding to expand the State Climatologist Office to enable the State Climatologist to engage the climate science community and in turn advise State government on climate change issues.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: [https://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/coastal\\_processes/cosmos/](https://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/coastal_processes/cosmos/)



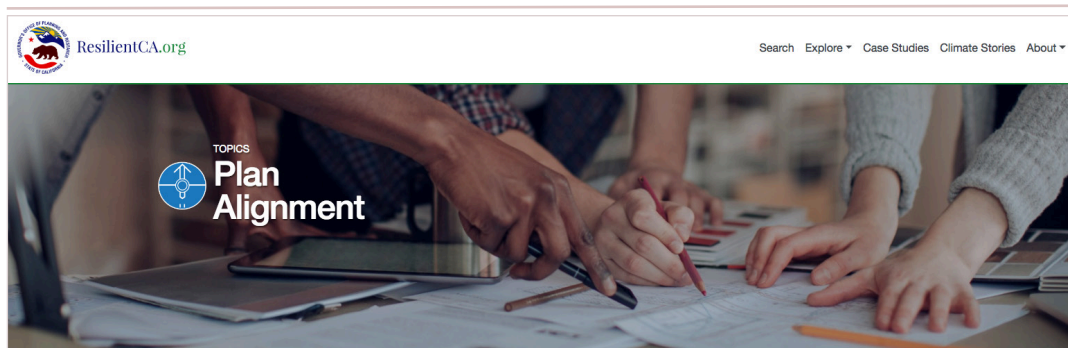
## Recommendation 3

*Because of the diversity of State agencies, types of infrastructure and their vulnerabilities, and the specific needs for climate science, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all recipe for State agencies to engage with the climate change science community. That said, the State budget should provide full funding to State infrastructure agencies so they can dedicate time and support to their engineers and architects to substantively and collaboratively interact with climate scientists and other relevant experts in the creation of useful advice, guidance and tools on a regular and ongoing basis, in a way and at a level appropriate to their needs.*

Whether it is through a national scale connection to the Sustained Climate Assessment, or through augmentation of the state's Adaptation Clearinghouse (Figure 10.4), including its Technical Advisory Group, or the better use of gatherings such as the California Adaptation Forum (CAF), formalized processes should be developed in which state engineers and architects have deliberate and sustained interaction with physical and social climate change scientists from diverse research institutions, as well as professional organizations and other experts and stakeholders. Some of the immediate first steps discussed earlier include:

- Expand timely options for state engineers and architects to travel outside of California to participate in professional conferences in order to continue learning about and gaining comfort with climate science, as well as continuing to build their network of peers and colleagues;
- Through a user-needs driven and broadly inclusive process, Cal-Adapt should be bolstered and updated to incorporate California-specific, engineering-scale information to have an authoritative site of publicly available information. Concurrently, a concerted outreach effort is needed to raise awareness of this information among state engineers and architects; and
- Equally important to the quality of the data provided via Cal-Adapt, once the tool is established, tool developers (within academia, consultancies, or State agencies) should provide training to end users to help them become familiar with and supportive of innovation and best practices related to sustainability and resilience, including support for collaborative processes.

*Formal processes should be developed in which state engineers and architects have deliberate and sustained interaction with physical and social climate change scientists, professional societies and stakeholders.*



**Figure 10.4:** The state's recently launched Adaptation Clearinghouse could become an important resource for centralized delivery of scientific information needed by engineers and architects, but concerted outreach to practicing engineers is needed to raise awareness of this treasure trove of resources. (Photo: Screenshot of CA.resilience.org)

## Recommendation 4

*During the all-important pre-development phase, projects are conceptualized, planned and designed. The State budget should improve this process by building staff capacity and greatly increasing project funding to better account for a changing and uncertain climate, by addressing social inequity, and by assessing and accounting for the true costs and benefits of integrated projects across their full life-cycle.*

During pre-development, infrastructure projects go from being just an idea to being plans and designs ready to be built. Pre-development determines the goals of the project, assesses their economic and technical feasibility, explores and decides among different design options, and involves all necessary components of project planning to make projects investor-ready. The most effective pre-development is more than a technical planning and design exercise (Figure 10.5). In keeping with the CSIWG's definition of climate-safe infrastructure, it should consider the broader concepts of statewide, sectoral or cross-sectoral and systems-oriented infrastructure investment. Examples of this type of work is being piloted in the San Francisco Bay Area Resilient by Design competition.

*The most effective pre-development considers systems-oriented infrastructure investment*



**Figure 10.5:** Training of engineers, architects and infrastructure planners is needed in the principles and approaches of effective pre-development of climate-safe infrastructure. (Photo: Training of scientists and practitioners; Susanne Moser, used with permission)

There are critical elements of successful pre-development planning and a range of tools to assist it. These include:

- Effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement from the start (see also Recommendation 5 below);
- Developing a climate-screening process to help identify the level of analysis needed and - together with stakeholders - to prioritize which projects to include in the “project pipeline”;
- Comprehensively calculating the cost effectiveness of climate-safe infrastructure;
- As appropriate and where information is available, employing a probabilistic risk management approach, using techniques such as robust decision making, scenario planning, adaptation (or adaptive) pathways and flexible engineering design analysis;
- Effective communication to link the small initial steps and successes with the goals of the larger adaptation pathway; and
- Training on the above principles and approaches to ensure that practitioners are employing these strategies appropriately.

## Recommendation 5

*Difficult decisions will have to be made and the impacts of potential policies or decisions on different stakeholder groups are complex and challenging to assess. It is critical therefore to engage all affected stakeholders in a meaningful way, from early on and throughout any decision-making process, using the seven principles of equitable planning and decision-making.<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Growth Council is well positioned to take a range of steps to encourage, improve and provide guidance on effective stakeholder engagement in the context of infrastructure development.*

Stakeholder engagement is essential at every step of the process of crafting climate-safe infrastructure, from initial stages of discussion, to implementation, to maintenance and decommissioning. An important check against decision-making at any stage should always consider whether decisions are being made *with* communities, rather than *for* communities. Intentional stakeholder engagement is instrumental for developing a just, fair and socially inclusive process that gives voice to all members of society (Figure 10.6). To operationalize this recommendation, State agencies, policy-makers and project owners should:

- Create opportunities for timely and meaningful engagement by a wide range of stakeholders to help develop and evaluate potential policies and programs;
- Develop guidelines (or even requirements) for effective stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects;
- Encourage agency staff to attend relevant conferences and meetings to make their constituents aware of proposed guidelines and to solicit comments;
- Hold trainings for stakeholder engagement facilitators; and
- Track progress on social equity.

*Intentional stakeholder engagement is instrumental for developing a just, fair and socially inclusive process that gives voice to all members of society.*



Figure 10.6: Many infrastructure decisions involve difficult trade-offs and engineers and architects need to have the skills to effectively convene, facilitate and navigate stakeholder conversations. (Photo: Carlsbad, California, desalination plant; vanderhe1, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## Recommendation 6

*Consistent with Executive Order B-30-15 and AB 1482, State agencies should update all relevant (i.e., climate-sensitive) infrastructure standards and guidelines that they can directly affect. Alternatively, or in addition, they should develop new state-specific guidelines where there are gaps to address climate resiliency by incorporating forward-looking climate information in those standards and codes. Where State agencies rely on standards developed by standard-setting organizations, state engineers and architects should work through the relevant professional organizations to advance development of climate-cognizant standards. Until new standards and codes are in place, State agencies should develop guidelines that go above and beyond minimum standards and codes to meet the goals of the Climate-Safe Path for All. Where agencies don't have resources to fulfill this workload, they should be fully funded in the State budget.*

In the course of its deliberations, the CSIWG identified many institutional barriers to integrating forward-looking climate science into existing standards, codes and guidelines. State agencies differ in their technical capacity to make needed updates to existing standards and codes (and/or developing new ones where needed) vs. those who must await standard-setting organizations to provide those updated standards, which the State would then adopt. While policy guidance should be unambiguous, the way to implement it at the level of standards and codes will need to be flexible to reflect this range of in-house capacities.

Thus, Recommendation 6 encourages State agencies, when possible, to update their respective standards and codes to address climate resilience; when not possible, they should provide subject matter expertise to standard-setting bodies to ensure that climate resiliency is addressed in updates or new codes. Moreover, as new codes are being developed, or old ones are being updated, State agencies should use voluntary standards that are relevant to their respective infrastructure and that go above and beyond minimum standards and ensure climate resilience.

Among the most important barriers are questions around liability, which constitute a large and complicated enough challenge that a separate panel should be convened to address all the nuances and complexities and to provide guidance and recommendations to infrastructure agencies.

New types of standards and procedural mechanisms provide opportunities for increased climate resiliency. These include:

- Performance-based standards;
- Standards for professional practice;
- Standards of care;
- Different procurement approaches for various types of climate-safe infrastructure projects; and
- ASCE's Manual of Practice (MOP) that recommends an adaptive design approach.

Building on the ASCE's forthcoming MOP, the CSIWG proposes the development of a California-specific MOP that: addresses all critical infrastructure in the state; references the climate science information that is most relevant to California and produced in and for the state; and adequately supports the work of this Working Group with in-house staff and external experts and commensurate funding.

Finally, State agencies require supporting information, tools and innovative design approaches to implement climate-safe infrastructure (Figure 10.7). The CSIWG sees an important opportunity for the State to improve the benefit-cost assessment (BCA) approaches it uses. Instead of conventional BCA, the State should use more sophisticated methods that account for:

- The full infrastructure life-cycle, not just initial capital outlays;
- The cost of inaction;
- The deep uncertainty in both climatic and non-climatic aspects of the future;
- Adaptation pathways and the adaptive implementation of design choices;
- Benefits and costs to systems, not just projects; and
- The social costs and benefits to ensure that equity is explicitly accounted for.

In addition, the State should support applied research and testing of adaptive design for different types of critical infrastructure as well as developing rigorous economic methodologies for determining the true cost and benefits of implementing adaptive design; and design policies that allow and encourage infrastructure which is either sufficiently “modular” or built with sufficient “safety buffer” to accommodate changing climate change risks over time.



**Figure 10.7: Different agencies require different types of information to support climate-safe infrastructure during planning, operation and maintenance. Close interaction between scientists, engineers and architects helps to identify those context-specific information needs. (Photo: Folsom hydropower dam; DWR, used with permission)**

## Recommendation 7

*Because improving resilience is not a zero-sum activity, adding resilience in one area cannot be balanced by relaxing resilience requirements somewhere else. Adding requirements for resilience will come at a cost, so unfunded mandates are not feasible. The true costs over the full life-cycle of infrastructure projects should be assessed broadly, and the State should make efforts to help policy-makers and the public better understand the necessity of bearing these costs. Educational, promotional and other outreach should be conducted to generate support for the expenditures.*

A follow-on activity to the work of the Working Group should explore the complex questions that arise about how to take climate change into account from a fiscal perspective. Moreover, the State has no comprehensive or reliable estimates of what climate change impacts and adaptation would cost at the State or local level. A range of factors make such estimates difficult to determine, but significant opportunities for filling knowledge gaps and improving on existing partial assessments is possible. The CSIWG identified a number of practical steps forward to implement the overarching recommendation on developing the funding and public support for investment in a climate-safe future:

- The State should include economic analyses of the costs and benefits of climate-safe infrastructure as an explicit focus in the next update of the Strategic Climate Change Research Plan to develop better estimates of the fiscal challenges and opportunities;
- With available and improved methodologies in hand, State agencies should carefully evaluate expected costs and benefits of current and proposed policy approaches to infrastructure planning and design, including via interdependencies with other agencies and policies, and to publicly disclose those costs, benefits and interdependencies;
- The State should find ways to compile and critically assess economic valuation methodologies, particularly of difficult-to-assess costs and benefits, that are available in the literature and update outdated State economic valuation practices, so that the environmental and social benefits can be more effectively integrated into feasibility studies;
- Agencies should build greater in-house technical know-how on innovative financing mechanisms;
- Working closely with financial advisers from the private and public sectors, including philanthropy, the State should explore and implement innovative funding mechanisms; and
- The Technical Advisory Council (TAC) of the State's Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program's (ICARP) has begun investigating indicators and metrics of adaptation success. The TAC or a subset of the TAC, in cooperation with relevant State agency staff, external researchers, stakeholders representing social equity interests and financial experts should develop a suite of metrics that are meaningful to all parties – funding seekers and funding providers.

*Equally important is for the Strategic Growth Council and other State agencies to launch serious outreach efforts to help Californians more fully understand why investment in climate-safe infrastructure is necessary.*

Equally important to the above is for the Strategic Growth Council and other State agencies to launch serious outreach efforts to help Californians more fully understand why investment in climate-safe infrastructure is necessary, why the Climate-Safe Path for All is the safest and – in light of observed climate trends and already-experienced catastrophic impacts – likely a highly cost-effective way forward, and to make the case for continued financial reforms that remove some of the structural obstacles to a more reliable and affordable approach to infrastructure financing.



## Recommendation 8

*The Strategic Growth Council should coordinate with the Government Operations Agency, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and other relevant agencies to develop a work plan on how to address the training and professional development gaps of its infrastructure-related workforce as identified in this report, and begin to implement that work plan as soon as feasible. Because the Strategic Growth Council does not currently have the staff capacity and funding to implement this task, it would require adequate funding to do so.*

Over the course of the CSIWG's work, a recurring theme was the need to have the skilled workforce to get climate-safe infrastructure appropriately designed, built, operated and maintained (Figure 10.8). The CSIWG identified a subset of actions that can be taken immediately to help advance this recommendation:

- Engage with professional societies, state-based engineering schools and universities, the American Society of Adaptation Professionals, private sector engineering and architecture firms and others deemed relevant in the development of the recommended workplan;
- Incentivize a rapid and substantial expansion of end-to-end, multidisciplinary climate change research, education and application programs;

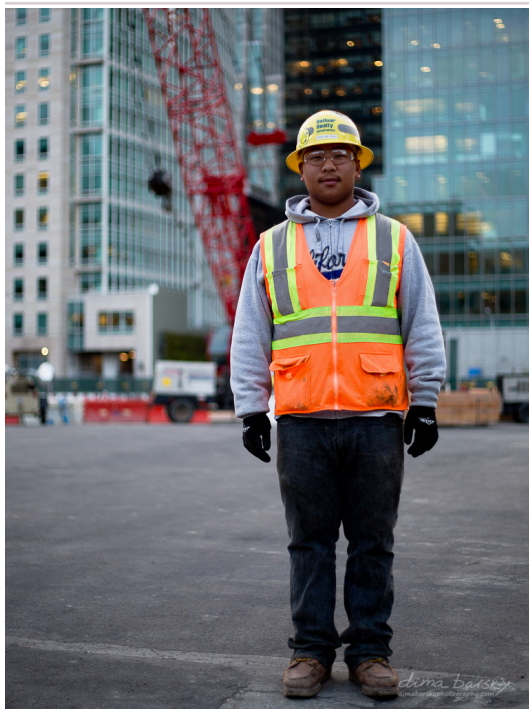


Figure 10.8: A recurring theme during the deliberations of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group was the need for a skilled workforce to appropriately use, interpret and act on scientific information. (Photo: Construction worker; Dima Barsky, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons License 2.0)

- Set expectations through professional standards, qualification and continuing education requirements of state engineers and architects and those receiving State funding; and
- Expand and institutionalize the State's internal decision support capabilities, including a professional development pipeline of well-trained professionals by requiring staff to engage in ongoing professional development in the areas found to be most in need of advancement.

California is not alone with this struggle, thus the recommendations in this report for how to implement sustained and effective training and professional development can have implications beyond just the State of California.

*The State should set expectations of a quality workforce through professional standards, qualifications and continuing education requirements of state engineers and architects and those receiving State funding.*

## Recommendation 9

*The State should establish a Standing CSIWG to devise and implement a process for coordinating and prioritizing Climate-Safe Path related resilience policies and actions at the highest level. This panel would provide a needed forum for agencies to coordinate their policies, take advantage of synergies, address potential conflicts and learn from one another. As AB 2800 is slated to sunset in 2020, the work of a standing CSIWG would require an extension of AB 2800 and adequate financial support to conduct its business.*

The CSIWG proposes the development of a standing CSIWG, which would have the following roles:

- Coordination;
- Central point of contact for infrastructure across the state;
- Forum to advance climate-safe infrastructure questions; and
- Leadership in incorporating forward-looking information in engineering standards.

The standing CSIWG panel would improve cross-sector coordination and integration by:

- Identifying ways to minimize obstacles to collaboration;
- Experimenting with new forms of coordination (e.g., coordinated integrative budgeting for projects);
- Fostering standing cross-agency working groups for infrastructure (such as for the development of the California-specific Manual of Practice (MOP), to explore legal issues around liability, or to prioritize infrastructure-related research needs;
- Ensuring wider and more effective stakeholder participation; and
- Fostering regular communication across silos.



**Figure 10.9:** A standing Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group would coordinate the State's infrastructure-related activities, serve as a central point of contact and as a forum to advance climate-safe infrastructure questions, and provide critical leadership to ensure forward-looking science is incorporated into infrastructure planning, design and construction. (Photo: Bridge work at night; Caltrans, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)

## Recommendation 10

*The State budget should provide full funding to State agencies to make deliberate efforts in reducing or eliminating the barriers that hinder or slow down adoption of State-level climate-safe infrastructure policy into practice. Key focus areas include the translation of Climate-Safe Path policy into practice manuals and contracting language, providing incentives to account for climate change in infrastructure projects, identifying metrics of success for monitoring and evaluation and developing a best-practices compendium.*

Ultimately, for all of these recommendations to be used by on-the-ground contractors – those who implement the plans developed by state architects and engineers – they must be translated and made accessible to all working on infrastructure. The California-specific MOP provides one mechanism for this by providing step-by-step guidance for how to incorporate some of the more novel and non-traditional approaches to engineering described in [Chapter 6](#).

The CSIWG recommends several important additional steps to help with the translation of State-level policy into climate-safe infrastructure project implementation on the ground:

- Once procurement approaches have been thoroughly assessed by a future working group for their advantages and disadvantages, guidance should be developed for infrastructure owners for writing different types of bids;
- Effectively assessing and managing bids, design proposals and construction requires adequate training of staff in infrastructure agencies, which is not always a given at this time;
- The standing CSIWG or a designated working group should engage with legal and financial experts as well as engineering and climate change experts to develop model contract language and other support to assist with linking policy to project-level contracts; and
- The standing CSIWG should also systematically examine the hurdles and opportunities for improved inclusive procurement practices as it transitions to building more climate-safe infrastructure and develop an inclusive procurement practices toolbox.

Furthermore, incentives – financial and otherwise – provide the inducements to break from traditional and well-trodden paths and try the innovative approaches and paradigm shifts necessary to move infrastructure design into the new Climate-Safe Path paradigm. Metrics of success and performance also provide tools that achieve multiple goals such as: enabling deliberate planning and decision-making; providing a mechanism for accountability and governance; providing justification of adaptation expenditures; providing the information needed for adaptive design; and supporting communication, public engagement and public support. And, finally, peer-to-peer learning supported by the development of a best practices compendium provides references, tools, ideas and inspiration for engineers and architects as they work towards a safer future for all.



**Figure 10.10:** For State policy to be translated into projects on the ground, planners need help in developing appropriate contract language. A California-specific Manual of Practice, model contracts, incentives and a set of performance metrics are all ways to support implementation. (Photo: Trinidad Head, Humboldt County; R. Bertolf, [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



## In Closing

Through all of its climate-focused activities, the State of California has been laying the foundation for the work of the CSIWG. AB 2800 allowed the Working Group to tackle the tensions and challenges with changing ways of thinking and doing and creating new paths for infrastructure planning in the state. In using the systemic approach to move from vision to implementation, and in following the recommendations that provide the bricks for the Climate-Safe Path, California has the opportunity to Pay it Forward. It must make these investments today to ensure the safety, well-being and prosperity of all Californians tomorrow.

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*California has the opportunity to Pay it Forward. It must make these investments today to ensure the safety, well-being and prosperity of all Californians tomorrow.*

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Figure 10.11: Investing in California's climate-safe infrastructure today is "paying it forward" – for the sake of the safety, well-being and prosperity of all. (Photo: Ian D. Keating, [flickr](#), licensed under Creative Commons license 2.0)



# References

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Note: Whenever possible, references are provided with a link to an online and free source so as to make the resources that informed this report accessible to all interested readers. These links are current and active as of August 18, 2018. California Fourth Climate Change Assessment Reports are available from the California Climate Change Portal once released; see: <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/research/> and <http://www.ClimateAssessment.ca.gov>.

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## The Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group

(in alphabetical order)

Dr. Amir AghaKouchak, P.E., University of California, Irvine

Nancy Ander, P.E., California Department of General Services

John Andrew, P.E., ENV SP, California Department of Water Resources

Gurdeep Bhattal, P.E., California Department of Transportation (alt)

Martha Brook, P.E., California Energy Commission

Dr. Dan Cayan, University of California, San Diego: Scripps Institution of Oceanography

James Deane AIA, CDT, LEED AP, PMP, California High Speed Rail Authority/WSP

Dr. Noah Diffenbaugh, Stanford University

Dr. David Groves, RAND Water and Climate Resilience Center, Pardee RAND Graduate School

Dr. Kristin Heinemeier, P.E., University of California, Davis: Energy Efficiency Center

Dr. Robert Lempert, RAND Corporation; Frederick S. Pardee Center for Longer Range Global Policy and the Future Human Condition (alt)

Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E., ENV SP, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Dr. Kyle Meng, University of California, Santa Barbara

Dr. Deb Niemeier, P.E., NAE, University of California, Davis

Bruce Swanger, P.E., California Department of Transportation

Chester Widom, FAIA, California Department of General Services; Division of State Architect

## Co-Facilitators and Report Authors

Dr. Susanne C. Moser, Susanne Moser Research & Consulting

Dr. Juliette Finzi Hart, U.S. Geological Survey

## Project Support

Keali'i Bright, California Natural Resources Agency

Joseph Wraithwall, California Natural Resources Agency

Elea Becker Lowe, California Natural Resources Agency

Guido Franco, P.E., California Energy Commissions

**Suggested citation:** Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (CSIWG). 2018. Paying it forward: The Path Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure in California. Report of the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group to the California State Legislature and the Strategic Growth Council. Sacramento, CA: CNRA, Publication number: CNRA-CCA4-CSI-001.

The full report is available at: <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/climate-safe-infrastructure-working-group/>

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**Acknowledgement.** The work of the Working Group was funded through a grant from the California Natural Resources Agency to the Berkeley Energy and Climate Institute (BECI), a part of the California Institute for Energy and Environment (CIEE) at the University of California, Berkeley, and constitutes a contribution to the Fourth California Climate Assessment.

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