

Guiding Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change and Food Systems

Climate change demands ambitious and durable federal policy solutions that are commensurate with the urgency and scale of the problem. These solutions, which may entail costs, must provide transparency and promote affordability while distributing costs and benefits in such a way that promotes equity. The scientific consensus that the climate is changing at an increasingly rapid pace is incontrovertible. The timeframe for taking meaningful action to avoid catastrophic impacts is running short. Adherence to the following principles will help ensure the inclusion of food, agriculture, and forestry in climate policies that reduce carbon emissions and curb climate impacts.

BIPARTISAN AND BROADLY SUPPORTED

Policy solutions must be broadly bipartisan and widely supported by Americans.

FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND FORESTRY INCLUSIVE

Climate legislation must work with – not against – the diverse interests that make up this critically important sector of the U.S. economy, regardless of farm, ranch, or forest scale, location, type, ownership structure, or supply chain position.

ATTENTIVE TO RURAL PEOPLE AND PLACES

A robust food and agriculture system underpins the well-being of all communities.

MITIGATIVE AND ADAPTIVE

Climate policies should support both mitigation of greenhouse gases and adaptation to the effects of climate change. The food, agriculture, and forestry sectors are both affected by and must be an integral part of any strategy for addressing climate change.

SCIENCE-BASED

Strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change should be informed by rigorous scientific research and data analysis. This includes developing protocols and methodologies to quantify soil health and carbon sequestration that can drive investment and decision-making at multiple scales.

MARKET-BASED- AND OUTCOME-DRIVEN

Climate policies should provide economic incentives commensurate to their contributions to climate mitigation and improved ecosystem services, including rewarding early action. These incentives may include market-based solutions that reward performance.

RISK REDUCING

Efforts should support farmers, ranchers, foresters, and supply chain actors in determining the best long-term strategies to mitigate economic and environmental risk and bolster resilience.