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SUMMARY

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# U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP): Overview and Considerations for Congress

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) is an interagency program established by Congress through the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (GCRA; P.L. 101-606) to coordinate and integrate federal research on global change. *Global change* refers to global environmental changes in the Earth's climate, land productivity, water resources, atmospheric chemistry, and ecological systems that may affect Earth's capacity to sustain life. USGCRP was established to enhance scientific understanding of global changes and assess their potential impacts, and for the program's results to be useful for those developing policy responses. As the Trump Administration looks to alter executive branch activities related to climate change, an issue for the 119th Congress may be whether—and if so, how—to alter congressional direction and funding for USGCRP and its activities.

Pursuant to the GCRA, USGCRP coordinates global change research conducted by the federal government, undertakes scientific assessments, and facilitates international scientific cooperation. To accomplish this, USGCRP coordinates U.S. global change research activities across 15 federal agencies and departments. The program develops reports and assessments, including the National Climate Assessment (NCA), which is produced periodically and synthesizes the state of the science on observed and projected climate trends, sectoral and regional impacts, and adaptation and mitigation strategies. USGCRP supports U.S. participation in international scientific initiatives, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). U.S. scientists have played a prominent role in authoring, reviewing, and providing technical input for IPCC assessments.

USGCRP member agencies fund and implement global change research activities, with appropriations provided directly to the agencies rather than through a centralized USGCRP budget. USGCRP compiles a budget crosscut in its annual reports, summarizing funding that agencies self-identify as their contributions to the program. Reported funding for USGCRP-related activities has increased since the program began, reaching approximately $4 billion in FY2023.

Presidential administrations and Congress have taken varying positions on the program. The Biden Administration issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14072 directing USGCRP to develop an assessment on the "condition of nature within the United States"; USGCRP was implementing the order by developing a National Nature Assessment. The Trump Administration issued E.O. 14154 revoking E.O. 14072; work on the National Nature Assessment was reportedly discontinued. Members of Congress have also expressed a range of views regarding the program. For example, some Members have proposed restricting its funding, while other Members have proposed expanding the program's scope through new activities related to climate resilience.

Congress may evaluate USGCRP's role under the GCRA, including whether it should remain the primary federal entity responsible for coordinating global change research, producing scientific assessments, and supporting international collaboration. Congress may also evaluate the future of USGCRP's scientific assessments, including the ongoing development of the Sixth National Climate Assessment (NCA6), and the extent of U.S. participation in international scientific assessments.

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# Introduction

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) is an interagency program established by Congress in 1990 to coordinate and integrate federal research on global environmental changes, including climate change. According to the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (GCRA; Title I, P.L. 101-606), the program and its activities are to advance global change research and provide scientific information useful for policymakers.[1] To accomplish its functions pursuant to the GCRA, USGCRP serves as a platform for interagency coordination by facilitating meetings and supporting interagency groups, and developing strategic plans that establish research priorities. USGCRP produces scientific assessments, including the National Climate Assessment (NCA), which is released approximately every four years and evaluates climate-related risks and impacts in the United States. USGCRP facilitates U.S. participation in international global change research activities, including international scientific assessments, such as those conducted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

USGCRP member agencies fund and implement global change research activities, with appropriations provided directly to the individual agencies themselves rather than through a centralized USGCRP budget. USGCRP compiles a budget crosscut in its annual reports, referred to as *Our Changing Planet*, summarizing funding that agencies self-identify as their contributions to the program. Reported funding for USGCRP-related activities has increased since the program began, reaching approximately $4 billion in FY2023.

Presidential administrations and Congress have taken varying positions on the program. The Biden Administration issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14072 directing USGCRP to develop a new report on the status of the nation's natural resources—referred to as the National Nature Assessment.[2] In 2025, the Trump Administration issued E.O. 14154, which revoked E.O. 14072; USGCRP reportedly discontinued work on the National Nature Assessment after E.O. 14154.[3] Members of recent Congresses have also proposed both restricting USGCRP's funding and expanding its scope. As the Trump Administration looks to alter executive branch activities related to climate change, an issue for the 119th Congress may be whether—and if so, how—to alter congressional direction and funding for USGCRP and its activities.

This report provides an overview of USGCRP, beginning with background information, followed by information about its member agencies and interagency groups, scientific assessments, and international activities. The report concludes with considerations for Congress.

# History, Functions, and Structure

USGCRP originated from interagency planning activities under the Reagan Administration.[4] USGCRP was established by Congress in 1990 by the GCRA (P.L. 101-606) in order to "assist

[1] 15 U.S.C. §§2931-2938.

[2] Executive Order 14072, "Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies," 87 *Federal Register* 24851, April 22, 2022.

[3] Executive Order 14154, "Unleashing American Energy," 90 *Federal Register* 8353, January 20, 2025; Catrin Einhorn, "Trump Killed a Major Report on Nature. They're Trying to Publish It Anyway," *New York Times*, February 10, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/climate/nature-assessment-trump.html; Lynda V. Mapes, "WA Scientists Plan to Publish Report on Nature That Trump Canceled," *Seattle Times*, February 17, 2025, https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/climate-lab/wa-scientists-plan-to-publish-report-on-nature-that-trump-canceled/.

[4] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), *Accomplishments of the U.S. Global Change Research Program*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.17226/24670.

the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change."

### What Is *Global Change*?

*Global change* refers to large-scale shifts in the Earth's environment that can affect ecosystems, resources, and human well-being. As defined by the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (GCRA; P.L. 101-606), *global change* means global environmental changes in climate, land productivity, oceans and other water resources, atmospheric chemistry, and ecological systems that may alter Earth's capacity to sustain life.

These changes are driven both by human activities—such as fossil fuel combustion, land-use change (agriculture, deforestation, urbanization), and industrial pollution—and natural processes, including volcanic eruptions and other geological events.

*Global change research*, as defined in the GCRA, includes the study, monitoring, assessment, prediction, and management of information related to the physical, chemical, and biological processes that regulate the Earth system, the changes occurring within it, and the influence of human activities.

Pursuant to statute, USGCRP has four major sets of responsibilities under the GCRA:

1. coordinating global change research across the federal government,[5]
2. developing and distributing mandated products,[6]
3. providing scientific information to inform policy decisions,[7] and
4. facilitating international research coordination.[8]

USGCRP coordinates global change research across federal agencies, including through its interagency groups.[9] USGCRP's mandated products include (1) a strategic research plan released every 10 years with updates every 3 years,[10] (2) scientific assessments that synthesize scientific knowledge for policymakers and the public,[11] and (3) an annual report.[12] These mandated products are designed to provide scientific information useful to policymakers. USGCRP's annual report—*Our Changing Planet*—provides updates to Congress on its activities and budget and documents programmatic achievements.[13] In addition, USGCRP supports the development of datasets and tools to provide decisionmakers with accessible and policy-relevant scientific information.[14]

USGCRP supports international collaboration on global change research by engaging with global scientific organizations and research initiatives. USGCRP supports U.S. participation in

[5] 15 U.S.C. §2932(e)(2).

[6] 15 U.S.C. §2934(a); 15 U.S.C. §2936; 15 U.S.C. §2937.

[7] 15 U.S.C. §2932(e)(6).

[8] 15 U.S.C. §2932(e)(5).

[9] U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), *Our Changing Planet: The U.S. Global Change Research Program for Fiscal Year 2025*, 2024, https://doi.org/10.7930/ocpfy2025 (hereinafter USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024).

[10] 15 U.S.C. §2934(a); USGCRP, *The U.S. Global Change Research Program 2022-2031 Strategic Plan*, 2022 (hereinafter USGCRP, *Research Strategic Plan 2022-2031*, 2022).

[11] 15 U.S.C. §2936.

[12] 15 U.S.C. §2937.

[13] Annual reports are available at USGCRP, "Reports Library," https://www.globalchange.gov/reports?topic%5B117%5D=117.

[14] Examples include the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, which provides data, maps, and case studies to help communities assess and prepare for climate-related risks (available at https://toolkit.climate.gov/); and the Global Change Information System (GCIS), a platform that offers all materials and data used for USGCRP products and climate assessments, such as global change data and publications, and acts as a guide to global change research produced by USGCRP member agencies (available at https://data.globalchange.gov/about).

international scientific assessments, including those by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), such as ozone depletion assessments and the IPCC's periodic climate change assessment reports.[15]

USGCRP operates under the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) and is overseen by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).[16] The NSTC's Subcommittee on Global Change Research (SGCR) leads USGCRP's activities and coordinates interagency efforts through the USGCRP National Coordination Office (NCO) and, according to a USGCRP website, 17 interagency groups.[17] Representatives from each participating department and agency comprise the USGCRP. In addition, the Executive Office of the President and other related entities have designated liaisons that participate in the SGCR.[18] The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's (NASEM's) Committee to Advise USGCRP provides ongoing guidance, including reviewing draft strategic plans.[19]

According to a 2022 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, the USGCRP's NCO provides operational support and technical expertise to the program by planning, coordinating, and assisting USGCRP activities; in FY2020 its budget was $8.1 million.[20] GAO also reported that as of August 2022, USGCRP had three employees on detail from participating agencies within its NCO and 25 contractor staff, and that the USGCRP NCO is managed by a consultancy contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

# Member Agencies and Departments

USGCRP has coordinated global change research across 15 federal agencies and departments that either conduct global change research or rely on it to carry out their missions.[21] This research spans multiple disciplines and includes Earth observations through long-term continuous data collection, studies of past changes in the Earth system, quantitative modeling to predict future conditions, and interdisciplinary research examining interactions among physical, chemical, biological, and social processes related to global change.

Federal agencies and departments engage in different aspects of this research depending on their statutory mandates, missions, and areas of expertise. Each agency has distinct authorities,

[15] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "Preparing Reports," https://www.ipcc.ch/about/preparingreports/, archived March 26, 2025, at https://perma.cc/3U7F-BR5Y.

[16] The USGCRP was originally coordinated by the Committee on Earth and Environmental Sciences (CEES), as stipulated in the Global Change Research Act (GCRA). President Clinton disbanded the CEES as part of a larger science and technology reorganization effort, and reconstituted these research efforts as the U.S. Global Change Research Program under a subcommittee of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). For more information on the administrative history of the USGCRP, see National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Accomplishments of the U.S. Global Change Research Program*, 2017, p. 5, https://doi.org/10.17226/24670. For more information on the National Science and Technology Council, see CRS Report R47410, *The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP): Overview and Issues for Congress*, by Emily G. Blevins.

[17] USGCRP, "Interagency Groups," https://www.globalchange.gov/our-work/interagency-groups, archived March 24, 2025, at https://perma.cc/X3JJ-LEAS.

[18] Other participants include representatives from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Climate Change Technology Program (CCTP), and the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (OFCM).

[19] NASEM, *Review of the U.S. Global Change Research Program's Draft Decadal Strategic Plan, 2022-2031*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.17226/26608.

[20] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Federal Research and Development: Funding Has Grown*, GAO-23-105396, December 2022, p. 49.

[21] USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024.

expertise, and research networks, as well as separate program and budget structures. USGCRP has no authority over individual agency missions or budgets (see "Budget Information"). USGCRP provides a framework to coordinate research activities, to ensure they are complementary, reduce duplication, and collectively advance understanding of global change.

Participating agencies and departments have included

- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Commerce;[22]
- Department of Defense;
- Department of Energy;
- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Homeland Security;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of State;
- Department of Transportation;
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
- National Science Foundation;
- Smithsonian Institution; and
- U.S. Agency for International Development.

# Budget Information

In the USGCRP annual report to Congress, USGCRP reports budget data on activities supporting the USGCRP for many of its member agencies and departments—that is, the budget crosscut shows the funding self-identified by agencies and departments as their contributions to USGCRP.

**Table 1** presents the budget crosscut by agency, adjusted for inflation. The budget crosscut does not include all agency investments directly relevant and necessary for USGCRP to carry out its objectives. For example, costs related to observing networks such as satellite systems—which provide important data for observing global change—are not included in the budget crosscut. In addition, not all agencies report costs. For example, the Department of Defense has not recently reported funding through the USGCRP budget crosscut. Each agency develops and implements its own activities as part of its contribution to USGCRP, with funds appropriated directly to the agency for those activities. These activities may or may not be explicitly identified as USGCRP-related in agency budget justifications or other publicly available materials. USGCRP does not have authority over agency budgets and does not control how funds are allocated.

[22] The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) comprise Department of Commerce's participation in USGCRP.

**Table 1. Crosscut by Agency for Expenditures in Support of USGCRP (Inflation-Adjusted 2023 Dollars)**

Funding amounts are shown in millions of dollars and are rounded to the nearest million

| | FY 1990 | FY 2000 | FY 2010 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration | 763 | 1,589 | 1,350 | 1,597 | 1,727 | 1,815 | 1,774 |
| National Science Foundation | 86 | 255 | 384 | 267 | 709 | 764 | 836 |
| U.S. Agency for International Development | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | — |
| U.S. Department of Commerce | 28 | 91 | 434 | 333 | 478 | 501 | 588 |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture | 33 | 72 | 133 | 121 | 127 | 145 | 198 |
| U.S. Department of Energy | 78 | 154 | 205 | 278 | 328 | 367 | 380 |
| U.S. Department of Health and Human Services | — | 62 | 5 | 11 | 31 | 30 | 187 |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | 20 | 28 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 20 | 21 |
| U.S. Department of the Interior | 20 | 31 | 76 | 41 | 222 | 241 | 252 |
| U.S. Department of Transportation | — | — | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Smithsonian Institution | — | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 |
| **Total** | **1,028** | **2,291** | **2,668** | **2,677** | **3,653** | **3,893** | **4,247** |

**Source:** Prepared by CRS from U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) annual report (*Our Changing Planet*) data. Annual reports are available at USGCRP, "Reports Library," https://www.globalchange.gov/reports?topic%5B117%5D=117. Inflation adjustment calculated using Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Data: "National Income and Product Accounts, Table 5.9.4 Price Indexes for Gross Government Fixed Investment by Type," line 4, September 27, 2024, https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/?reqid=19&step=2&isuri=1&categories=survey.

# Interagency Groups

Interagency groups coordinate and support implementation of global change research activities within and across USGCRP agencies and departments. USGCRP's interagency groups are composed of representatives from federal agencies and departments responsible for activities in each area.

The 17 interagency groups include working groups focused on Earth system processes, such as carbon and water cycles.[23] Other working groups focus on social sciences and public health.[24] A number of working groups address adaptation and resilience, including assessing risks to ecosystems, infrastructure, coastal and urban areas, and national security.[25] Additional working groups specialize in data collection, climate modeling, and decision-support tools.[26] USGCRP

[23] Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG) and Integrated Water Cycle Group (IWCG).

[24] Social Sciences Coordinating Committee (SSCC) and Interagency Crosscutting Group on Climate Change and Human Health (CCHHG).

[25] Coasts Interagency Group (CoastsIG), Interagency Task Force on Sea Level Change (TF-SLC), Urban Interagency Group (UrbanIG), Working Group on National Security (WGNS), and Federal Adaptation and Resilience Group (FARG).

[26] Integrated Observations Interagency Working Group (ObsIWG), Greenhouse Gas Measurement and Monitoring (continued...)

also has working groups dedicated to public engagement and education, scientific assessments, and international coordination.[27]

# Scientific Assessments

According to the GCRA, the purpose of USGCRP scientific assessments is to integrate, evaluate, and interpret USGCRP findings; analyze the effects of global change; and analyze current trends in global change.

USGCRP periodically produces the NCA pursuant to statute; it also had initiated in 2022 a new periodic assessment—the National Nature Assessment (NNA)—pursuant to an executive order that was later revoked in 2025.[28] These assessments are discussed below.

## National Climate Assessment

The GCRA requires the USGCRP to develop an assessment of global change at least every four years.[29] In response to this mandate, USGCRP periodically produces the NCA, synthesizing the state of climate science and assessing climate-related risks and impacts across each U.S. region and major sectors of the economy. The NCA does not direct federal agencies to take specific actions; rather, it provides scientific information that agencies, policymakers, and stakeholders may use to support decisions such as those related to infrastructure resilience, disaster preparedness, economic risk assessment, and environmental planning.

The NCAs are written by hundreds of experts, including scientists working in federal government, academia, and the private sector. Each NCA undergoes multiple rounds of expert and governmental review, including evaluation by federal agencies, external experts, the public, and a NASEM review committee.[30]

To date, USGCRP has released five NCAs:

1. First National Climate Assessment (NCA1; 2000);[31]
2. Second National Climate Assessment (NCA2; 2009);[32]

Interagency Working Group (GHG IWG), Interagency Group on Integrative Modeling (IGIM), Indicators Interagency Working Group (IndIWG), and Climate Services Technical Working Group (CS-TWG).

[27] Climate Engagement and Capacity-Building Interagency Group (CEC), Sustained Assessment Working Group (SAWG), and International Activities Interagency Working Group (IAIWG).

[28] USGCRP has developed a number of other scientific assessments, including the first and second *State of the Carbon Cycle* reports, as well as reports focused on climate change and food and on climate change and human health. A. W. King et al., eds., *First State of the Carbon Cycle Report*, U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research, 2007; N. Cavallaro et al., eds., *Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report*, USGCRP, 2018; A. J. Crimmins et al., eds., *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*, USGCRP, 2016; M. E. Brown et al., *Climate Change, Global Food Security, and the U.S. Food System*, USGCRP, 2015.

[29] The GCRA specifies that each National Climate Assessment (NCA) must assess the potential effects of global change on a range of sectors and activities, including the natural environment, agriculture, energy, land and water resources, transportation, human health, social systems, and biodiversity. Each assessment must consider observed and projected trends, evaluate scientific advancements, and analyze climate-related risks over both near-term (25-year) and long-term (100-year) time frames.

[30] NASEM, *Review of the Draft Fifth National Climate Assessment*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.17226/26757.

[31] National Assessment Synthesis Team, *Climate Change Impacts on the United States: The Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change*, USGCRP, 2001.

[32] Thomas R. Karl et al., eds., *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, USGCRP, 2009.

3. Third National Climate Assessment (NCA3; 2014);[33]
4. Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4; 2017, 2018);[34] and
5. Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5; 2023).[35]

According to USGCRP, NCA5 is the most comprehensive analysis of climate change in the United States.[36] In 2024, USGCRP began developing the Sixth National Climate Assessment (NCA6).[37]

## National Nature Assessment

In 2022, the Biden Administration issued E.O. 14072, "Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies," directing USGCRP to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the condition of nature in the United States.[38] In response, USGCRP initiated the First National Nature Assessment (NNA1) and defined its scope as follows: [39]

> The scope of NNA1 is to assess the status, observed trends, and future projections of America's lands, waters, wildlife, biodiversity, and ecosystems and the benefits they provide, including connections to the economy, public health, equity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and national security.

A draft outline was released for public comment in 2024.[40] USGCRP anticipated releasing a draft for public comment in early 2025 and releasing the final report in 2026.[41]

In 2025, the Trump Administration issued E.O. 14154, "Unleashing American Energy," which revoked a number of executive orders from the Biden Administration, including E.O. 14072.[42] Reportedly, USGCRP's efforts to develop NNA1 were discontinued.[43]

[33] Jerry M. Melillo et al., eds., *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, USGCRP, 2014.

[34] NCA4 was published in two volumes, covering climate science (Vol. I, 2017) and climate impacts, risks, and adaptation strategies (Vol. II, 2018). D. J. Wuebbles et al., eds., *Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I*, USGCRP, 2017; D. R. Reidmiller et al., eds., *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II*, USGCRP, 2018.

[35] C. W. Avery et al., eds., *Fifth National Climate Assessment*, USGCRP, 2023.

[36] USGCRP, "U.S. Global Change Research Program Releases Fifth National Climate Assessment," press release, November 14, 2023, https://www.globalchange.gov/our-work/announcements/us-global-change-research-program-releases-fifth-national-climate-assessment.

[37] USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024.

[38] Executive Order 14072, "Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies," 87 *Federal Register* 24851, April 22, 2022.

[39] OSTP, "Framing the National Nature Assessment," 87 *Federal Register* 65622, October 31, 2022. Department of the Interior, "Request for Public Nominations for Authors and Scientific/Technical Inputs for the First National Nature Assessment," 88 *Federal Register* 80747, November 20, 2023.

[40] DOI, "Draft Outline for the First National Nature Assessment," 89 *Federal Register* 76867, September 19, 2024; USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024.

[41] USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024, p. 65.

[42] Executive Order 14154, "Unleashing American Energy," 90 *Federal Register* 8353, January 20, 2025.

[43] Catrin Einhorn, "Trump Killed a Major Report on Nature. They're Trying to Publish It Anyway," *New York Times*, February 10, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/climate/nature-assessment-trump.html.

# International Coordination and Research

USGCRP coordinates U.S. global change research activities with the programs of other nations and international organizations. USGCRP, its interagency groups, and member agencies participate in a variety of international activities, including international scientific assessments and collaborative research efforts, as well as meetings and conferences.

USGCRP, in coordination with the U.S. Department of State, provides U.S. representation at international meetings and conferences on global change research and supports U.S. scientists' participation in international scientific assessments. For example, USGCRP manages the nomination process for U.S. scientists, serves as the point of contact for communication with international scientific bodies, and coordinates interagency review and input. These international assessments include those conducted by the UNEP, WMO, IPCC, and others. The findings from these assessments have provided the scientific basis for international conventions and protocols including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[44]

USGCRP collaborates with international and regional research initiatives and scientific organizations, and supports global monitoring networks. USGCRP contributes to the development and maintenance of global monitoring systems that track environmental change, and facilitates data sharing and coordinates research on global change issues.[45]

# Considerations for Congress

USGCRP began as a presidential initiative under the Reagan Administration in 1989 and was established by Congress in 1990 under the GCRA to develop a comprehensive and integrated U.S. research program to assist both the nation and the world in understanding, assessing, predicting, and responding to global environmental change. As the Trump Administration looks to alter executive branch activities related to climate change, USGCRP-related issues for the 119th Congress may include whether—and if so, how—to alter congressional direction and funding for USGCRP and its activities, whether to reverse or codify in statute actions that may be taken by the Trump Administration, and whether to conduct oversight and investigation to inform its actions.

Decisions related to altering USGCRP encompass not only the funding and scientific resources dedicated to supporting USGCRP activities and the extent to which those funds and resources may or may not be diverted to other research endeavors, but also the potential implications of changes for the type, reliability, accessibility, coordination, and transparency of global change data and research. These data and research changes may have implications for global change scientific assessments and the policy and investment decisions that the assessments inform.

Members of Congress may consider whether to support USGCRP continuing its activities under the GCRA. Alternatively, Members may consider how USGCRP's role and structure could change, or how the types of scientific activities and information it supports could change. USGCRP has aimed to provide publicly accessible scientific information on global change, such as assessments, datasets, and tools, that inform domestic and international policymakers, including by addressing global-change-related scientific confidence, uncertainty, and research

[44] USGCRP, *Research Strategic Plan 2022-2031*, 2022.

[45] For example, USGCRP participates in the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), AmeriGEO, and the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI); USGCRP, *Annual Report*, 2024.

gaps. Members may consider whether it serves the American public for the federal government to continue performing this role and, if so, whether USGCRP should remain the primary entity coordinating these efforts.

In past Congresses, Members have expressed a range of views. Some Members have proposed restricting the use of federal funding for USGCRP.[46] Other Members have sought to expand its scope, including by directing USGCRP to establish new working groups or undertake additional activities, such as initiatives related to extreme weather and resilience.[47]

USGCRP periodically produces the NCA, synthesizing scientific understanding of climate trends and sectoral and regional impacts, as well as producing usable information for policymakers to formulate effective strategies related to global change. The first Trump Administration was critical of USGCRP activities, including the NCAs.[48] Under the Biden Administration, USGCRP completed NCA5 and initiated the development of NCA6. Members may consider supporting the completion of NCA6, directing USGCRP to halt the assessment, or having USGCRP focus on certain aspects of global change, among other actions.

The reported cancellation of NNA1 in 2025 raises considerations for Congress regarding the development and dissemination of this scientific assessment. USGCRP initiated NNA1 in 2022 and was anticipating releasing the first draft in early 2025.[49] Congress may seek to clarify whether or not USGCRP should publicly release this scientific assessment. Alternatively, Congress might redirect efforts toward other priorities, depending on current needs and resources. Some researchers involved in NNA1 have expressed interest in publishing their findings independently through academic journals or other nongovernmental platforms. While this approach could make this information publicly available, it may lack the authoritativeness of a government report.

USGCRP facilitates U.S. participation in international scientific global change research efforts, including scientific assessments conducted by the IPCC. According to USGCRP, the U.S. government has played a pivotal role in establishing the IPCC, and U.S. experts have contributed to every assessment to date.[50] The Trump Administration has reportedly restricted U.S. scientists' participation in the next IPCC assessment.[51] Members may consider both the role of USGCRP in IPCC assessments and whether or not the United States should continue to play a prominent role in international scientific assessments, as well as the consequences of each course of action. Historically, active U.S. participation has meant that U.S. scientific perspectives and priorities have often been integrated into international global climate assessments, which in turn inform domestic policy and international negotiations. A shift to less active participation could reduce the incorporation of U.S. perspectives and priorities in international scientific assessments. Members

[46] For example, see H.Amdt. 1163 (118th Congress), H.Amdt. 597 (118th Congress), H.Amdt. 758 (113th Congress), and H.Amdt. 671 (113th Congress).

[47] For example, see H.R. 2872 (117th Congress), S. 1420 (117th Congress), H.R. 2748 (116th Congress), S. 1482 (116th Congress), H.R. 2760 (117th Congress), S. 1282 (117th Congress), H.R. 5994 (116th Congress), and S. 3349 (116th Congress).

[48] White House, "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, Director of the NEC Larry Kudlow, and NSC Advisor John Bolton," press release, November 27, 2018, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-director-nec-larry-kudlow-nsc-advisor-john-bolton-112818/; Scott Waldman, "Trump Official Who Tried to Downplay Major Climate Report Now Will Oversee It," *Politico E&E News*, March 3, 2025.

[49] Catrin Einhorn, "Trump Killed A Major Report on Nature. They're Trying to Publish It Anyway," *New York Times*, February 10, 2025.

[50] USGCRP, *Research Strategic Plan 2022-2031*, 2022, p. 29.

[51] Jeff Tollefson, "US Pulls Back from Gold-Standard Scientific Climate Panel," *Nature*, vol. 639, no. 17 (2025).

may weigh these and other considerations when deliberating the extent of U.S. involvement in future international scientific assessments and the potential impacts on efforts to understand and address climate change, and on the scope and priorities of USGCRP's activities.

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