

# Impacts of Extreme Weather and Climate Change

From the Center for American Progress

Hurricane season starts this weekend and [nine independent scientific organizations](#) have predicted that this year will bring an extremely active hurricane season. The United States has experienced an onslaught of extreme weather in the past few years with over 25 events that caused at least \$1 billion in damage beginning in 2011. An analysis by the Center for American Progress found that the federal government spent a whopping [\\$136 billion](#) between 2011 and 2013 on disaster relief and recovery, which cost American families an average of \$400 annually. Many of these storms, floods, droughts, heat waves, and wildfires are climate change related. It's now time to reduce the carbon pollution responsible for climate change, and here's why:

## Americans Overwhelmingly Support Action on Climate Change

- The vast majority of Americans understand that there is a scientific consensus that climate change is real and due to human activities. A recent [Gallup poll](#) found that 62 percent of Americans believe that “scientists think warming is occurring” and 57 percent of respondents believe that climate change is due to “human activities.”
- Americans also understand that the recent spate of extreme weather is related to climate change. A [recent poll](#) by the Yale Project on Climate Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication found that nearly 6 in 10 Americans – 58 percent – say that “global warming is affecting weather in the United States.”
- Americans want our government to take action – [70 percent](#) of respondents say global warming should be a priority for the president and Congress.

## Federal Disaster Relief Spending High Due to Record-Breaking Extreme Weather

- The U.S. was subjected to many severe climate related weather events over the past two years. The president declared [141 major climate-related disasters](#) in 2011 and 2012, and there have been 20 so far in 2013. 2011 set the record with 94 climate-related disasters.
- In 2011 and 2012, there were a total of [25 severe extreme weather events](#) that each caused at least \$1 billion in damage that affected [67 percent](#) of U.S. counties and 43 states. Combined, these extreme weather events were responsible for [1,107 fatalities](#) and up to [\\$188 billion](#) in economic damages.
- The two costliest events were the 2012 drought—the worst drought in half a century, which baked nearly [two-thirds of the continental United States](#)—and [Superstorm Sandy](#), which battered the northeast coast in late October.
- According to NOAA, last year was the [warmest year on record](#). There were [356 all-time high temperature](#) records broken and [34,008 daily high temperature](#) records set or tied throughout 2012. [19 states](#) had their warmest year ever in 2012.
- A recent CAP analysis found that the federal government—which means taxpayers – spent [\\$136 billion total](#) from 2011-2013 on disaster relief and recovery, adding up to an average of nearly [\\$400 per household](#) per year.

## **Despite Impacts, Some Members of Congress Continue to Obstruct Disaster Relief & Deny The Threat of Climate Change**

- The vast majority of [Senate](#) and [House](#) conservatives voted against the \$50 billion disaster relief and recovery package for the people and businesses harmed by Superstorm Sandy.
- When the Senate passed the long-delayed \$50 billion Hurricane Sandy relief package, hypocrisy struck when 31 Republicans that voted against the bill had previously supported emergency aid efforts following disasters in their own states.
- In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House of Representatives voted [317 times](#) to block action to address climate change and protect safeguards on our air, water and environment, making it the most anti-environmental Congress in history.