

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change has issued a report on [Adapting to Climate Change: A Call for Federal Leadership](#). As its title suggests, the report calls for the federal government to take the lead on climate adaptation efforts, creating a national adaptation program with three major elements: strategic planning, information provision, and research. The authors concede that state and local efforts are important, and indeed their suggestions are largely drawn from state and local efforts to date. But they argue that federal leadership is essential. From the Introduction:

While many adaptations will occur at the state and local levels, the federal government is a critical player in an effective and coordinated approach to climate change adaptation in the United States. The federal government is significant for four primary reasons discussed in more detail in a later section: it owns and manages a significant number of assets and natural resources; its programs affect the ability of others to adapt; it is an important provider of technical, fiscal, and other support; and it plays a crucial role in dealing with impacts that cross geographic or jurisdictional boundaries.

Some municipalities, states, federal agencies, and others have already recognized the importance of addressing climate impacts by initiating climate adaptation plans, commissioning impact or vulnerability assessments, or enacting “no regrets” adaptation actions² that improve their communities’ climate resilience. Such efforts are making initial strides in tackling adaptation needs, but a dedicated and appropriately focused national program is needed to address the multiple institutions, sectors, and levels of government involved in adaptation as well as the complexity, magnitude, and long time horizon of many climate impacts.