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Today, President Obama issued an Executive Order intended "to prepare the Nation for the impacts of climate change by undertaking actions to enhance climate preparedness and resilience."

In some respects, this order simply continues ongoing efforts. Under this administration, the executive branch has already been doing a great deal of research, assessment, and planning for adaptation. Today's Executive Order will continue those efforts. But it also lays the foundation for moving from planning to action.

Two provisions strike me as potentially important advances.

First, the Executive Order tells the nation's key land and water management agencies, working with the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Management and Budget,

> to complete an inventory and assessment of proposed and completed changes to their land- and water-related policies, programs, and regulations necessary to make the Nation's watersheds, natural resources, and ecosystems, and the communities and economies that depend on them, more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Second, it directs federal agencies to "work together to develop and provide authoritative, easily accessible, usable, and timely data, information, and decision-support tools on climate preparedness and resilience." That's very general, of course, but the Order provides at least one specific directive: it tells CEQ and OMB to create a special portal for climate issues and decisionmaking on the data.gov site.

Both of these measures hold great promise. The first provides a needed nudge for agencies to adjust their programs in light of increasing understanding of the potential effects of climate change. And the second offers the hope that for once data and tools will be shared within and between agencies, and with the public and other governments, in ways that will improve the effectiveness and decrease the costs of adaptation work. The key test, of course, is the extent of follow-through. If the White House makes this effort a priority, the agencies will too. If the White

House forgets about it and moves on to other things, it could end up as nothing more than hopeful words.