



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Energy Programs Office

# Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities

Presentation to the Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB)

February 14, 2023

# Background on DEP's Energy Programs Office

- EPO is the U.S. Department of Energy-recognized Pennsylvania State Energy Office.
- Housed in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- **Nonregulatory:** Supports energy policies and programs that prevent pollution, protect our environment, improve public health, and ensure access to affordable energy options for all Pennsylvanians.
- Focuses on:
  - Energy conservation and efficiency
  - Advanced energy technologies
  - Energy security and resiliency
  - Education and outreach
  - Climate

# EPO and Environmental Justice

- EPO strives to incorporate EJ input and considerations in all its work, and understands the value of being intentional in its focus to support equitable outcomes.
- Meeting the needs of communities facing environmental injustice and other social/economic hardships requires direct engagement with these communities to collaboratively assess challenges and opportunities to provide necessary support.
- The federal government is also highlighting the importance of thoughtful EJ inclusion through funding requirements under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Justice40 initiative, and other efforts.

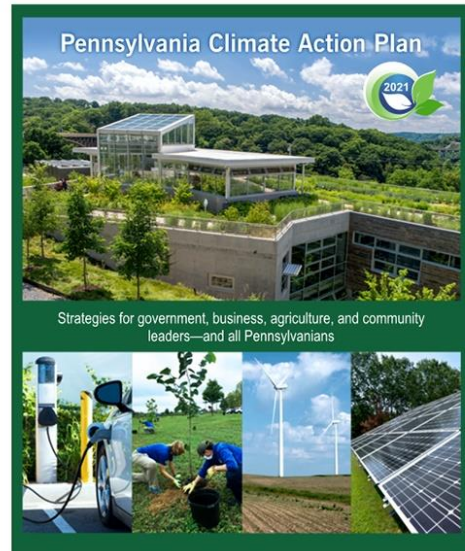
# Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities: Background

- In order to better address the needs of Disadvantaged and Environmental Justice Communities, DEP must understand these communities and their biggest obstacles to climate resilience.
- Using State Energy Program funding, DEP developed the scope of work for the Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities (CADAC) Program to:
  - develop a plan for community engagement
  - facilitate engagement
  - solicit and coordinate input from Disadvantaged Communities and experts on diversity, equity and inclusion
  - **develop a guide for implementation of climate strategies for maximum benefit to Disadvantaged Communities, and how to measure success**
- This guide will be useful as EPO prepares the 2024 Climate Impacts Assessment (IA) and Climate Action Plan (CAP), and develops programs to deploy federal funding.

# Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities: Background

- **Context:** the 2021 CAP provides recommended strategies PA can take to combat climate change and improve resilience. The 2021 IA describes the greatest hazards anticipated as a result of climate change and suggest adaptation pathways to improve community and statewide resilience.

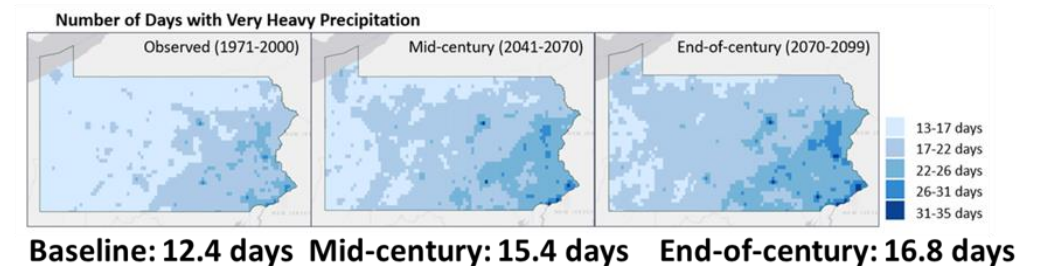
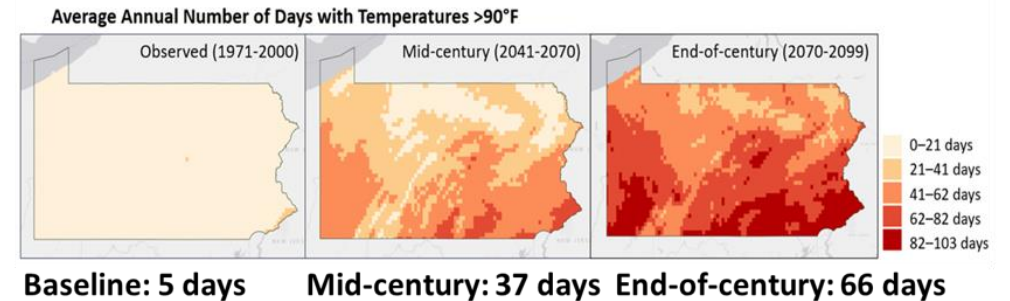
## PA Climate Action Plan



Observed and projected annual days with temperatures above 90°F

Observed and projected annual days with “very heavy” precipitation

## Climate Impacts Assessment



# Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities: Background

- The CAP and IA underscore critical issues that EJ advocates have been raising for decades: **EJ and underserved communities will likely experience disproportionate impacts as a result of climate change.** Therefore, these communities could benefit from additional support and inclusion in climate change adaptation, GHG reduction, and resilience.

# Where CADAC Makes a Difference

- Addressing climate change and reducing emissions requires an "all hands on deck" approach, but climate change will not affect all Pennsylvanians equally.
- Some may be more vulnerable to impacts due to their location, income, housing, or other hazard-specific factors.
- Disproportionate impacts are often not random. Consequences of historical discriminatory practices, such as redlining and disinvestment, may also manifest as inequities today.



# Where CADAC Makes a Difference

- **The CADAC program is intended to address and correct these inequities while advancing Pennsylvania's climate goals by:**
  - Engaging with and listening to Disadvantaged Communities to better address needs.
  - Incorporating their needs in future climate adaptation and planning to ensure GHG reduction strategies produce meaningful health, welfare, and community benefits to Disadvantaged Communities and avoid collateral impacts of climate action.
  - Aiding in prioritization of state and federal funding to ensure assistance is available where it is most needed.



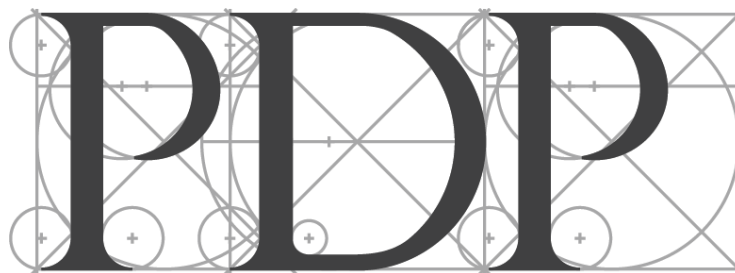
# Where CADAC Makes a Difference

## Big picture:

**How can we use information gained in this process to address the most significant adaptation needs and impactful GHG reduction opportunities for PA communities, as defined by both the communities themselves and our CAP and IA?**

# Preservation Design Partnership

- Preservation Design Partnership (PDP) is a nationally recognized MBE/WBE heritage planning and design firm focusing exclusively on the protection, preservation of historic resources and older communities throughout the United States.
- [Preservation Design Partnership \(pdparchitects.com\)](http://pdparchitects.com)



PRESERVATION DESIGN PARTNERSHIP, LLC

# Project Milestones

- Conduct literature review
- Develop plan for engagement – who, where, how
- Develop preliminary Action List
- Engage with public on preliminary actions ← Next step
- Synthesize public recommendations into report to refine actions to maximize impact
- Develop Guide for Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities

# Preliminary Action List

- List based on:
  - Literature review
  - Existing CAP
  - Strategies from Local Climate Action Plans
  - DEP priorities
  - Justice40 requirements
  - Known best practices
- EPO and its partners believe the strategies included in the preliminary action list can reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing meaningful environmental and resilience benefits to communities.
- However, residents and local government/non-profit leaders better understand community needs and potential localized impacts of climate action implementation.
- Feedback provided during engagement meetings on proposed strategies will be prioritized to guide implementation of climate strategies to provide meaningful benefits to Disadvantaged Communities and avoid/eliminate unintended negative impacts.

# Preliminary Action List

- **Note:** Like the Climate Action Plan, the action guide is intended as a menu of climate resilience strategies that state government and community leaders can take to provide resilience benefits to Disadvantaged Communities.
- It is not a policy document or regulation, and instead aims to provide options and perspectives to assist in future decision making.

# Engagement Plan

- Based on conversations with PDP, as well as input from the Office of Environmental Justice, Policy Office, and the EJAB, EPO is developing a list of six (6) proposed locations for in-person meeting with Disadvantaged Communities to discuss their needs and resilience challenges, and to gather input on the preliminary action list.
- Locations will be selected based on:
  - DEP Environmental Justice Area status
  - US Department of Energy Disadvantaged Community status
  - Local Climate Action Plan participation
  - Ability to act as a “model” for other communities in Pennsylvania based on size, economic landscape, climate hazard vulnerability, etc.
  - Additional feedback from project contributors and advisory board members

# Engagement Plan: Before In-Person Meetings

- In each location, DEP and PDP will work with local “ambassador” organizations that represent the community to site and promote meetings
  - Municipal government, locally-focused non-profits, community action groups, etc.
- Outreach to local organizations with an interest in climate, sustainability, and community services.



# Engagement Plan: In-Person Meetings

- Meetings will include an introductory presentation about the project and a short primer on climate change and the most serious impacts in PA.
- PDP will facilitate discussion of community needs, risks, and opportunities to improve resilience of homes and community resources/infrastructure, allowing communities to speak for themselves during guided discussion.
- DEP and PDP will review list of proposed strategies with meeting participants to gather input.
- Online post-meeting surveys will be used to gather additional input from participants, as well as those who could not attend and wish to contribute.

# Refining the List and Finalizing the Action Guide

- Using feedback from community members and leaders, PDP and DEP will refine the preliminary action list to develop a final Guide to Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities.
- **Anticipated publication: Summer 2023**

# CADAC and Future Planning

- Within EPO, better understanding the needs of vulnerable communities can help better support these populations through existing programs, including:
  - PA Climate Action Plan 2024 – How can DEP “bake in” equity and environmental justice to the core of the plan?
  - Energy Assurance Outreach – What additional outreach should DEP be doing to ensure resiliency in underserved and vulnerable communities?
  - Shared Energy Manager – How can DEP support communities trying to turn local climate plans into GHG reduction action?
- As DEP prepares to receive more federal funding, recommendations can help to guide structuring of new programs to target funding to areas of greater need in alignment with Justice40 and EJ priorities.

# In Summary

- DEP and its contractor will connect with leaders and residents from Disadvantaged Communities and EJ areas to assess their resilience needs and opportunities to pursue GHG reduction actions that can provide benefits to these communities.
- Six (6) in-person meetings will be sited around the state, with additional opportunities to engage using online survey tools.
- With the preliminary action list currently under development, meetings are expected to take place this spring with a final Action Guide published in the summer.



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Energy Programs Office

# Thank you!

**Sarah Pinter**

Energy Program Specialist

[spinter@pa.gov](mailto:spinter@pa.gov)