

## 15. Climate Change (Federal Actions)

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**CAP Goal Statement:** *Increase Federal government consumption of electricity from renewable sources to 30% by 2025 and improve energy efficiency at Federal facilities including \$4 billion in performance contracts by the end of 2016 as part of the wider strategy to reduce the Federal government's direct greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent from a 2008 baseline.*

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With the end of the national energy shortage in the 1970s, efficiency efforts were ultimately re-cast and broadened to become “sustainability” initiatives. Will energy efficiency continue to be a federal priority in coming years?

**Background.** Federal energy efficiency initiatives [over the past dozen years](#) have been bipartisan affairs. For example, the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 set goals and standards to reduce energy use in existing and new federal buildings. This was followed in 2007 by a George W. Bush Administration [executive order](#) that expanded those goals. Congress, in turn, legislated these higher standards in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and increased federal energy reduction goals to 30 percent by fiscal year 2015.

President Barack Obama signed [an executive order in 2009](#) that expanded the scope of these goals and required all federal agencies to appoint a Senior Sustainability Officer to prepare and implement a Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan for their agency.

To create better cross-agency collaboration on meeting these goals and sustained high-level attention, these initiatives were designated in 2014 as one of the 15 Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals of the Administration, per a statutory requirement to designate a handful of priority goals.

[A third executive order](#), signed by President Obama in 2015, updated the provisions of the two earlier directives and set “ambitious climate, energy and environmental sustainability goals for Federal agencies over the next decade... [because] ... The U.S. government must lead by example.” The higher goals set in this directive led to revisions to the CAP Goal to raise the bar.

**Objectives of the Cross-Agency Priority Goal.** The actions begun under the federal cross-agency priority goal, “[Climate Change \(Federal Actions\)](#),” largely focus on federal government energy consumption and energy efficiency. The goal, and subsequent actions, set a series of targets for the government as a whole and for each agency to:

- Reduce direct Greenhouse Gas Emissions by the federal government by at least 40 percent by 2025 (from a 2008 baseline).
- Increase the federal government’s consumption of renewable electricity by 30 percent by 2025.
- Increase the use of performance-based contracting to improve energy and water efficiency in federal buildings by \$4 billion, by the end of 2016.
- Reduce the Greenhouse Gas Emissions of the federal government’s major suppliers and monitor progress with a [scorecard](#).

**Governance Structure.** Like the other CAP Goals, there is an overarching governance body to oversee the implementation of the goal. In this case, this body is housed in the White House Council on Environmental Quality's [Office of Federal Sustainability](#) and is led by a Federal Chief Sustainability Officer. Its work is supported by agency-level chief sustainability officers who form the Interagency Sustainability Steering Committee. The Council and Office support four implementation teams, one for each of the sub-goals, each with different mixes of agency partners:

- Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction
- Renewable Electricity
- Performance Contracting
- Supply Chain Greenhouse Gas Emission Management

**Progress to Date.** While agency plans and progress status scorecards are no longer available on the cross-governmental [performance.gov](#) website, they are available on each agency's site. For example, the Department of Energy's [fiscal year 2015 scorecard](#) shows that it exceeded its targets in six of seven major categories. And its [2016 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan](#) makes measureable commitments to the ten goals outlined in the 2015 executive order.

The governmentwide [progress status report](#) for the CAP Goal at the end of fiscal year 2016 noted measurable progress:

- By the end of FY 2015, direct Greenhouse Gas Emissions from federal activities had declined 17.6 percent from the 2008 baseline.
- At the end of FY 2015, the original renewable electricity goal of 7.5 percent was exceeded; it was 8.3 percent of total electricity use (the 2015 executive order set a higher goal of 30 percent by 2025).
- The goal of committing at least \$4 billion to performance-based contracting goal [was exceeded](#).

**Example of Results.** According to the progress status report, in August 2016, the U.S. Army announced that it had completed contracting for \$1 billion in energy-savings projects. The Army report that in the previous five years, it had undertaken 127 energy-efficiency projects with the private sector, aimed at making energy-savings upgrades to federal buildings, noting that: "These upgrades will use long-term energy savings to pay for up-front costs, at no cost to taxpayers."