

## **Climate Change: What District Consumers Should Know**

**What is climate change?** Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that define Earth's local, regional and global climates. Human activities, particularly fossil fuel burning, increase heat-trapping greenhouse gas levels in Earth's atmosphere, raising Earth's average surface temperature.<sup>1</sup>

**Has DC's climate already changed?** Yes. The District is already experiencing climate change including hotter summers, more severe weather events, and increased flooding. July 2020 was the third-hottest month on record, and the top ten hottest have all been since 1990.<sup>2</sup> Water levels along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers have increased 11 inches in the past 90 years due to a combination of sea level rise and subsidence. As a result, nuisance flooding in riverfront areas has already increased by more than 300%.<sup>3</sup>

**How will DC's climate continue to change?** Climate change will bring even hotter summers, more severe weather events, and increased flooding. By 2080, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conservatively predicts up to 3.4 feet of additional sea level rise in the District. The average summer high temperature in the District used to be 87°F. By the 2080s, it is projected to increase to between 93°F and 97°F.<sup>4</sup>

### **How can we combat climate change?**

- **Support District goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** – Help advance the District's climate change [goals](#) including to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the District 100% by 2050. Participate in government planning exercises to help do that.<sup>5</sup>
- **Reduce energy use** – Check out DC Sustainable Energy Utility [tips](#) to reduce energy use including adjust your thermostat, dust vent covers and fan blades, and use an advanced power strip.<sup>6</sup>
- **Conserve water** – Check out DC Water's [tips](#) to conserve water including check your plumbing for leaks, turn off the water while brushing your teeth, and plant native plants.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NASA, Overview: Weather, Global Warming and Climate Change, <https://climate.nasa.gov/resources/global-warming-vs-climate-change>.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Livingston, *Washington posted its third-hottest July on record with most 90-degree days*, Washington Post (Aug. 2, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/08/02/washington-dc-july-2020-recap/>.

<sup>3</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Sea Level Rise and Nuisance Flood Frequency Changes around the United States*, NOAA Technical Report NOS CO-OPS 073 (2014), [http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20140728\\_nuisanceflooding.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20140728_nuisanceflooding.html).

<sup>4</sup> District Department of Energy and Environment, Climate Ready DC at 2, 3 available at <https://doee.dc.gov/climateready>.

<sup>5</sup> District Department of Energy and Environment's website about climate change: <https://doee.dc.gov/service/climate-change>.

<sup>6</sup> DC Sustainable Energy Utility's Money Saving Tips: <https://www.dcseu.com/homes/money-saving-tips>.

<sup>7</sup> DC Water's Tips for Conserving Water: <https://www.dewater.com/savewater>.

