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# Visiting Scholar Cecilia Martinez Co-Authors Climate Justice Report

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American Progress Washington, D.C.*

As the Trump administration tries to roll back environmental protections, a new report from the Center for American Progress and the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy shows how U.S. mayors can fight climate change by redesigning cities in ways that reduce the risk of floods.

pollution, and the damage caused by extreme weather and sea level rise.

These issues are front and center for cities in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and as communities prepare for the new normal of more severe weather events and other threats fueled by climate change. These new climate plans can cut carbon pollution, prepare cities for the effects of rising temperatures, lower energy bills, expand economic opportunities, and improve air quality.

At the same time, these changes must address legacy social, racial, economic, and environmental inequality that can often make weather damage worse for areas where families struggle to make ends meet and for communities of color. Urban improvements include upgrading aging energy and water systems, increasing the energy efficiency of buildings, supporting solar installations, job training, and improving access to public transit and affordable housing. “Mayors understand that no city is an island unto itself, especially in a changing climate,” said [Cathleen Kelly](#), co-author of the report and senior fellow for Energy and Environment at CAP. “Creating a just and sustainable economy in one place can improve lives in nearby communities.”

The report includes examples from dozens of cities that have already taken action, knowing that the cost of reducing climate change threats is minuscule relative to the high cost of inaction. Every \$1 invested in disaster risk reduction and community resilience saves \$4 in future disaster costs, according to one study. “By embracing strategies that curb climate change and support pathways to a just economy, city officials can expand access to living wages, safe jobs, affordable housing, and sustainable neighborhoods,” said [Cecilia Martinez](#), co-author of the report and co-founder and executive director of the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy. The report recommends nine actions that mayors and city leaders can take to rebuild resilient and just cities:

- Make equity, racial justice, and a just economy core goals of city resilience and climate action plans.
- Collaborate with community groups and build neighborhood capacity to shape and implement climate change solutions.
- Expand economic opportunities and the availability of affordable housing.
- Increase access to affordable and clean energy.

- Ensure access to affordable and clean transportation.
- Invest in resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
- Support emergency preparedness and resilient disaster recovery.
- Support social cohesion and deeply connected communities.
- Use innovative financing to strengthen community resilience and livability.

Read the [report](#), “A Framework for Local Action on Climate Change,” by Cathleen Kelly, Cecilia Martinez, and Walker Hathaway-Williams. **For more information on this topic or to speak with an expert**, contact Sam Hananel at [shananel@americanprogress.org](mailto:shananel@americanprogress.org) or 202.478.6327.



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