



Railroad Retirement Board Policy for Climate Change Adaptation

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board
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Subject: Railroad Retirement Board Policy for Climate Change Adaptation

Purpose and Background:

This memorandum establishes the Railroad Retirement Board's (RRB) policy for climate change adaptation. This policy sets up RRB's vision and starts a process that will help its employees integrate climate change adaptation considerations into how the Agency deals with risk, vulnerability, and overall resiliency issues.

The RRB is an independent agency in the executive branch of the Federal Government, with the primary function of administering comprehensive retirement-survivor and unemployment-sickness benefit programs for the nation's railroad workers and their families under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts. RRB has a staff of approximately 900 employees, with over 250 of them located throughout the country across 53 field offices. Our headquarters is located at the William O. Lipinski Federal Building, in Chicago, Illinois. The headquarters building is the only facility over which the RRB has operational control.

Climate Change Adaptation Policy Statement:

RRB is committed to enhancing its resiliency to climate change and establishing policies that will ensure compliance with all environmental and energy statutes, regulations, and executive orders to meet and exceed required goals and objectives. RRB supports the climate change adaptation goals established by Executive Order 13514 *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*. The RRB adopts the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force's guiding principles and framework for adaptation planning and is committed to working with other federal agencies, the scientific community, and local stakeholders in the Chicago region to conduct proactive adaptation planning of common interest to enhance the agency's resiliency to climate change.

The RRB recognizes that climate change poses additional challenges to implementing the agency's mission, programs, and operations. To meet these challenges, RRB will leverage innovative thinking, technology, new partnerships, and strong collaboration with federal agencies, the climate science community, and various local and regional stakeholders to conduct effective and holistic adaptation planning. Further, RRB will add climate change considerations to its long term planning and operations considerations to ensure that it continues to be customer-focused, quality-driven, and fiscally responsible while effectively adapting to a changing environment.

The agency's culture for continuous improvement and learning provides a strong platform from which to incorporate climate change adaptation considerations as part of the cross-cutting drivers that will influence the future effectiveness of the agency in meeting its commitments to its customers.



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Climate Change Adaptation Actions:

RRB will do its part to support the nation's vision to enhance resiliency to climate change by mainstreaming climate change adaptation planning into its on-going mitigation efforts. RRB understands that in order for adaptation strategies and initiatives to be successful, they have to be aligned with and complement on-going mitigation efforts. To maximize joint benefits of mitigation efforts, RRB will work with its federal partners, including the regional General Services Administration (GSA) and Department of Energy (DOE) offices – Argonne National Laboratory, to expand vulnerability analysis and engineering assessments to incorporate climate change components. In addition, where feasible, RRB will strive to work with these partners to apply new tools that inform decision makers as to the climate change risks and vulnerability levels at the headquarters building and potential environmental health conditions that impact its stakeholders.

RRB will leverage knowledge related to likelihood, magnitude, and the agency's ability to adapt to climate change impacts as it considers adaptation options, and the timeline and costs of implementing those options. RRB will evaluate climate change adaptation strategies with an understanding of the agency's financial, capacity, and operational constraints and the uncertainty inherent in downscaled projections of future changes in climate characteristics. The agency will leverage the tools and resources developed and made available by other agencies to mainstream climate change considerations into its existing operations, policies, and programs. As part of its on-going risk assessment efforts, RRB will evaluate and prioritize adaptation options and consider adaptation requirements as needed to meet its other sustainability requirements of EO 13514.

To accomplish this, RRB's Senior Sustainability Officer (SSO), the Director of the Office of Administration with the support of the senior leadership team at the headquarters facility in Chicago, will lead the Agency's effort to consider climate stressors in the development of agency-wide decision making to effectively deliver on its program and operational plans. The SSO and his administrative staff will also work in partnership with other federal agencies and authorities in Chicago.

Henry Valiulis (Signed)

Senior Sustainability Officer, RRB

Chicago, Illinois