



SABIN CENTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE LAW



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The **Sabin Center for Climate Change Law** at Columbia Law School develops legal techniques to fight climate change, trains law students and lawyers in their use, and provides the public with up-to-date resources on key topics in climate law and regulation. We work in conjunction with the renowned scientists of Columbia University's Earth Institute, and in close cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations

grappling with the legal and policy issues raised by climate change. Our activities are spearheaded by Michael Gerrard, Faculty Director and Andrew Sabin Professor of Professional Practice at Columbia Law School, and Michael Burger, Executive Director and Research Scholar at Columbia Law School.

The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law engages in a variety of activities, including:

➤ **Legal Resource Center**

The Sabin Center's [website](#) organizes and links to a wide range of materials in a searchable format, including judicial and administrative decisions, pleadings, and environmental impact statements addressing climate change, among other things. This site is now recognized as the leading source of continually updated climate change legal information in the world, and it is followed by lawyers and policymakers globally via Facebook, Twitter, and our listserv.

➤ **Model Laws, Best Practices, and Handbooks**

The Sabin Center prepares model laws, best practices, and handbooks intended to help people understand the options available for addressing various facets of climate change. Examples of the Center's past work include a [guide to managed coastal retreat](#); a [handbook of the tools available to state public utility commissions to promote energy efficiency](#); a [report ranking states' hazard mitigation plans for how well they address climate change](#); and [model ordinances](#) for green buildings, energy efficiency, and use of renewable energy resources.

➤ **Regulatory Tracking and Participation**

We also systematically track regulatory processes relating to climate change, provide the public with detailed assessments of new climate regulations, and participate in regulatory decision-making processes. For example, the Sabin Center in 2014 submitted [comments on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's draft Clean Power Plan](#), focusing on tools to foster energy efficiency; more recently, the Center submitted an [amicus brief in support of the final rule](#) on behalf of a coalition including the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and 54 cities, counties and mayors.

➤ **Promoting Long-Term Adaptation Planning**

In addition to our work on climate mitigation, the Sabin Center also develops legal techniques to promote adaptation planning in both the public and private sectors. In 2013, we [successfully intervened](#) in a rate case before the New York Public Service Commission to ensure that Con Edison and other utilities would account for future climate change-related impacts such as sea level rise and increased temperatures in their capital planning processes. That success has since been repeated in other rate cases in New York State. We have also recently written [letters to government agencies](#), such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, requesting that they consider the impacts of climate change when promulgating rules for the environmental review process, and when conducting environmental impact assessments for specific actions.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ColumbiaClimateLaw) and Twitter (@ColumbiaClimate)

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, Columbia Law School, Jerome Greene Hall, 435 W. 116th Street, New York NY

➤ **Legal Issues Facing Threatened Island Nations and Other Vulnerable Countries**

At the request of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Sabin Center convened an international scholarly conference held at Columbia in May 2011 on the legal issues facing island nations threatened with submersion as a result of rising sea levels. A [book collecting the papers and outcomes of the conference](#) was published by Cambridge University Press in 2013. Since then, the Center has continued to assist Pacific island nations and other vulnerable countries on a range of climate-related legal issues. We also partner annually with the London-based “Legal Response Initiative” to provide pro bono legal assistance to least developed countries during international climate negotiations.

➤ **Book Series**

The solutions to climate change involve such complex legal issues that practitioners in all sectors benefit from book-length treatments. These are best done as multi-author works, so that chapter authors can bring their own specialties to bear. Some of our recent publications include [Global Climate Change and U.S. Law, 2nd Ed.](#) (ABA 2014); [The Law of Green Buildings](#) (ABA 2010); [The Law of Clean Energy: Efficiency and Renewables](#) (ABA 2011); [The Law of Adaptation to Climate Change: U.S. and International Aspects](#) (ABA 2012); and [Threatened Island Nations](#) (Cambridge 2013).

➤ **Public Events**

The Sabin Center holds and participates in conferences, debates, seminars, and panel discussions. Some of our recent events included a panel discussion evaluating whether universities and pension funds should divest from fossil fuel stocks, and a presentation on climate justice by world renowned lawyer and activist Tony Oposa. In 2016 we hosted lectures by Susan Biniiaz, lead climate lawyer for the U.S. State Department, on lessons from the Paris Climate Talks, and Richard Kauffman, Chairman of Energy and Finance for New York State, Office of the New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. We also plan to host a workshop on how federal agencies can better account for the effects of climate change on natural resources in planning and management decisions.

Examples of Online Resources available at our website:



CLIMATE CHANGE LITIGATION CHARTS

The Sabin Center maintains [U.S.](#) and [non-U.S.](#) climate litigation charts, organized by both claim type and name, which include links to decisions, briefs and relevant commentaries. We also circulate a monthly update on recent developments in climate-related litigation. To subscribe to the Center’s monthly update, contact: columbiaclimate@gmail.com.

NEPA AND STATE NEPA EIS RESOURCE CENTER

We have compiled [databases of environmental impact statements](#) (EISs) that include consideration of climate-change impacts prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California equivalent, as well as a matrix and paper summarizing the impacts discussed in EISs prepared by various federal agencies. Our website also includes links to the [protocols and guidelines](#) of various federal, state, local, and international bodies for considering climate change in EISs.



CLIMATE CHANGE LAWS OF THE WORLD

Countries around the world are taking important domestic actions to help tackle the issue of climate change. Our Center is working to collect the [relevant laws and policies](#) of each country into an easily accessible database, so as to facilitate comparative research and the sharing of approaches and legal frameworks. To complete this research, we are drawing on the expertise of visiting scholars, LLM candidates, and practitioners around the world.

CLIMATE LAW BLOG

Our [blog](#) covers current issues relating to climate change law at the local, state, federal, and international levels, with contributions from our director, fellows, visiting scholars, student interns, and guest bloggers.

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