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Climate & Health News

Newsletter of the JHU-UPF Public Policy Center Climate Change Working Group



JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY

PUBLIC POLICY CENTER



upf. Universitat
Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona

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Welcome to the December edition of *Climate & Health News*!

This month we are transitioning to a new format. The last two years have seen rapid growth in climate change and health research studies, policy papers and news coverage. For example, there are often nearly 100 science articles published per month now, when there used to be less than a dozen. Similarly, news increasingly covers a range of human health impacts from climate change, and cities and local governments are ever more front and center.

As a result, we are re-working this newsletter with the goal of bringing you a more focused selection of pieces most highly relevant to our field.

This month, see in particular [summary reporting from last month's COP23](#), possible changes to [local government credit ratings based on climate preparedness](#), and a new proposal on [climate-focused public health surveillance](#).

As always, comments and suggestions on *Climate & Health News* are welcome. Wishing you happy holidays and watch for more on our new focus in the year ahead!

NEWS



[Douglas Fischer](#) Nov 18, 2017

CLIMATE TALKS END WITH COMMITMENT BUT FEW CONCRETE STEPS

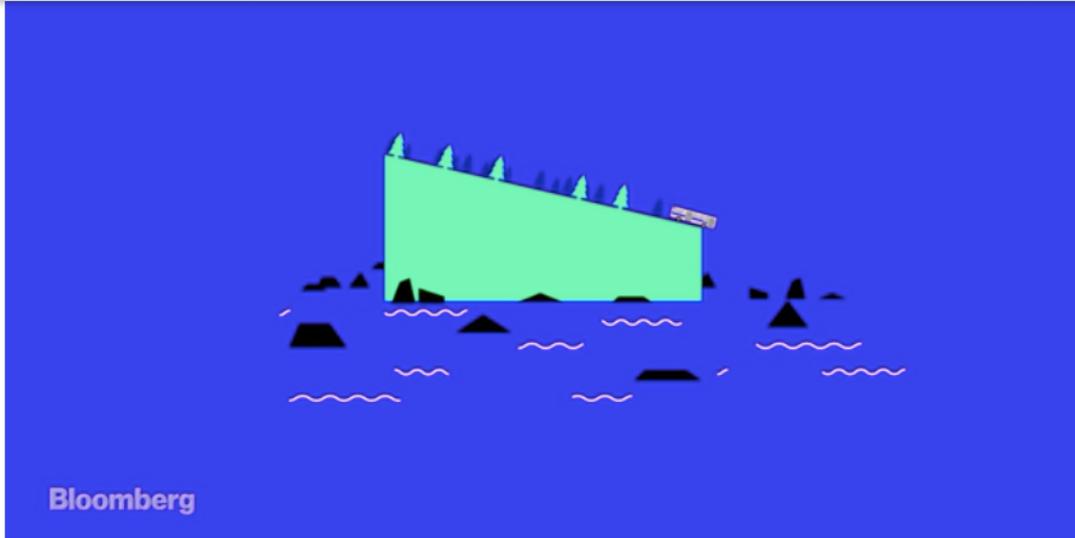
- The COP23 climate meeting closed in Bonn last month reaffirming commitment to a collective international framework agreed in Paris in 2015 to manage climate change; for more, see the [New York Times summary](#).
- Despite the Trump administrative announcement to withdraw from the Paris Accord, the US continued its engagement with the presence of negotiators (along with a “shadow” delegation of local government and private sector)
- However, no clear global plan has yet emerged to reduce hydrocarbon use, although a number of governments have pledged to transition from coal, or establish low- or no-emissions targets.



Planet Earth (NASA)

[THOUSANDS OF SCIENTIST ISSUE BLEAK 'SECOND NOTICE' TO HUMANITY](#)

- Last month 15,000 scientists from 184 countries issued a “second notice” to humans on their harmful ecological impact.
- Following a first “warning to humanity” in 1992, this notice offers 13 suggestions for reining in our damage to the planet, including creating incentives to shift patterns of consumption away from hydrocarbons and developing green energy.
- The organizers have formed a new organization, the [Alliance of World Scientists](#), aimed at providing a science-based perspective on issues affecting the well-being of people and the planet.



How to Hit the Brakes on Climate Change

CLICK THE PICTURE ABOVE TO SEE VIDEO

[MOODY'S WARNS CITIES TO ADDRESS CLIMATE RISK OR FACE DOWNGRADES](#)

- Coastal communities in the US have been put on notice to prepare for rising seas and increased risk of flooding, or to face higher credit costs
- The rating agency Moody's will now take into account climate change preparedness in its ratings for local government creditworthiness.
- Six indicators will be used, including share of economic activity near the coast and homes in a floodplain.
- Strong signals from rating agencies could push city planners to reconsider where they build and develop.

SCIENCE



Source: [City of Edmonton](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE: TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

- To enhance the capacity of public health surveillance systems to cover climate change in the US, the authors reviewed the literature and used frameworks from the UN IPCC and US CDC to identify climate and health indicators.
- Multiple assessments of public health surveillance systems capacity were also analyzed.
- The article proposes a summary table of 20 indicator groups in six domains: environment, vulnerability, health, adaptation, mitigation and policy.
- A key finding is that focus of previous efforts has been largely on data, to the exclusion of other aspects of surveillance such as information systems, workforce training and policy (legislation) development.



CHANGES IN EXTREME EVENTS AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON HUMAN HEALTH

- Climate change has caused changes in frequency, intensity and geographic distribution of extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, wildfires, dust storms, flooding rains, coastal flooding, storm surge, and hurricanes.
- This survey examines the major pathways connecting extreme events to health outcomes and economic losses, describes some of the ways extreme events are changing with a changing climate, and provides examples of the potential impacts on human health and infrastructure.
- It also identifies research gaps to be addressed to improve the resilience of public health to extreme events in the future.



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Climate & Health News Editor: Mary Sheehan (msheeh10@jhu.edu).

Managing Editor: Eileen McRae (emcrae4@jhu.edu)