

# **OUR CHANGING PLANET**

**THE FY 2001  
U.S. GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAM**

A Report by the Subcommittee on Global Change Research,  
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
of the National Science and Technology Council

A Supplement to the President's Fiscal Year 2001 Budget

## About the National Science and Technology Council

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President Clinton established the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) by Executive Order on November 23, 1993. This cabinet-level council is the principal means for the President to coordinate science, space, and technology policies across the Federal Government. The NSTC acts as a “virtual” agency for science and technology to coordinate the diverse parts of the Federal research and development enterprise. The NSTC is chaired by the President. Membership consists of the Vice President, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads with significant science and technology responsibilities, and other senior White House officials.

An important objective of the NSTC is the establishment of clear national goals for Federal science and technology investments in areas ranging from information technology and health research, to improving transportation systems and strengthening fundamental research. The Council prepares research and development strategies that are coordinated across Federal agencies to form an investment package that is aimed at accomplishing multiple national goals.

To obtain additional information regarding the NSTC, contact the NSTC Executive Secretariat at 202-456-6100 (voice).

## About the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

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The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) is one of nine committees under the NSTC, and is charged with improving coordination among Federal agencies involved in environmental and natural resources research and development, establishing a strong link between science and policy, and developing a Federal environment and natural resources research and development strategy that responds to national and international issues.

To obtain additional information about the CENR, contact the CENR Executive Secretary at 202-482-5917 (voice).

## About the Office of Science and Technology Policy

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The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) was established by the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act of 1976. OSTP’s responsibilities include advising the President on policy formulation and budget development on all questions in which science and technology are important elements; articulating the President’s science and technology policies and programs; and fostering strong partnerships among Federal, State, and local governments, and the scientific communities in industry and academia.

**To obtain additional information regarding the OSTP, contact the OSTP Administrative Office at 202-456-6004 (voice).**

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**  
WASHINGTON D.C. 20502

September 2000

Members of Congress:

I am pleased to transmit to you a copy of *Our Changing Planet: The FY 2001 U. S. Global Change Research Program*. This report, prepared under the auspices of the President's National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), highlights the Program's recent research and describes future plans and goals. The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) was established in 1989 and authorized by Congress in the Global Change Research Act of 1990. The first edition of *Our Changing Planet* was transmitted to the Congress as a supplement to the FY1990 budget. In just over a decade, the USGCRP has generated remarkable improvements to our knowledge of Earth's global-scale environmental processes and helped identify and explain the causes and consequences of a series of global environmental changes, including ozone depletion and climate change.

In a natural outgrowth of the progress in global-scale analysis, the USGCRP will soon complete its first National Assessment of the Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change, which describes the projected impacts of climate change and variability in the United States on a regional scale. This effort is the culmination of more than two years of work by hundreds of scientists from around the country. The National Assessment will provide managers, planners, organizations, and the public with the information needed to increase our resilience to climate variability and to improve our ability to cope with climate change. The production of this document is an important milestone for the USGCRP. As we look ahead to the next decade for the program, the creation of useful scientific products that contribute to the information needs of decision-makers is expected to be a more prominent part of this important research effort.

The assessment also identifies key research needs for continuing improvements in understanding climate impacts. As such, it has been an important contribution to the development of a new long-term strategy for the USGCRP. This document, which will be submitted to the Congress as required in the authorizing legislation of the USGCRP, will provide a long-term vision for the continuing development of our nation's global change research efforts. A strong continuing base of physical science research will be augmented by a greater focus on biological, ecological, and social science research focused on the accurate characterization of the vulnerability and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems and human society to global change.

The USGCRP has been strongly backed by every Administration and Congress since its inception and FY2001 Budget Request and program plans continue the commitment to scientific research on global change that has been demonstrated in every budget submitted by the President and the Vice President. I am confident that this bipartisan tradition of support for sound science will continue.

Finally, I would like to once again commend all the program participants and the members of the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. I would particularly like to recognize the many contributions of outgoing SGCR chair Dr. Robert Corell, who stepped down this year after leading the subcommittee for a decade. Dr. Corell provided invaluable leadership and insight during his tenure, and I know that new SGCR Chair D. James Baker and Vice-Chairs Margaret Leinen and Ghassem Asrar join me in expressing our gratitude to Dr. Corell for a job well done.

Neal Lane  
Director

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