

State Energy / Climate Plan

Description:

State energy plans (SEPs) are developed in order to provide guidance for meeting current and future energy needs sustainably, reliably, and cost-effectively. While the motivations for developing a SEP are likely to vary across states, most state plans address emerging environmental and energy security concerns. These two sources of motivations are most obvious in the use of Climate Action Plans (CAPs), which typically address strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or adapt to climate change, and can include cross-sector or economy wide policy recommendations. In many states, CAPs also serve as SEPs.

Discussion of the Policy:

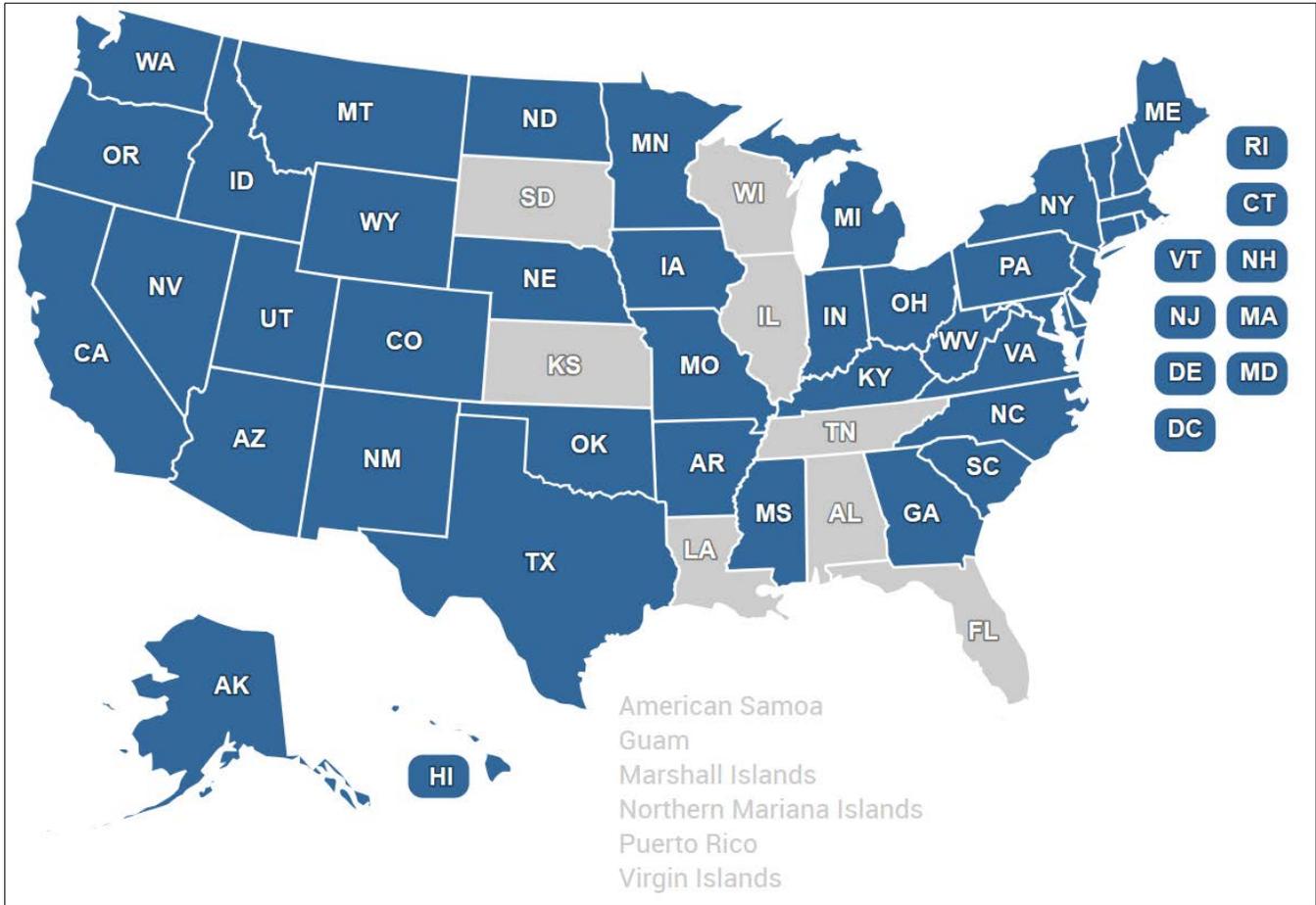
Plan development and planning procedures are typically required by either legislative or executive action, and State Energy Offices (SEOs) and / or Public Utilities Commissions (PUCs) generally lead the SEP process. Plan development typically involves input from multiple public and private stakeholders and provides for a public comment period. Ideally, SEPs are comprehensive documents that set clear goals, action items for meeting those goals, and metrics for evaluating success. In practice, existing plans vary from state to state. Differences exist in the amount of coverage provided to existing state policies and programs and recommendations for the development of new policies and programs. Plans also vary in the range of energy-related issue areas covered. For example, while some plans focus on clean energy and reducing carbon emissions (CAPs), others cover a broader number of energy-related issues. SEP and CAP goals can conflict when addressing coal, oil, and natural gas planning. Lastly, plans vary in the amount of attention paid to evaluating outcomes and updating implementation strategies. While some set clear, measurable goals, outline specific timelines, and provide metrics and processes for evaluating success, others provide more general goals and action items. However, there may be an emerging trend towards increasing comprehensiveness and attention to program evaluation.

Many states are already experiencing the impact of climate change. As a result, CAPs can include adaptation components, which use scientific information to identify communities, programs, and infrastructure susceptible to current and future risks. CAPs can propose strategies to address these risks.

Example State Programs:

To date, 42 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have SEPs, and 37 states and the District of Columbia have CAPs (see map below).

- Minnesota's 2025 Energy Action Plan
<https://mn.gov/commerce/policy-data-reports/energy-data-reports/mn-action-plan.jsp>
- Oregon's 2018 Biennial Energy Report
<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/ber>
- Utah's Energy Action Plan Through 2020
<https://energy.utah.gov/policy-solutions/utah-action-plan-success/>
- Washington's State Energy Strategy
<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/washington-state-energy-office/>



Source: [NASEO](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy’s [State Energy Program](#) provides a wealth of information and resources for states. Among other activities, the Program also offers energy planning assistance.

Key Components:

- Energy planning can provide opportunities for capitalizing on and developing available resources, human capital, and infrastructure. Plans should strive for comprehensiveness.
- Plan development should allow input by and consensus building among multiple public and private stakeholders.
- Plans can set clear, measurable goals, outline actions items (including policy adoption), set timetables, and provide metrics and methods for evaluating and tracking outcomes.
- In order to account for changing conditions, emerging technologies, and new regulatory requirements, state policy can provide for regular reviews and periodic updates to energy plans.
- Plans can include a climate adaptation strategy that identifies potential changes in climate and related impacts on state resources and major industries as well as strategies to adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of these changes.

More Information:

- Center for Climate Strategies:
http://www.climatestrategies.us/policy_tracker/state/
- National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO):
<http://www.naseo.org/>
- NASEO SEP Guidelines:
https://naseo.org/Data/Sites/1/sepguidelines_2018_final.pdf
- National Conference of State Legislatures:
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/energy/a-policymaker-s-guide-to-comprehensive-state-energy-planning.aspx>