CLIMATE POWER

FACT SHEET: CLIMATE CHANGE HURTS IOWA

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS IOWANS' SAFETY

- In 2025, Iowa saw two severe storms that caused up to $1 billion in damage.
- Between 2010 and 2024, Iowa saw 57 distinct billion-dollar extreme weather events, totaling up to $50 billion in damages. In the past decade, Iowa received almost $1 billion in disaster assistance funding.
- Over the past 60 years, extreme rainfall events have become 35% more frequent in Iowa. In the past 50 years, Iowa's annual average precipitation has increased by 4.2 inches, the second-highest increase in the Midwest region.
- Ten days before the start of July 2025, cities in eastern Iowa experienced almost 250% of their normal rainfall for the summer.
- A July 2025 derecho caused widespread damage and power outages in Iowa, as Sioux Center saw wind gusts of 99mph and Spencer saw 92mph gusts.
- In July 2025, severe thunderstorms caused flash flooding across Iowa, which left hundreds of homes without power.
- In June 2011, runoff from a record winter snowpack in the Rocky Mountains and heavy rains caused major flooding along the Missouri River. The flooding caused a levee to collapse, forcing 20% of residents in Hamburg to evacuate.
- In June 2008, heavy rainfall caused record flooding on multiple rivers. The Cedar River in Cedar Rapids, which crested at 31.12 feet, experienced some of the worst flooding impacts. The flooding caused nearly $10 billion in economic damage across the state of Iowa.
- From 1970 to 2024, the average temperature in Iowa increased by 2.2°F.
- Iowa's winter in 2023 and 2024 was one of the second-warmest on record.
- The average summer high temperature in Sioux City, Iowa, is expected to increase by 10.7°F by 2100.

CLIMATE CHANGE HARMS IOWANS' HEALTH

- In 2025, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines-West Des Moines-Ames, and Waterloo-Cedar Falls metropolitan areas ranked among the top 100 cities in the U.S. for high ozone days.
- The number of heat-related emergency department visits in Iowa jumped from 647 in 2003 to 1,085 in 2023.

- In 2023, Iowa saw 8,111 asthma-related emergency room visits.
- Climate change is one of the leading factors affecting the population and habitat of disease-carrying insects. In 2007 and 2008, one of the mosquito species that transmits West Nile virus and the La Crosse virus was discovered for the first time in Iowa.
    - From 2004 to 2014, Iowa reported 231 cases of West Nile virus from mosquitoes and 905 cases of Lyme disease from ticks.
    - In 2023, 17 Iowans were diagnosed with West Nile virus, with one death.

CLIMATE CHANGE HURTS IOWA'S ECONOMY

- Climate change was expected to decrease Iowa's GDP by almost $6 billion.
- Climate change was driving Iowa's insurance crisis, as rates increased and insurers left the state.
    - As of 2025, reinsurers, companies that insure home insurance providers, were increasingly reluctant to cover Iowa due to repeated high-cost weather events.
    - Between 2019 and 2024, home insurance rates in Iowa increased by 61%, placing the state among the top 10 for rate increases. In 2024 alone, home insurance rates in Iowa increased by 18%.
    - In 2024, Pekin Insurance said it had paused writing homeowner insurance policies in Iowa due to the increased severity and frequency of storms, and it dropped all of its 40,000 Iowa customers.
    - In 2024, Secura Insurance began dropping Iowa homeowners due to increasingly erratic weather.
- Climate change is making extreme weather more common and severe, costing Iowa millions in recovery costs.
    - By October 2024, Pottawattamie County had already experienced three federally declared disasters, costing up to $5 million in public infrastructure damage. The severity of extreme weather events also made it more difficult for Iowans to acquire home insurance.
- Iowa's agriculture industry contributes $159.5 billion to the state's economy and supports one in five Iowan jobs. In 2023, corn production generated over $12 billion for Iowa's economy, and Iowa is the top corn-producing state in the country.

  - Climate change-induced warming has increased drought in Iowa, while climate change-induced extreme rainfall events also damage Iowa's crops, erode soil, and disrupt planting schedules.

  - Iowa experiences "corn sweat," when crops pull moisture from the soil into the atmosphere, which causes the state to experience five to 10 degrees of additional humidity during the summer months.

- Due to climate change, Iowa farmers could see statewide gross farm revenues reduced by as much as $4.9 billion per decade.

- Due to climate change, gross farm revenues in 92 of Iowa's 99 counties are expected to decrease.

  - 45 of Iowa's counties are predicted to experience high-end farm revenue losses of more than $50 million, and eight counties are predicted to experience high-end farm revenue losses of more than $100 million.

- The loss in capital investment and spending due to climate change is expected to ripple throughout Iowa's economy.

  - Up to 2,500 jobs could be lost statewide due to climate change-induced agricultural damages, reducing annual state revenue collections by $4 million and cutting Iowa's annual economic output by more than $360 million.

- In 2024, Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska experienced high waters and flooding, which caused up to 1 million corn acres to be lost.

- From January to September 2023, Iowa producers reported 4,519 livestock losses due to extreme weather events.

- According to a 2023 study, Iowa has suffered more than $13 billion in property losses and $4.1 billion in crop losses from flooding in the past 30 years.

- In 2008, a severe flooding event caused roughly 2.5 to 3 million acres of corn and soybeans in Iowa to be underwater, placing over 50% of the statewide crops in poor condition. The flood caused roughly 10% of Iowa's cropland, an estimated 2.3 million acres, to have severe soil erosion.

- In Iowa, poor pasture regrowth from intense droughts forced farmers to supplement their cattle's diet with corn silage and hay from their winter feed supplies.

  - In July 2024, above-average rainfall in Iowa ended the state's drought that had persisted for 204 weeks, the longest period of drought since the 1950s.

- In the summer of 2023, extreme heat and humidity killed approximately 370 cows in Iowa. Many ranchers were forced to buy more hay after extensive droughts in 2023 caused low hay yields and poor hay quality.

CLIMATE CHANGE HARMS IOWA'S WATER QUALITY

- At 109.8 ppt, Quad Cities had the second-highest level of PFAS contamination out of 44 sites tested across the country in 2020.
- Agricultural runoff has led to high nitrate levels in Iowa's streams and rivers that supply drinking water.
  - In 2025, Polk County released a report that analyzed the water quality of the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers, which are the main sources of drinking water for the Des Moines region. The study found that the rivers have some of the highest nitrate levels across the U.S., and routinely exceed federal drinking water standards, and that 80% of nitrate in the rivers was directly tied to agriculture.
  - In June 2025, Central Iowa Water Works, the largest drinking water utility in the state that serves 600,000 people, implemented a lawn watering ban for the Des Moines metropolitan area to prevent the utility's water from exceeding federal nitrate limits.
  - A 2023 study found that harmful levels of nitrate were found at 1-in-20 Iowa public drinking water systems, and a study conducted between 2002-2017 found over 12,300 private wells tested positive for potentially harmful levels of nitrate.
  - Experts have noted that more frequent extreme weather because of climate change will heighten the issue, because nitrate levels are more difficult to control during severe weather.
  - Consuming water with high levels of nitrate has been linked to a higher risk for certain types of cancer. A 2019 study put Iowa as one of four states with the highest risk of nitrate-attributable cancer, ranging from 2.3 to 10.43 cases per 100,000 people.