

Researching topic #22 -- SOCIETAL RESPONSES – POLICY – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (U.S.)
[last revised 3/14/2021]

This prompt offers two kinds of help:

- A brief overview of the kinds of questions you might wish to explore as you study how climate change is likely to affect the food supply;
- A suggested strategy for how to search the literature as you prepare to write your paper.

OVERVIEW – SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE – POLICY – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (U.S.)

I believe it was back in 1989 that NASA scientist James Hansen first testified, in a Congressional hearing, about the threat of climate change. That’s almost 30 years. What have various parts of the federal government done in the intervening years?

The House and the Senate?

What hearings have been held? Have bills been introduced? Have the bills made it to the floor of either House or Senate for a debate and a vote?

The Executive Branch?

What have been to stated positions and the actions of Presidents since 1990?

What about the various agencies housed within the Executive Branch?

EPA

NOAA

Interior

The military and the national security apparatus acknowledge climate change and worry about national security implication. What are they saying?

How has the federal government been engaging (or not) in international negotiations?

(Please note: Research should span over the whole 30 year period. There have been significant swings in policy, ranging from acknowledgement and some positive action (Obama), to inattention (Clinton), to active hostility (Trump). So you can’t just find, for example, that “the EPA has done xxxx,” because what the EPA has or has not done has varied so greatly over those years.)

SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR SEARCHING THE LITERATURE

I recommend the following sequence for searching the literature:

- 1 Start with a search of the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**;
- 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com);
- 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine;
- 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**.
(NOTE that I do not suggest using Wikipedia.)

1 Search the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**

(NOTE: There are many excellent reports one can consult. You will find a lot of repetition, so you do not need to consult every source. Here I start with a handful of the most recent reports, followed by a more complete list.)

These publications should, in most cases, supply you with all you need:

IPCC's most recent full set of reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

EPA: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society_.html

U.S. Global Change Research Program:

<https://science2017.globalchange.gov/> (the science)

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (the impacts)

American Meteorological Society:

www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017_lowres.pdf

A more complete list of best scientific and governmental sources:

International

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
World Meteorological Organization

Agencies of the U.S. federal government

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
U.S. Global Change Research Program

Scientific bodies – U.S.

National Academic of Sciences
Climate Change at the National Academies (climatechange@nas.edu)
National Science Foundation

Other professional bodies – American Meteorological Society

2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

(NOTE: Narrow and focus your search by using several phrases in quotes – such as “climate change”. For example, if you are searching for how climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, don’t just enter “climate change,” search, instead for” “climate change” AND “extreme weather events”)

Search terms to use (you may certainly choose others):

“climate change” AND x, where x can be:

Bush Administration [son Bush, not father]
 Clinton Administration
 Obama Administration
 Trump Administration
 U.S. AND Kyoto Accords
 U.S. AND Paris Agreement
 U.S. Congress
 EPA
 NASA
 NOAA

(NOTE: For some citations you find on Google Scholar, you can directly download the PDF. For other citations, you may be able to find and download PDFs if your University library offers on line access to academic journals.)

3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine

Use the same search terms to do a general search on Google or another search engine. This will bring up information more recent than you find on scholar.google.com (it takes several years for research to be published in academic journals).

4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**

New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian

On line sources

Climate Central
 GRIST
 Society of Environmental Journalists
 The Daily Climate
 Climate Nexus
 InsideClimate News
 DeSmogBlog
 Skepticalscience.com
 Yale 350

(NOTE about on line sources: You will run into a lot of denialist disinformation on the internet, on websites, on blogs, on youtube. FYI, skepticalscience.com has a comprehensive list of denialist talking points (and refutations of those talking points). See, for example: <https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php>)

Update, March 2021 revisions

General note: With a new Administration in Washington, it should be possible to find summaries of all Trump Admin actions concerning national climate policy, AND find summaries of Biden Admin policies, starting January 2021.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/30012019/worldwide-threat-assessment-climate-change-intelligence-agencies-national-security>

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/30012019/worldwide-threat-assessment-climate-change-intelligence-agencies-national-security?fbclid=IwAR115O5QifLQoIbkVMD30UB923gzihLOR3ZafWhlc0-9XtssKrQSTloFAvo>

http://www.gp.org/gnd_full

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/27/us/politics/trump-climate-science.html>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/08/white-house-blocked-intelligence-aides-written-testimony-saying-human-caused-climate-change-could-be-possibly-catastrophic/?fbclid=IwAR2Tz0THixjtqPD_pW_f43Az04C9osF57Z1Xb9SS3UaM1QnI_ccPDC5Bu08&noredirect=on&utm_term=.4726718f813d

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/02/14/she-pushed-trump-exit-paris-climate-agreement-rollback-environmental-rules-shes-returning-epa-chief-staff/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-climate-security/climate-change-could-pose-catastrophic-security-threat-experts-warn-idUSKCN20I2O9>

<https://climateandsecurity.org/a-security-threat-assessment-of-global-climate-change/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/17/climate/emissions-trump-rollbacks-deregulation.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/01/14/climate/fossil-fuel-industry-environmental-policy.html>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trump-administration-begins-work-on-next-national-climate-report/>

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062379543>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2021/climate-environment/biden-climate-environment-actions/>