



# Climate and Sustainability in 2025: Progress, Pressure, and the Path Ahead

Center Forward Basics  
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## Overview

As of 2025, the effects of rising global temperatures are being felt more acutely, from unprecedented weather events to ecological disruption and socio-economic stress. Simultaneously, the world is undergoing a significant energy transition, marked by accelerated adoption of renewable energy and intensifying commitments to sustainability. Corporations, governments, and individuals are being compelled to adapt, but not without challenges.

This Basic explores the current state of climate and sustainability, highlighting key developments in global temperature rise, the shift to renewable energy, and corporate accountability, while addressing the emerging hurdles coming into play.

## The Climate Crisis and Push Forward

In 2025, the global climate system is under mounting pressure. Average temperatures continue to rise, with 2023 and 2024 ranking among the hottest years ever recorded. Scientists warn the planet is dangerously close to surpassing the 1.5°C warming limit—a threshold that, if exceeded, could lead to irreversible environmental damage. This warming trend has intensified extreme weather events across the globe, resulting in longer heat waves, stronger hurricanes, rising sea levels, and worsening wildfires. These changes impact food security, public health, water availability, and biodiversity. In response, the world is rapidly transitioning away from fossil fuels. Renewable energy technologies—particularly solar and wind—have become more cost-effective, scalable, and accessible. By 2025, renewables will make up an increasing share of the global energy mix, with innovations in energy storage, smart grids, and green and blue hydrogen playing critical roles. These advancements support decarbonization efforts in traditionally hard-to-abate sectors, such as transportation and heavy industry.

However, the energy transition is not without its challenges. Many countries face logistical and political obstacles in phasing out coal and oil while meeting growing energy demands. Supply chain disruptions and mineral shortages, particularly of lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements, also limit the pace of renewable deployment. Additionally, developing nations require greater financial and technical support to implement clean energy solutions equitably.

At the same time, the role of businesses in the climate fight has come under increased scrutiny. Leading companies take action such as science-based targets, invest in carbon reduction initiatives, and embrace circular economy principles. Yet, green marketing remains a persistent issue, with some corporations accused of overstating their environmental commitments without meaningful action. Organizations can align sustainability efforts with measurable impact and accountability to maintain credibility and stakeholder trust. Together, these developments reflect a critical inflection point: the recognition that addressing the climate crisis is not just about innovation or policy, it's about system-wide transformation. The convergence of

## Center Forward Basics

Center Forward brings together members of Congress, not-for-profits, academic experts, trade associations, corporations and unions to find common ground. Our mission: to give centrist allies the information they need to craft common sense solutions, and provide those allies the support they need to turn those ideas into results.

In order to meet our challenges we need to put aside the partisan bickering that has gridlocked Washington and come together to find common sense solutions.

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rising environmental risks, clean energy momentum, and corporate responsibility marks a defining chapter in the sustainability movement.

## Challenges Ahead

While notable progress has been made in climate and sustainability efforts, several complex challenges remain in 2025 with potential impacts for the pace and effectiveness of global action. One of the most prominent concerns is the climate financing gap. Many developing countries continue to seek support for mitigation and adaptation measures, particularly in areas vulnerable to rising sea levels, extreme weather, and drought. Although various international agreements have set targets for financial assistance, the actual disbursement of funds often falls short of what is needed. Closing this gap is considered essential for ensuring all countries can participate equitably in global climate solutions.

Policy uncertainty and differences in national priorities can also influence climate progress. In some regions, climate-related policies evolve with changing leadership or economic conditions. These shifts can lead to inconsistencies in long-term planning and investment, making it more difficult for public and private sectors to operate confidently. Across the political spectrum, diverse views are present on how best to approach climate action, ranging from regulatory strategies to market-based solutions, which can lead to delays or disagreements over implementation. Public communication and information quality are additional factors. As climate-related information becomes more widespread, it can sometimes be difficult for the public to distinguish between credible scientific data and less reliable sources. This has created challenges in building consensus around specific policies or actions. Ensuring information is accessible, accurate, and balanced is important for maintaining broad public engagement and support.

Another key issue is the social and economic impact of the energy transition. Shifting away from fossil fuels affects different communities in different ways. For instance, regions with economies heavily reliant on coal, oil, or natural gas may experience job losses or economic restructuring. Addressing these concerns through education, workforce development, and transitional support is viewed by many experts as critical to ensuring the energy transition is inclusive and sustainable over the long term.

Infrastructure and technology readiness also pose ongoing challenges. Many electrical grids are aging or were not designed to handle large-scale renewable energy sources like wind and solar. Significant investment in grid modernization, energy storage, and supply chain resilience is needed to support increased clean energy use while maintaining reliable service. Additionally, some renewable technologies depend on critical minerals, and securing stable and ethical sources of these materials is an area of growing international focus.

The road ahead involves balancing environmental goals with economic, social, and technological realities. Effective climate and sustainability strategies will likely require continued innovation, collaboration across sectors, and flexible approaches that reflect diverse regional and national contexts.

## Looking Ahead

Looking forward, if efforts remain focused, inclusive, and adaptive, the potential for further advancement is possible. Technological innovation, public-private collaboration, and international cooperation all have vital roles to play. Addressing climate-related risks can also create economic opportunities through job growth in clean energy, improved infrastructure, and investment in sustainable industries.

At the same time, effective climate and sustainability strategies will need to consider a wide range of perspectives and regional needs. Balancing environmental goals with energy reliability, economic competitiveness, and community impacts is essential to building support across diverse constituencies. As policy frameworks evolve, maintaining open dialogue, scientific transparency, and bipartisan cooperation will help ensure future solutions are practical, equitable, and widely supported.

Ultimately, the decisions made today will shape not only the environment of future generations but also the social and economic well-being of global communities.

## Links to Other Resources

- MSCI – [Sustainability and Climate Trends to Watch for 2025 | MSCI](#)
- National Centers for Environmental Information – [Assessing the Global Climate in April 2025 | News | National Centers for Environmental Information \(NCEI\)](#)
- Oxford Economics – [Key climate and sustainability themes for 2025 | Oxford Economics](#)
- Salata Institute – [Financial Economics of Climate and Sustainability 2025 - The Salata Institute](#)