

Session 3: Protecting Communities  
Most Vulnerable to the Impacts  
of Climate Change  
*Displacement, Relocation & Human Rights*

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National Climate Assessment

# US National Climate Assessment (NCA): Key Message about Relocation

Accelerated sea level rise, erosion, permafrost thaw, and/or increased intensity of weather events are **forcing relocation of entire tribal and indigenous communities** in Alaska, Louisiana, the Pacific Islands, and other coastal locations. These relocations and the lack of governance mechanisms or funding to support them are causing loss of community and culture, health impacts, and economic decline, further exacerbating tribal impoverishment.

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# Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples in the United States

Impacts, Experiences and Actions



 Springer

- A federal agency could be designated and funded as part of a stronger emphasis of US disaster policy on risk mitigation; serve as a bridge toward climate change adaptation and relocation policies. A designated agency and relocation policy would help coordinate the current dispersed efforts.
- The Stafford Act needs to be amended.
- Inclusion in restoration plans and adaptation efforts based on cost-benefit analyses need to be critically examined.
- Tribal communities have a long history of adapting to environmental changes that should be recognized and protected.
- Communities should be empowered to make decisions regarding the most appropriate adaptation strategy. If the community decides in-situ adaptation is no longer possible and need to relocate, such relocation should be community-led. Be cautious of governments using climate change impacts as an excuse to force communities out.
- Expand understandings of migration and adaptation to include managed migration that is carried out according to cultural needs and priorities.
- Relocation must not diminish the living standards of affected communities.
- Protect the social, economic and cultural human rights of individuals and communities forced to relocate, whether internally or across national borders.
- These efforts should be rooted in a human rights framework that asserts and protects tribal rights to determination and preservation.

# Thank you

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