

# Human Health Impacts of Global Warming on Virginia



Around the world, global warming threatens irreversible damage not only to the environment but to human health and well being. And Virginia will be no exception. A recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found global warming could harm Virginia in many ways, including reducing air quality, straining municipal water supplies and damaging crops and reducing farm productivity.

Climate-Related Possible Impacts	Health	Community Impact	Human Welfare
Degraded Air Quality	✓		
Heat Waves	✓	✓	✓
Wildfires	✓	✓	
Drought		✓	
Tropical Storms	✓	✓	✓
Extreme Rainfall with flooding	✓	✓	✓
Sea Level Rise		✓	✓

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research Final Report, Synthesis and Assessment Product, (SAP 4.6) July 2008.

According to the EPA, the impacts of global warming on Virginia could include:

#### Degraded air quality:

- Increasing heart and lung diseases, such as asthma.

#### Intense heat waves:

- Increasing heat stress and heat stroke.
- Increasing demand for energy.
- Greater physical discomfort.
- Limiting outdoor activities and recreation.

#### Wildfires:

- Contributing to greater asthma risks and aggravating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Disrupting communities.
- Property destruction.

#### Drought:

- Straining municipal water supplies.
- Damaging crops and lowering farm productivity.

#### Extreme rainfall with flooding:

- Contaminating water and food supplies with associated gastrointestinal illnesses such as salmonella and giardia.
- Increased exposure to carbon monoxide poisoning from portable generators.
- Disruption of transportation and other infrastructure.
- Increasing flood and wind damage.

In order to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that industrialized nations like the U.S. need to cut their emissions of global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050. For more information, visit [www.pewglobalwarming.org](http://www.pewglobalwarming.org), or to view the full EPA report, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).