



Cabinet approves historic Climate Change Policy 2024-2050 setting the Cayman Islands on a 26-year strategic road to climate-resiliency

- The new, national policy outlines strategic actions to lessen climate change impacts on key sectors and vulnerable groups
- Policy provides the Cayman Islands with a 26-year route to climate resiliency through fair and accountable governance
- Policy highlights six focus areas that support community, economy and environment

Grand Cayman, 9 October 2024: For the first time, a national Climate Change Policy (CCP) has been approved for the Cayman Islands. The CCP, presented by the Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Minister for Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, was approved by Cabinet on Wednesday 25 September.

The Policy outlines a 26-year plan for adaptation and mitigation that aims to bring to life the Policy's vision of a climate-resilient Cayman Islands that promotes and sustains vibrant communities, a thriving natural environment and a robust economy.

The Policy has three core goals for the country and the government:

1. Become more resilient to climate change
2. Achieve a low-carbon economy
3. Govern climate action fairly and transparently with future generations in mind.

These goals are underpinned by six focus areas that are essential pillars to the success of the policy:

1. **Robust economy:** Diversifying economic sectors and providing access to financial and technical resources to foster sustainable livelihoods.
2. **Liveable built environment:** Planning holistically and building climate-resilient structures and sites to safeguard citizens, businesses and cultural heritage.
3. **Healthy and resilient communities:** Improving the health and safety outcomes of communities.
4. **Resilient infrastructure networks:** Enhancing the capacity and functionality of critical infrastructure and its networks to withstand extreme weather events.
5. **Harmony with nature:** Safeguarding the integrity of nature and its ecosystem services to support a robust economy and healthy communities.
6. **Integration and coordination:** Developing government processes and capacity to take urgent climate action.



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The Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Minister for Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, said: “I am delighted to see this historic Policy approved by Cabinet. This is the first time that a Climate Change Policy has been approved for the Cayman Islands, and is the result of two years of work and multi-stakeholder engagement carried out by the MSCR Policy Team and the Technical Working Group. The Policy is bolstered by fresh insights and circumstances that were identified in the Cayman Islands Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022, taking into further consideration the needs of the most vulnerable in our society such as children, the elderly, disabled, and the economically disadvantaged, and also implications for the Financial Services Sector.

“As a nation we have recently experienced Hurricane Beryl, and witnessed the utter devastation she wrought upon parts of the US. We’ve seen flooding and coastal erosion continue to pose serious risks to homes and businesses in the Cayman Islands, and we know that increasingly warmer ocean waters contribute to the strength and intensity of hurricanes in our region. While we cannot prevent these severe weather events, this policy enables us to take proactive steps to safeguard and support our people, environment and economy.

“The approval of this Policy is testament to the incredible dedication of the Ministry and its policy advisors. It is also important to note, however, that this policy is a strategic pathway for a more climate-resilient future for the benefit of us all, and the key to success is in collaboration.

“The Climate Change Policy provides a governance framework for climate action which includes cooperation and coordination across ministries and departments, the private and public sectors and civil society, and I look forward to seeing this policy make a real and positive change in the future outlook for all three Cayman Islands.”

The CCP, builds on previous climate-resiliency policies, notably the draft Cayman Islands’ Climate Change Policy 2011.

Cabinet’s approval of the CCP 2024-2050 enables the Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency to start developing an implementation plan which will involve consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

The CCP sets out clear timeframes and strategic actions which will move the country towards the Policy’s goals, and states 23 “quick-wins” that have been identified as short-term actions (deliverable between 2024 and 2030) that will build momentum toward the Policy’s vision. The quick wins include identifying climate-related financial opportunities and vulnerabilities, completing the Coastal Setback Reference Line reassessment and implementing a National Sargassum Management Strategy, to name a few. The Policy will be reviewed every two years.

The Policy is largely guided by the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) which was conducted in 2022. Funded through the Governor’s Office by the United Kingdom’s Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, and following extensive desktop research, technical stakeholder



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consultation and public engagement, the resulting Cayman Islands Climate Change Evidence Report (2022) is now the most comprehensive reference document to date on the potential implications of climate change on the Cayman Island's environment, society and economy.

Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie, Senior Policy Advisor – Climate Resiliency, Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, said: “The Climate Change Policy 2024-2050 is a mission-driven and evidence-based policy that provides a clear strategic pathway to address the most pressing risks posed by current and continued climate change factors. The Policy’s strategies have been crafted to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on households and communities in the short and longer term. Work on an implementation plan with government and non-government partners to bring about these, and other benefits, will begin immediately.”

Acting Chief Officer, Troy Jacob, Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, said: “I would like to thank the Minister for her guidance and determination, the team within the Ministry, and our colleagues from other ministries, departments and government agencies for consulting on this updated Policy. Indeed, it is a notable achievement for this Ministry, being new and small, to have delivered two approved national policies within this administration – the Updated National Energy Policy which was approved earlier this year, and now the CCP. The Ministry looks forward to working closely with government, private sector and non-governmental partners, for the implementation of both national policies.”

For more information and to view the policy and the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) in full, please visit: <https://www.gov.ky/sustainability/climatechange政策>

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