

Press Release: California Partners with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to Enlist Earth-Observing Satellite Data in Climate Change Efforts 11-24-20

Description

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California partners with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to enlist Earth-observing satellite data in climate change efforts

Space-based observations will help inform action on sea-level rise, forest health, biodiversity, carbon emissions and more

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SACRAMENTO — A new partnership with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (NASA JPL)



will help state agencies better understand climate change

impacts and identify opportunities to build resilience, conserve biodiversity and use California's natural and working lands to store and remove carbon from the atmosphere.

The California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Food and Agriculture have signed a [memorandum of understanding \(MOU\)](#) with JPL that

will allow the state to access a growing body of data from Earth-observing satellites and other ground-based technologies. The trove of remote-sensing data — including information collected by the [Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite](#) launched on November 21 — will be used to understand current conditions, predict future vulnerabilities and inform actions to boost climate resilience. (A [short video about the MOU](#) is available on CNRA's YouTube page.)

The MOU will support the state's efforts under Governor Gavin Newsom's recent [executive order](#) to advance strategies to store carbon in the natural and working lands and remove it from the atmosphere. It will also help support California's first-in-the-nation goal to conserve 30 percent of the state's land and coastal water by 2030 to fight species loss and ecosystem destruction.

The agencies and NASA JPL will explore opportunities to use data to better forecast and combat climate-driven impacts such as sea-level rise, extreme drought, wildfire risk, severe storms and depleted groundwater basins. They will also assess how space-based observations and models can inform actions to address impacts on agriculture and food security and to evaluate carbon emissions, stocks and sinks.

JPL is among the world's leaders in understanding our planet and the impacts occurring due to climate change," California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot said. "We're excited to see this collaboration that will enable JPL's remote-sensing satellites aerial imaging and ground-based monitoring to improve California's ability to protect communities and nature and lead the world in combating climate change and species loss."

"California is the home of innovation, whether it's our agricultural products and practices or our scientific institutions," California Secretary for Agriculture Karen Ross said. "Utilizing JPL's technology to do real-time monitoring of carbon stocks and to understand what's happening with groundwater and our surface waters is a huge step forward — both in helping us achieve our climate goals and in ensuring sustainability for the next generation of agriculture in California."

"California's climate agenda is a science-driven one, so the more data we have and the more granular that data is the better our decisions will be," California Secretary for Environmental Protection Jared Blumenfeld said. "We are not playing on the margins anymore. The time for small, incremental action is over. We need to take bold actions that really reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other climate pollutants quickly. And we need bold partnerships like this."

"With this MOU, we're excited to further our collaboration with the state, using technology to scale up measurements to tackle the challenges of the coming decades," JPL Director for Earth Science Jim Graf said. "JPL's unique air- and space-based science can provide California the much-needed data to keep our ecosystems and forests healthy, manage our limited freshwater resources and aid efforts to keep our agricultural sector thriving."

The collaborative relationship with NASA JPL will provide useful remote-sensing information in critical areas including, but not limited to the following:

- Drought, snowpack, rising temperatures, groundwater volumes, severe storms and flooding, and other climate change augmented challenges
- Air pollutant and GHG emissions
- Climate exacerbated food security and agricultural production issues

- Forest health, resilience, impacts from pests and disease
- Harmful algal blooms, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, plastic pollution fate and transport
- Land surface change impacts related to earthquakes, Subsidence, landslides, groundwater overdraft, fire, etc.
- Combining remote sensing data and modeling with state collected ground-based monitoring data
- And issues such as data management, big data model development, the use of artificial intelligence to improve modeling accuracy and precision, etc.

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