The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School develops legal techniques to fight climate change, trains law students and lawyers in their use, and provides the public with up-to-date resources on key topics in climate law and regulation. We work in conjunction with the renowned scientists of Columbia University’s Earth Institute, and in close cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations grappling with the legal and policy issues raised by climate change. Our activities are spearheaded by Michael Gerrard, Faculty Director and Andrew Sabin Professor of Professional Practice at Columbia Law School, and Michael Burger, Executive Director.

The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law engages in a variety of activities, including:

- **Legal Resource Center**
  The Sabin Center’s website organizes and links to a wide range of materials in a searchable format, including judicial and administrative decisions, pleadings, and environmental impact statements addressing climate change, among other things. This site is now recognized as the leading source of continually updated climate change legal information in the world, and it is followed by lawyers and policymakers globally via Facebook, Twitter, and our listserv.

- **Model Laws, Best Practices, and Handbooks**
  The Sabin Center prepares model laws, best practices, and handbooks intended to help people understand the options available for addressing various facets of climate change. Examples of the Center’s past work include a guide to Managed Coastal Retreat; a handbook of the tools available to state public utility commissions to promote energy efficiency; a report ranking states’ hazard mitigation plans for how well they address climate change; and model ordinances for green buildings, energy efficiency, and use of renewable energy resources.

- **Regulatory Tracking and Participation**
  We also systematically track regulatory processes relating to climate change, provide the public with detailed assessments of new climate regulations, and participate in regulatory decision-making processes. For example, in 2014, the Sabin Center submitted comments on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s proposed rule to regulate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from existing power plants under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, focusing on legal tools to foster energy efficiency.

- **Promoting Long-Term Adaptation Planning**
  In addition to our work on climate mitigation, the Sabin Center also develops legal techniques to promote adaptation planning in both the public and private sectors. In 2013, we successfully intervened in a rate case before the New York Public Service Commission to ensure that Con Edison and other utilities would account for future climate change-related impacts such as sea level rise and increased temperatures in their capital planning processes. We have also recently written letters to government agencies, such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), requesting that they consider the impacts of climate change when promulgating rules for the environmental review process, and when conducting environmental impact assessments for specific actions.
Legal Issues Facing Threatened Island Nations and Other Vulnerable Countries

At the request of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Sabin Center convened an international scholarly conference held at Columbia in May 2011 on the legal issues facing island nations threatened with submersion as a result of rising sea levels. A book collecting the papers and outcomes of the conference was published by Cambridge University Press in 2013. Since then, the Center has continued to assist Pacific island nations and other vulnerable countries on a range of climate-related legal issues. We also partner annually with the London-based “Legal Response Initiative” to provide pro bono legal assistance to least developed countries during international climate negotiations.

Book Series

The solutions to climate change involve such complex legal issues that practitioners in all sectors benefit from book-length treatments. These are best done as multi-author works, so that chapter authors can bring their own specialties to bear. Some of our recent publications include Global Climate Change and U.S. Law, 2nd Ed. (ABA 2014); The Law of Green Buildings (ABA 2010); The Law of Clean Energy: Efficiency and Renewables (ABA 2011); The Law of Adaptation to Climate Change: U.S. and International Aspects (ABA 2012); and Threatened Island Nations (Cambridge 2013).

Public Events

The Sabin Center holds and participates in conferences, debates, seminars, and panel discussions. Some of our recent events included a panel discussion evaluating whether universities and pension funds should divest from fossil fuel stocks, and a presentation on climate justice by world renowned lawyer and activist Tony Oposa. In 2015, we will be hosting lectures by Cynthia Giles, Assistant Administrator on Compliance and Enforcement at U.S. EPA, and Timothy O’Connor, Senior Attorney & Director of the California Climate Program at Environmental Defense Fund. We also plan to host a panel discussion on climate law in China, and a workshop to discuss the development of model protocols for assessing the impact of climate change on actions subject to environmental review requirements under NEPA and state equivalents.

Examples of Online Resources available at our website:

CLIMATE CHANGE LITIGATION CHARTS
The Sabin Center maintains U.S. and non-U.S. climate litigation charts, organized by both claim type and name, which include links to decisions, briefs and relevant commentaries. We also circulate a monthly update on recent developments in climate-related litigation. To subscribe to the Center’s monthly update, contact: columbiaclimate@gmail.com.

NEPA AND STATE NEPA EIS RESOURCE CENTER
We have compiled databases of environmental impact statements (EISs) that include consideration of climate-change impacts prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California equivalent, as well as a matrix and paper summarizing the impacts discussed in EISs prepared by various federal agencies. Our website also includes links to the protocols and guidelines of various federal, state, local, and international bodies for considering climate change in EISs.

CLIMATE CHANGE LAWS OF THE WORLD
Countries around the world are taking important domestic actions to help tackle the issue of climate change. Our Center is working to collect the relevant laws and policies of each country into an easily accessible database, so as to facilitate comparative research and the sharing of approaches and legal frameworks. To complete this research, we are drawing on the expertise of visiting scholars, LLM candidates, and practitioners around the world.

CLIMATE LAW BLOG
Our blog covers current issues relating to climate change law at the local, state, federal, and international levels, with contributions from our director, fellows, visiting scholars, student interns, and guest bloggers.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ColumbiaClimateLaw) and Twitter (@ColumbiaClimate)

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