



**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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**Mayor Tom Barrett Joins 45 Mayors & County Leaders Nationwide in Pledge to Create More Resilient Cities**

*National campaign highlights the City of Milwaukee's leadership and commitment in response to growing extreme weather and energy challenges.*

MILWAUKEE – Mayor Tom Barrett has joined 45 other mayors and county officials from around the country who have committed to creating more resilient cities, towns, and counties in response to our nation's growing extreme weather and energy challenges. As an Inaugural Signatory of the Resilient Communities for America campaign, Mayor Tom Barrett is among the first local elected officials in the nation to showcase his leadership on these key issues testing America's communities.

The national campaign, which launched today, recognizes that local governments like the City of Milwaukee are on the front lines of responding to increasing disasters and disruptions fueled by a changing climate. An unprecedented increase in heat waves, droughts, floods, severe storms, and wildfires have devastated communities nationwide over the past two years and cost America \$188 billion in damages. Communities are also put at risk by unreliable and costly energy, thanks to volatile global prices and aging infrastructure taxed by extreme weather.

“We cannot ignore the challenges we face in Milwaukee and to many other regions across the country,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “All levels of government need to focus attention and resources on the potential impacts of climate change. I am committed to helping Milwaukee become more resilient and prepared for an uncertain climate in the future—to keep our community safe and strong, and keep our economy competitive.”

The Resilient Communities for America campaign seeks to champion the work of Mayor Tom Barrett and other local elected officials and local governments at the forefront of the emerging national movement to build resilience—and to inspire hundreds more to follow their lead. Local governments can take a wide range of actions to prepare and protect community members, businesses, infrastructure, and natural resources, and allow communities to bounce back faster from disruptions and disasters. Every \$1 spent on disaster risk reduction can save \$4 in recovery and emergency response costs—making resilience efforts a sound investment for our community.

Milwaukeeans do not need a long memory or global statistics to have felt the impact of climate change

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locally. As a result of the July 2010 storms that dumped over 7 inches of rain in some parts of the city in several hours and sent treated and untreated water into 11,000 homes, over \$60 million in assistance from FEMA was dispersed to aid local governments in cleaning up flood damage. Fast-forward to 2012 which was the warmest year on record with the Midwest and Wisconsin experiencing some of the worst drought conditions since the Dust Bowl era. Due to the drought and other manmade impacts, Lake Michigan water levels reached all-time lows in January 2013, impacting the \$6 billion recreational fishing industry in the Great Lakes region.

Here in Wisconsin, the annual average temperature rose by 1.1 degree Fahrenheit from 1950 to 2006. Annual precipitation has also registered a modest increase, with 3.1 inches more per year, an increase of approximately 10 percent over the 57 years covered by the UW-Madison study. In short, Wisconsin's changing climate has been measured, has already caused damage to land, people and property in the Milwaukee region, and has extracted an economic toll on municipal government as well as the local economy.

In response to these challenges, the City of Milwaukee has already taken a range of cost-effective actions that increase our resilience.

- Adopted a Green Streets design and construction policy that will help keep rain water out of the sewers through the use of green infrastructure practices;
- Milwaukee is one of eight cities nationally to participate in the Re.Invest Initiative, a Rockefeller Foundation funded effort to identify innovative “systems approaches” to design and finance infrastructure upgrades to prepare for major weather events; Milwaukee's Energy Efficiency – Me2 – program has helped improve nearly 800 homes and 150 businesses in the city, removing harmful CO2 emissions that impact our climate but also helping property owners save money; and
- Mayor's Green Team developing a comprehensive action plan for sustainability and resilience that will help Milwaukee thrive despite uncertain climate impacts and economic conditions in the future.
- In signing the Resilient Communities for America Agreement, Mayor Tom Barrett joins 45 other leading mayors and county leaders from across the country, including Mayor Vincent Gray of Washington DC, Mayor Kevin Johnson of Sacramento, CA; Mayor John Cook of El Paso, TX; Mayor Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken, NJ, and Mayor Kristin Jacobs of Broward County, FL.
- The campaign Agreement letter they signed lays out three commitments for local elected officials:
- To urge state and federal leaders to support local resilience initiatives and to take meaningful steps to build resilience and security throughout the nation.
- To build community resilience through their own self-defined local actions and goals (emphasizing actions that address climate change, energy security, infrastructure renewal, and economic recovery)
- To share their solutions and success stories with other local governments to help accelerate their progress on resilience.

The Resilient Communities for America campaign is being coordinated by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability USA, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Green Building Council, and the World Wildlife Fund. Learn more at [www.resilience4america.org](http://www.resilience4america.org).

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