



HARC



HARC's Commitment to Climate Equity
Leveraging Climate Investment to Build a
Just Economic Future

HARC's Commitment

Two of the most important and significant challenges facing Texas and the nation are the existential threat posed by climate change and the huge economic disparities that exist between low and high-income wage earners and among different racial and ethnic groups. HARC is working to address these dual challenges through collaborative strategies that integrate advanced environmental and economic research expertise with community perspectives and leadership for a more equitable and sustainable future.

The more frequent and powerful extreme weather events that we have witnessed in recent years -- droughts, hurricanes, higher temperatures, and colder than usual weather in areas with warmer climates -- are imposing higher human and financial costs on American society and our physical environment, and threaten to bring catastrophic losses that could reduce our quality of life. Effective and immediate action is imperative.

Additionally, America's income and wealth gap is increasing. Between 1978 and 2018, for example, corporate executives' incomes increased 900%, while workers' compensation increased 11.9%. Further, the top 10 percent held 70% of this country's wealth in 2021, while the bottom 50% owned only about 2.5% of the wealth. Over 14% of Texas' 30.2 million citizens live in poverty, including 19% of Texas children and 12% of Texas senior citizens. Texas is one of the nation's most diverse states (41% non-Hispanic whites, 40% Hispanic, 11.7% Black, 5% Asians, and 3.1% mixed race); but Blacks and Hispanics are twice as likely to live in poverty as white and Asian Texans. These income and wealth gaps threaten our state's economic and public health and our democracy. Sustained and concrete actions are needed to address this serious challenge.

Trillions of dollars will be invested between now and 2050 to address the climate crisis. The United States government is currently investing almost \$2.0 trillion for this purpose, and available federal tax credits will leverage even higher levels of private-sector investments. Additional non-profit investors are stepping up. The opportunity exists to deliberately and purposefully use climate investments, including those driving the energy transition, to simultaneously avert the catastrophic effects of climate change and to mitigate some of the unacceptable social and economic disparities in our communities.

HARC is committed to making the new green economy inclusive.

HARC is actively seeking private and government investments in the economic and energy transition that directly recognize and address economic, racial, and geographic inequalities, and benefit fenceline and disadvantaged communities.





HARC's Priorities

Sustainability has been the foundation of HARC's work since its creation more than forty years ago by Texas energy pioneer and philanthropist George Mitchell. Sustainability has three pillars: the environment, the social and economic well-being of people and communities, and the economy. HARC has prioritized the protection of human health and the environment for the past two decades.

HARC is committed to engaging in practices that consider and support ecological, societal, and economic health and vitality to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The sustainability pillars – environment, people and the communities in which they live, and the economy -- are the foundation of HARC's work going forward. We seek to apply these pillars and leverage diverse

investments and science-based strategies and policies, particularly for the benefit of disadvantaged communities and people, in order to:

- Reduce and eliminate emissions, both greenhouse gases and air pollutants, to make communities clean, healthy, secure, and resilient.
- Create educational opportunities and good-paying jobs to enable all Americans to access America's promise of life, liberty, and happiness.
- Preserve and protect natural resources to assure a high quality of life for current and future generations.

HARC's mission is to use science and research to support the deployment of policies, programs, and practices that will effectively address the climate crisis while also leveraging climate investments and partnerships among government, businesses, the non-profit sector, and communities to provide just, social, and economic opportunities for all.

Climate Equity and Community Resilience Initiative

HARC's Climate Equity and Community Resilience Initiative particularly focuses on how to serve disadvantaged communities effectively. Some recent examples include:

- ▶ Establishment of the HARC Climate Equity and Community Resilience Advisory Council and process to obtain ongoing counsel and guidance from community leaders and climate practitioners to inform HARC's climate priorities and agenda.
- ▶ Community Engagement Practices and Assessments, which involve robust outreach in fenceline and disadvantaged communities to build a trusting and effective working relationship with these communities' leaders and residents. HARC will also work with partners to develop an effective calculator to track and quantify benefit flows to these communities.
- ▶ Community Benefit Partnerships, a collaboration among fenceline and disadvantaged community leaders, businesses, government, philanthropy, and non-profits to co-develop programs and strategies to deliver educational, workforce, economic, energy, and environmental benefits to persons and families who live in those communities, and to persuade more companies to fully embrace the federal Justice40 Initiative's principles and goals. Community Benefits Hubs will be created to house these collaborative efforts in various communities.

- ▶ Community Research and Analysis, a participatory effort to inform problem definition in disadvantaged and fenceline communities and to support co-development of solutions to pursue on a priority basis.

In collaboration with the leaders of fenceline and disadvantaged communities and climate practitioners, HARC has already launched three Climate Equity projects that we hope will yield valuable foundations for future advances and investments in social and economic equity across much of Texas:

- ▶ A coordinated effort with partners to acquire more than \$500 million from governmental entities to directly invest in Texas communities. If this application is successful, these funds will improve residents' lives by deploying clean energy measures that grow jobs, reduce 50,000 households' utility bills, reduce carbon and other emissions, support minority-owned businesses, and build community resilience.
- ▶ HARC joined the HyVelocity Gulf Coast Hydrogen Hub in a leadership role to direct 40% of this \$1.2 billion federal investment to disadvantaged and fenceline communities along the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast as envisioned by Justice40.
- ▶ Created an effort to integrate climate equity metrics across HARC's existing portfolio of energy, environmental, and natural resources protection programs.

HARC will be deepening and expanding its Climate Equity and Community Resilience Initiative beyond these foundational initiatives in 2024 and beyond.



For more information, please contact:

Dr. Margaret Cook, Deputy Director, Climate Equity and Resilience

☎ 281.364.6043 | ✉ mcook@HARCresearch.org | 📍 8801 Gosling Rd., The Woodlands, TX 77381

HARCresearch.org