

**Union of
Concerned Scientists**
Strategic Framework
2023–2027





IN THIS REPORT

Science for This Critical Moment	5
Putting Science into Action	7
Science that Matters	8
Goal 1	10
Build the power and influence of science and scientists working for the public good	
STRATEGY 1A: Scientists and experts	11
STRATEGY 1B: Innovation and innovators	12
Goal 2	14
Advance science-based solutions to our planet's most urgent problems	
STRATEGY 2A: Climate change emissions	15
STRATEGY 2B: Transportation systems	17
STRATEGY 2C: Food	18
STRATEGY 2D: Nuclear weapons	20
STRATEGY 2E: Decisionmaking and elections	22
Our organization-wide commitments	25



Science for This Critical Moment

**The stakes have never been higher.
Our planet is heating up.
Democracy is under assault.
Nuclear threats remain acute.**

As serious as these challenges are, we stand at a moment of great clarity, one where truly transformative change is possible and science has an essential role to play.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has never been more important. Our voice carries the respect earned through more than 50 years of delivering the independent science that matters most. Free from political or commercial influence, our trusted scientists continue to speak truth to power. And we have become a partner of choice for those who understand how science—and scientists—can help them achieve justice.

There is no time to lose. We must think big, act fast, and work together—using science as our compass.

Accordingly, our five-year strategy reflects bold new investments in science and scientists; more teamwork across our programs, campaigns, and partnerships; and a firm conviction that it is still possible to create a better future.



Our Mission

We put rigorous, independent science into action, developing solutions and advocating for a healthy, safe, and just future.

Our Vision

A peaceful, healthy, and just world where science serves people and the planet by helping to solve the world's most urgent problems.

Our Values

- ➔ **Science** in the service of people and the planet;
- ➔ **Justice and equity** for people of all races and incomes—now and for future generations;
- ➔ **Courage** to take principled, science-based stands in the public arena;
- ➔ **Integrity** to always examine evidence critically, openly, and honestly;
- ➔ **Democracy** to promote a voice for all in government decisions;
- ➔ **Action** to inspire and mobilize people to build a healthier, safer, and more just world.



Putting Science into Action

**Science is our guiding star at UCS.
But science and scientists alone
can't build a better world.**

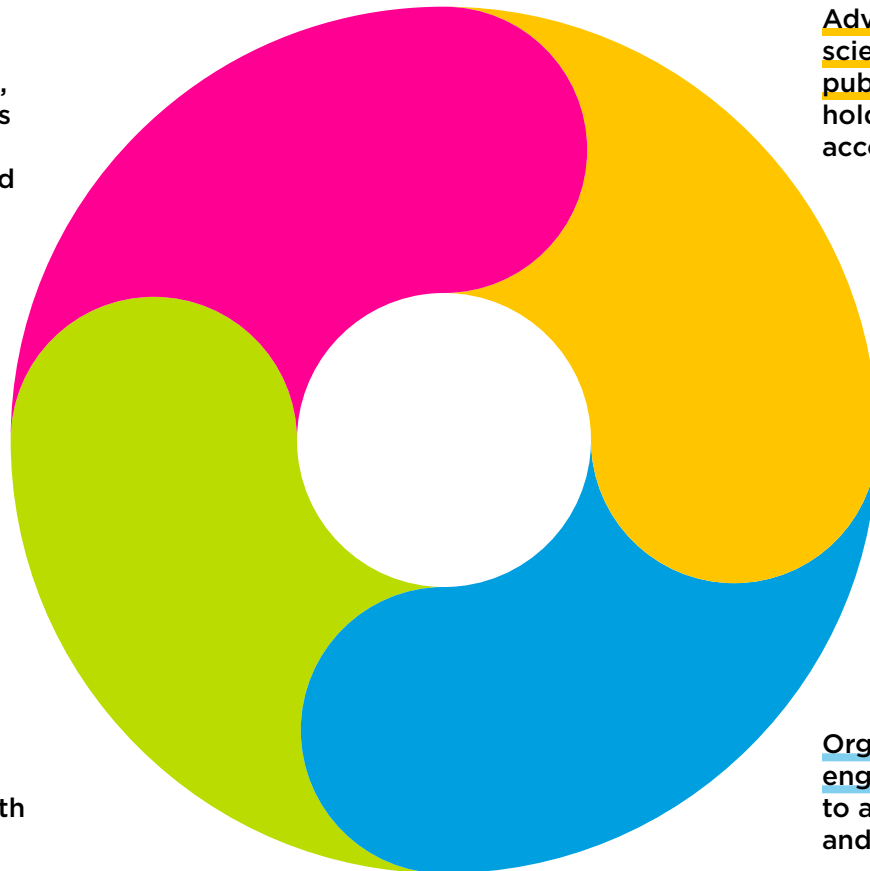
That's why UCS works at the intersection of science, advocacy, and political opportunity. This makes us more than a think tank, more than an advocacy shop, more than an academic research lab, and more than a professional association. It positions us to drive solutions that will stick, and that can scale up.

Develop solutions informed by science that serve the public, integrating the needs and knowledge of the most-impacted communities

Advocate for science-informed public policy and hold decisionmakers accountable

Build power by working in solidarity and collaboration with coalition partners

Organize experts and engage with the public to advance sustainable and just solutions



Science that Matters

Our five-year Strategic Plan reinforces UCS's commitment to science by dedicating the first organization-wide goal to **building influence of science and scientists** through an elevated Science Network and new investments in innovation.

A second organization-wide goal multiplies the impact of each of UCS's programs and campaigns through measurable objectives that integrate ambitions, and **unite science with justice**.





Goal 1





Build the power
and influence
of science
and scientists
working for the
public good

Strategy 1A

Grow and engage a diverse network of scientists and experts working for a healthy, safe, and just future.

This expanding movement of scientists, engineers, social scientists, and public health professionals will use the best available science to actively shape decisions on the most important issues of our time.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES





-  **Amplify our advocacy impact** by deploying more experts from the 23,000-member UCS Science Network on specific campaigns.
-  **Connect experts with advocates** at the local, state, and national levels so they can put science to work in shaping democracy, security, and climate solutions.
-  Increase the influence of UCS (and science in general) by deepening **partnerships with scientific societies** and nonprofit organizations such as the American Geophysical Union, the National Science Policy Network, and the Journal of Science Policy & Governance.
-  Strengthen our **collaboration with BIPOC-serving institutions** such as AISES (the American Indian Science and Engineering Society), the National Society of Black Engineers, SACNAS (the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science), historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Tribal colleges to connect scientists in advocacy, particularly focusing on next-generation leaders.

Strategy 1B

Champion innovation and innovators that help us meet the moment and plan for the future.

Creating solutions requires science that responds to a changing world.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES

-  Grow the **UCS Science Fellows Program** to advance research, analysis, and action that pushes the boundaries of what's possible—both in the world and inside UCS.
-  Launch an internal **innovation fund** to catalyze new research, analysis, and collaborative action on emerging issues.
-  Expose how special interests' use of **disinformation and artificial intelligence** undermines our democracy, security, and social and natural environments.
-  Set the gold standard for developing and using scientific tools to advance **social equity**.



Goal 2

Advance
science-based
solutions to our
planet's most
urgent problems

Strategy 2A

Promote policies that will slash climate change emissions and chart the fastest path to a clean, just economy.

These policies must include a fair and fast fossil fuel phaseout.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES

- ➔ Expand **clean and efficient electricity systems** that benefit communities by being equitable, sustainable, and affordable.
- ➔ Establish better **protections for communities** that are most at risk from climate change by expanding their access to science and decisionmakers.
- ➔ Conduct additional **climate attribution science** that further exposes fossil fuel companies' lies and the harms they have inflicted on people and the environment for decades, and informs legal and financial consequences.
- ➔ Secure **precedent-setting state and regional victories** in places like California, Illinois, and Massachusetts that demonstrate the feasibility of fair and ambitious policies that decarbonize energy and transportation systems, build community resilience, and strengthen water and wildfire management.

We're Using Science to Hold Major Fossil Fuel Companies Accountable

UCS's latest peer-reviewed science shows that **more than one-third of the total area** scorched by forest fires in the western United States and southwestern Canada since 1986—almost **20 million burned acres**—can be **directly attributed** to emissions traced to the world's largest fossil fuel producers. UCS analyses are shining a spotlight on the role the major oil and gas companies have played and continue to play in creating our current climate crisis and are now being used in court to help hold these companies accountable. Notably:




- **More than half** of the more than 40 US climate accountability lawsuits against major fossil fuel companies **cite UCS analyses**.
- Our seminal 2017 journal article in *Climatic Change* linking global temperature increases to emissions tracing to the major fossil fuel companies is now one of that journal's **most-accessed articles ever**, with more than **130,000 downloads** and **166 citations** to date, ranking it in the 99th percentile of all science journal articles from that year—a clear testament to its groundbreaking role in the field.

Strategy 2B

Drive relentlessly toward clean, accessible transportation systems.

We will develop and promote science-informed policies that improve personal mobility, support healthy communities, decrease global warming, and air pollution, and phase out oil use.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES






-  Accelerate a transition to **zero-emissions vehicles** that reduces disproportionate health burdens from transportation pollution.
-  Secure **fuel standards** that advance a clean, safe, and fair phaseout of petroleum; reduce pollution from fuel supply chains; and reduce harms from current fuel production methods.
-  Expand **transportation systems** that allow communities to thrive by safely, reliably, and affordably connecting places, people, and resources—with priority given to historically marginalized communities.

Strategy 2C

Make healthy food available to all, without depleting our farmlands or polluting rural communities.

Our science and advocacy will drive a more resilient and just food system that manages land in a way that reliably delivers nutritious food, safe and dignified jobs, thriving communities, healthy ecosystems, and climate solutions.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES

-  Build a more **diverse US farmer population**, with greater participation by BIPOC farmers in USDA conservation, technical assistance, and lending programs.
-  Farmers increase their adoption of agroecological practices that promote **soil health and climate resilience**.
-  New and expanded federal policies enable more small and midsize US farms to grow fruits and vegetables for **local markets**, especially in underserved communities.
-  Foster **deeper engagement in food and farm policy debates** among scientists, frontline partners, and labor in the run-up to elections and the next farm bill, both nationally and in key agricultural states.
-  Mobilize partners representing food workers and farmworkers to demand new **worker protections** in the 2028 farm bill.





Strategy 2D


Stop our reliance on civilization-ending nuclear weapons, and reckon with the harms caused by weapons testing.

We will move toward a world free from nuclear weapons by slowing the continued development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons as an essential element of US security policy. We will also repair the injustice and harms caused by nuclear weapons.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES

-  The United States takes actions that **reduce the risks of nuclear war**, including:
 - Updating outdated nuclear policies
 - Addressing the risks of emerging technologies
 - Preventing new nuclear arms races
 - Maintaining an environment in which future international arms control agreements are possible
 - Building constructive pathways to international dialogue, especially between the United States and China

-  Decisionmakers reckon with the unacceptable economic, security, and human **costs of maintaining nuclear capability** as a key component of US and global security, and communities harmed by US nuclear weapons development and testing receive **compensation and support** in the form of healthcare and environmental remediation.

-  US nuclear weapons policy is shaped by a more **diverse, inclusive, and influential body of stakeholders**, bolstered by increased scientific and technical capacity and a growing number of increasingly active congressional champions.

We're Helping Win Compensation for Victims of Nuclear Testing and Production

Between 1945 and 1962, the United States conducted more than 200 open-air tests of nuclear weapons that threatened public health by releasing radioactive material into the atmosphere. Over roughly the same period, the US government also dramatically expanded uranium mining for nuclear weapons production, exposing thousands of workers to radiation and dangerous working conditions. UCS advocacy on Capitol Hill and with impacted community groups is working to strengthen a bipartisan federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). To date, RECA has brought more than **41,000 claimants** some **\$2.6 billion in benefits** to help cover medical expenses resulting from the radioactive fallout to which they were unknowingly subjected. Strengthening RECA would extend compensation and support to thousands more impacted individuals.

Champion the role of science in democratic decisionmaking and in protecting free and fair elections.

We will ensure that the best available science informs policies and rules of elections to protect the health, safety, and rights of every person.

FIVE-YEAR MILESTONES

-  Federal science and **scientists are protected from political interference**, as scientific integrity becomes the law of the land and the best available science, facts, and evidence inform government decisionmaking.
-  Legislative, policy, and rulemaking processes become more **equitable and inclusive** as they are informed by science, traditional ecological knowledge, and input from the lived experiences of people in the most-affected communities.
-  Science is used to strengthen our democracy and ensure that **elections are fair and equitable**, such that:
 - Partisan gerrymandering is reduced
 - Fair representation is increased
 - Equitable ballot designs are broadly utilized
-  Election data analysis protects fair, free, and secure elections. **Original analytic work** determines which government policymaking and election processes result in more just and equitable outcomes and protections, especially for historically marginalized and underserved communities.



SCIENCE IN ACTION

We're Keeping Political Interference Out of Government Science

For almost two decades, UCS has been in the vanguard of research and advocacy to protect federal science and scientists from political interference. The Biden administration's landmark scientific integrity policies drew heavily on our analyses and recommendations. Over the course of the past five administrations, UCS has chronicled and helped expose **320 separate incidences of attacks on science** that have put political expediency over scientific evidence, often at the public's expense. That's why we're working now to press Congress to pass the Scientific Integrity act, codifying current policies into law to ensure that some **355,000 federal scientists and engineers** at more than **400 federal agencies and subagencies** are able to conduct science free from suppression and distortion, thereby **protecting the health and safety of millions of people in the United States.**



Our organization-wide commitments

We are investing in our people and practices to meet the demands of this moment and the future. We plan to:

- 🕒 **unlock innovation** by integrating the physical and social sciences that help us better understand and influence a rapidly changing world;
- 🕒 **pursue justice** in all our science and advocacy efforts, with help from a deeper base of environmental justice and frontline partnerships;
- 🕒 increase our organizational knowledge and practice of JEDI (**justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion**);
- 🕒 foster constructive collaboration and alignment across efforts, recognizing that the solutions we seek require **working across disciplines** and functions;
- 🕒 **communicate our issues with clarity and visual impact**, adapt to changing patterns of information consumption, and reach broader audiences;





HEADQUARTERS

Two Brattle Square
Cambridge, MA 02138-3780
(617) 547-5552

WASHINGTON, DC

1825 K St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006-1232
(202) 223-6133

WEST COAST

500 12th St., Suite 340
Oakland, CA 94607-4087
(510) 843-1872

MIDWEST

200 E. Randolph St., Suite 5151
Chicago, IL 60601-6436
(312) 578-1750

