

Briefing Series

Climate Change and Human Mobility

Overview

Disasters' compounding impacts – much of which can be attributed to global climate change – are accelerating risk exposure for all, starting with society's most vulnerable, under-resourced communities and regions. Projected sea level rise, extreme precipitation, drought, flooding, fires, and other hazards paint an increasingly uncertain future for existing communities, infrastructure, and economic investments.

One issue that has been particularly vexing for researchers and policymakers has been the expected increase in the movement of people in response to changing patterns of climate and disaster risks. Discussions on this topic can be challenging given long-term uncertainties on the degree and directionality of climate impacts, together with uncertain projections of demographic change that affect housing, infrastructure, employment, and investment patterns across the state.

Briefing Series Partnership

In 2025, the [UC Disaster Resilience Network](#) (UC DRN), [UC Berkeley Institute for Security in Governance](#) (ISG), and the [California Council on Science and Technology](#) (CCST) partnered to deliver a webinar series on Climate Change and Human Mobility. Over the course of four events, leading researchers, policy experts, and practitioners came together to unpack the critical relationship between climate-driven disasters and human mobility—including migration, displacement, and relocation.

For nearly 40 years, CCST has served as a trusted, nonpartisan source of expert science and technology advice for California policymakers. With a world class partner network that includes universities and federal labs across the State, CCST



Impacts



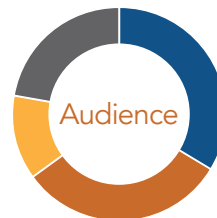
Registrants



Attendees



Views



32% State Government

30% Academia

12% Nonprofit / NGO

21% Other / Did not report

excels at bridging the gap between researchers and policymakers.

UC DRN is not only well positioned to tap into the over 26,000 University of California faculty from across its 10 campuses, but also the over 300,000 students enrolled in the system. With a nascent partnership with the California Community Colleges, and the over 2 million students enrolled there, DRN is committed to bringing the next generation into these important conversations.

Together, this partnership has engaged individuals from across the education, research, public, private and policy sectors in these critical conversations.



Crucial Topics. Top Experts.

America Adapts

Partnering with the [America Adapts](#) podcast, the conversations were led by creator and host Doug Parsons, leveraging his deep expertise in climate change adaptation and his ability to facilitate engaging and informative discussions. This partnership ensured that the conversations were not only accessible to a broad audience but also delved into the nuanced complexities of climate change and human mobility, drawing out valuable insights from the diverse group of experts.

Panel #1

Climate Change and Human Migration

Jesse Keenan (Tulane University), **Valerie Mueller** (Arizona State University), and **Daniel Swain** (UC ANR) discussed the big questions about why, how, and where people are moving to in response to changing patterns of exposure to climate and disaster risks, both within California and U.S. borders, and beyond.

Panel #2

Housing Costs, Insurance Rates, and Rebuilding After Disasters

This panel explored how disasters are affecting the costs of housing, insurance rates, and decisions by communities on whether to move away from at-risk areas. **Sarah Atkinson** (SPUR), **Judson Boomhower** (UC San Diego), **Molly Mowery** (Community Wildfire Planning Center), and **Michael Peterson** (California Department of Insurance) came together to discuss how recent disasters have prompted us to rethink how and where we build, and challenged

policy-makers to develop strategies to protect assets, minimize costs, reduce community displacement, and prevent future catastrophic losses.

Panel #3

Climate Change and Human Mobility Across Borders

In the face of the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-accelerated extreme climate and weather events, communities are grappling with the decision to either stay in place and face heightened risk, or to relocate to safer areas. In this discussion, **Hélène Benveniste** (Stanford University), **Joshua Busby** (UT Austin), and Barbara Walter (UC San Diego) discussed how the movement of people across borders is inextricably linked to complex legal, social, and policy questions.

Panel #4

Climate Change, Human Mobility, and Community Resilience in California

The final panel in the series explored how communities and local and regional governments in California are addressing the growing challenge of climate-induced human mobility. **Primitiva Hernandez** (805Undocufund), **Michael Méndez** (UC Irvine), **Ali Mostafavi** (Texas A&M), and **Sheri Weiser** (UC San Francisco) shared best practices for building resilience across sectors, including expanding healthcare access for climate migrants, leveraging data systems to anticipate migration patterns and coordinate resources, and developing adaptive infrastructure that balances immediate needs with long-term sustainability.