Climate Framework and Laws Montana released its initial Climate Change Action Plan in 2007. That plan spelled out the state’s goal of reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Key aspects include: providing incentives for advanced fossil-fuel generation and carbon capture and storage, developing clean-car standards for light-duty vehicles, and improving agricultural soil carbon management. In 2016, Governor Bullock released the Montana Energy Future report, detailing his energy vision for the state. In 2019, Governor Bullock signed Executive Order 8-2019 (EO 8-2019), joining Montana to the U.S. Climate Alliance and creating the Montana Climate Solutions Council. The Council will provide recommendations and strategies for the state to reduce GHG emissions and strengthen GHG inventories, including accounting measures to track progress and maintain accountability. The Council is tasked with issuing the Montana Climate Solutions Plan for achieving an interim goal of net GHG neutrality for average annual electric loads in the state by no later than 2035 and a goal of economy-wide net GHG neutrality at a date to be determined by the Council.

Power Generation Montana’s economy is well positioned to build upon the clean-energy accomplishments of the past six years, including
attainment of the 15% renewable portfolio standard (RPS) for utilities in 2015, doubling wind capacity with 180 megawatts (MW) of new construction, quadrupling installed solar capacity with the development of Montana’s first six utility-scale solar farms, installation of community solar projects by four rural electric cooperatives, and a 250% increase in the number of solar-powered homes and businesses. The Montana Solar Community Project seeks to expand access to solar energy solutions for Montana communities by providing technical, planning, and financial resources to help develop projects. Montana is the fifth-largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with more than half of all power in the state produced from renewable resources. The Montana Renewables Development Action Plan (June 2018) identifies 28 significant findings and 19 actions to remove barriers to the development and export of Montana renewable resources. The state also requires that new coal plants completed since January 2007 meet an emissions performance standard.

**Energy Efficiency** State government leads by example through its High-Performance Building Standards required of all new state buildings, and the State Building Energy Conservation Program. In addition, in 2014 Governor Bullock directed state agencies to begin monitoring energy use in state buildings and to begin publicly disclosing these energy numbers online. The state has adopted the International Energy Conservation Code with Montana-specific amendments applicable to all new residential construction. Montana tax law also provides an income tax credit for certain investments in energy efficiency.

**Transportation** In October 2017 Governor Bullock joined Montana into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among western states to provide a framework for creating an Intermountain West Electric Vehicle Corridor. The University of Montana became the first university in the country to operate fast-charging electric buses in 2016. Montana requires that state vehicles meet or exceed the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) Standards.

**Resilience** The Montana Ready Communities Initiative (MRCI) supports community resilience in the face of natural, human-caused, and economic challenges. The Montana Department of Commerce will develop a Montana Resiliency Framework, which will be an integrated and interdisciplinary strategy to ensure that long-term planning, projects, and priorities proactively address challenges and vulnerabilities while building community resilience. As part of EO 8-2019, the Montana Climate Council will coordinate with relevant state agencies to incorporate climate adaptation strategies into existing planning and operations and lead a state government-wide effort to prepare Montana’s communities for disaster-related risks.

**Climate Finance** The Alternative Energy Revolving Loan Program provides low-interest loans to increase investments in alternative energy systems and energy conservation measures in homes and businesses. Since its inception, more than $10.3 million in funding has been provided. In addition, income tax credits are available for both new home alternative energy systems and geothermal energy systems or ground-source heat pumps.

**Natural and Working Lands** EO 8-2019 requires that the Climate Solutions Council include strategies for supporting “voluntary, incentive-driven tools and technologies for improving productivity, reducing emissions, and boosting soil health and carbon storage on farms and ranchlands, and in forests and wood products” in the Montana Climate Solutions Plan.