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## Title: Sabin Center for Climate Change Law and Smart Surfaces Coalition Launch a Policy Tool to Help Cities Adapt to Climate Change

**December 18, 2024** – Today, Columbia Law School's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law and the Smart Surfaces Coalition launched the Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker – a publicly-available database containing more than **450 resources** which cities can utilize for smart surfaces policy development. Currently the tool includes policy references from 9 states, but the remaining 41 states will be added in 2025.

Cities have a unique and significant role to play in responding to climate change. Many are already doing so by adopting legal and policy tools to encourage the use of **smart surfaces—a group of technologies and design strategies that mitigate the effects of climate change in urban environments**—especially extreme heat, stormwater flooding, and poor air quality.

"With the climate clock ticking, we need innovative tools and solutions that can accelerate the implementation of tried and tested policies. The Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker is one such tool. By providing cities and stakeholders with easy access to proven policy examples, it empowers local leaders to take swift, effective action to protect public health, reduce environmental risks, and foster more equitable, climate-resilient communities." **Shweta Arya, Sr. Project Manager, Smart Surfaces, Center for Climate, Health and Equity, American Public Health Association**

The Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker can be leveraged by cities to understand the legal considerations to develop smart surface policies, plans and projects – zoning and building codes, procurement policies, comprehensive plans, green stormwater infrastructure regulations and so forth. Users can filter the items available by the policy goal that a tracked measure supports—for example, mitigating extreme heat, managing stormwater, providing recreational space, among others. Users can also view the information sorted by the type of smart surface, the state, region, or climate zone in which the policy has been adopted, and more.

"We applaud and appreciate the hard work of the Sabin Center and the Smart Surfaces Coalition to build the Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker. Cities are innovation hubs for addressing environmental health challenges like extreme heat and air pollution, and this tool will make it easier for us to rapidly learn from each other to make an even greater positive impact on people's lives. We are honored that the policy tracker will showcase some of Phoenix's heat mitigation strategies, including our Walkable Urban Code and the Shade Phoenix Plan, and look forward to using the tracker to continue to learn and improve our work." **David M. Hondula, Director, Heat Response and Mitigation. City of Phoenix, Arizona**

As of today, data in this tracker is drawn from the **nine U.S. states** containing cities participating in the Smart Surfaces Coalition's [Cities for Smart Surfaces Project](#): Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, and Texas. The tracker will expand be expanded in the near future to cover additional states.

"The Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker gives policymakers, researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders a first-of-its-kind resource to understand how cities are incorporating Smart Surfaces into local law and policy around the country. By combining a database of examples with guidance on best practices, the tracker allows leading cities to draw on the very best of what has already been done and to find new paths toward making cities more resilient and livable." **Daniel J. Metzger, Senior Fellow, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law.**

The Tracker is intended to be a resource for city policymakers and other stakeholders to learn what approaches cities have taken to smart surfaces implementation.

"One of the challenges policymakers face is not always a lack of data and information, but rather too much disorganized information. This reality can overwhelm already time-constrained government employees and limit innovation. The Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker is specifically designed to solve this problem and make it easy for policymakers to search and identify relevant policy examples quickly. The tool will allow folks to work smarter and faster to drive change towards more resilient infrastructure." **Bill Updike, Program Manager for the Smart Surfaces Coalition**

"This tool allows us to look at what's been successful across the country related to smart surface implementation. The amount of time this cuts down on peer city research, while also highlighting some potential policies, provides a significant benefit to our efforts to continue addressing urban heat in an efficient, equitable, and impactful way. We are currently using the tool to investigate policy options to incentivize public and private implementation

and look forward to being a contributor and user in the years to come.” **Robyn M. Byers, Ph.D., Sustainability and Resiliency Manager, Office of Sustainability & Resilience, City of Charlotte, North Carolina**

Research conducted for this project was supported by the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance and the website was created in partnership with the Smart Surfaces Coalition, National League of Cities, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, and American Public Health Association.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Smart Surfaces Coalition, and [here](#) to view more information on the Sabin Center’s large library of other trackers and databases on climate change law topics.

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