A New Era of Discovery and Environmental Action

Building the Future of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences at MIT
At MIT’s Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences (EAPS), in the School of Science, we are driven by curiosity to answer some of the most profound questions about the natural world and our place in the universe. Our faculty and students are explorers—crossing intellectual boundaries and geographical borders. They scour the global geologic record for evidence of ancient organic life; survey oceans, clouds, and ice caps to understand Earth's dynamic climate; and partner with NASA to lead missions to explore our solar system and to search for signs of exoplanetary life.

As we deepen our understanding of Earth and beyond, we are also working to solve some of the planet’s greatest challenges, from climate change to pollution to the sustainable use of natural resources. We draw on our research to guide policy and train the next wave of thought leaders who are urgently needed to safeguard our future. EAPS shares its goal of attaining a more sustainable world with the MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI), an effort that brings together faculty and students from across all five of MIT’s schools to develop innovative solutions to global challenges.

New Space for a New Era of Earth and Environmental Sciences

The Cecil and Ida Green Building (Building 54), home to EAPS, has towered over the MIT campus for more than 50 years. Now, this iconic, I.M. Pei-designed structure is poised to usher in a new era for environmental education, research, and innovation at MIT. We are creating a striking 11,000-square-foot pavilion at Building 54 to provide a dynamic new earth and environment portal with modern conference, meeting, office, classroom, and convening spaces, and a new home for ESI at the nexus of environmental research and academia at MIT. The new LEED-certified addition will enliven and beautify an essential location at the heart of campus, and offer new headquarters for ESI as well as EAPS and the MIT-Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Joint Program (MIT/WHOI). It will invite MIT and the wider community to engage in the work of EAPS, ESI, and MIT/WHOI and to join our quest to tackle the very real challenges facing our planet.

As the Building 54 development takes shape, MIT also plans to refurbish 10,000 square feet of wet labs in Building 4 to meet the expanding needs of EAPS researchers. These advanced laboratories will help attract the world’s best faculty and students, keeping MIT at the vanguard of earth and environmental sciences research for generations.

“Providing new, state-of-the-art facilities for the world-class students and faculty in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences is essential to our education and research missions. It will inspire our researchers to do their most innovative work and catalyze greater collaboration within the School of Science and across MIT.”

Michael Sipser
Dean, MIT School of Science
Donner Professor of Mathematics

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MIT’s Commitment to the Planet

MIT is aligning its capabilities to mobilize and lead the effort to understand and address challenges around issues of climate, environment, and sustainability. Our responsibility to improve the health of the planet and create a better world for its inhabitants is reflected by our commitment to establish a major hub for earth and environmental sciences and world-class laboratory space to support cutting-edge research in EAPS.

“Gaining 20,000 square feet of space for wet labs and teaching and meeting facilities will transform earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences at MIT. State-of-the-art labs in Building 4 and a new earth and environment pavilion for EAPS and the Environmental Solutions Initiative will enhance the community, galvanize our research and education programs, and create new synergies across campus,” says Robert van der Hilst, the Schlumberger Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences and head of EAPS.

An Investment in the Future

We call on MIT’s friends and supporters to join us in advancing the Institute’s global leadership in the earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences. Together, we can ensure that MIT continues to play a critical role in exploring the earth, its evolving climate and life, and the planets in and beyond our solar system. With your help, MIT can accelerate its drive to find collaborative solutions to some of the planet’s most urgent problems and bring its vision of a more sustainable future to life.

Learn More

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