## Climate Framework and Laws

In October 2018, Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order 80 (EO 80), reaffirming the state’s commitment to address climate change and transition to a clean energy economy. EO 80 establishes the state’s GHG emissions-reduction target (40% below 2005 levels by 2025). It also identifies actions to reduce North Carolina’s climate impact and vulnerability, including: establishing a Climate Change Interagency Council responsible for developing mitigation and adaptation programs; requiring the submission of a clean energy plan and a ZEV plan; and requiring agencies to incorporate climate measures into their programs, operations, and policies. EO 80 supports the development of clean-energy businesses and investments, and requests that the state’s Department of Commerce submit a workforce assessment to help North Carolinians meet demand for clean energy and transportation jobs. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has released a statewide GHG inventory for

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**NORTH CAROLINA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GHG REDUCTION</th>
<th>RENEWABLES</th>
<th>JOBS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHG EMISSIONS-REDUCTION TARGET</td>
<td>CLEAN ENERGY TARGET</td>
<td>RENEWABLE ENERGY &amp; ENERGY EFFICIENCY JOBS</td>
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<td>40% below 2005 levels by 2025</td>
<td>12.5% renewable and/or energy efficiency by 2021</td>
<td>96,957</td>
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(ESI & NASEO, 2019)

**NORTH CAROLINA’S CLIMATE LEADERSHIP**

Governor Cooper’s 2018 executive order calls for a 40% reduction in statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, 40% improvement in state building energy efficiency, and 80,000 zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) by 2025. In 2019, state agencies developed plans to support these goals—including a *Clean Energy Plan*, *Zero-Emission Vehicles Plan*, workforce assessments, and *Motor Fleet Zero-Emission Vehicles Plan*—and published a state GHG Inventory. North Carolina hosts 43,000 clean energy jobs and remains #2 nationally in installed solar capacity. A 2017 energy law will roughly double the state’s solar capacity in four years.
sector-specific emissions covering 1990–2017, and also projects future emissions through 2030.

**Power Generation** North Carolina’s renewable energy and energy efficiency portfolio standard (REPS) requires investor-owned utilities in the state to supply 12.5% of 2020 retail electricity sales from eligible energy resources by 2021. Municipal and electric cooperatives must meet a target of 10% by 2018. DEQ is charged with developing the *North Carolina Clean Energy Plan* under Section 4 of EO 80. This will be a stakeholder-informed action plan to increase the utilization of clean-energy technologies, energy-efficiency measures, and clean transportation solutions.

**Energy Efficiency** The North Carolina State Energy Office (SEO) works with local governments, businesses, and community organizations to help them become more energy efficient and educates businesses about tax credits that can make sustainable practices benefit their bottom line. The state’s Utility Savings Initiative for public buildings assesses the entire stock of state buildings, which in the summer of 2018 met its U.S. Department of Energy Better Buildings Challenge goal by achieving an overall 21% improvement in energy intensity, compared to the 2009 baseline year, for North Carolina’s building portfolio totaling 138 million square feet. The North Carolina Weatherization Assistance Program enhances the well-being of low-income residents through the installation of energy-efficient and energy-related health and safety measures. In FY 2019, the program weatherized 2,083 residences across the state. EO 80 Section 8 requires the development of a Comprehensive Energy, Water, and Utility Use Conservation Program to further reduce energy consumption for all state-owned buildings. As of February 2019, the state has achieved a 28% reduction in energy consumption.

**Transportation** EO 80 aims to have 80,000 zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) on the state’s roads by 2025. The state Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to develop a ZEV plan outlining compliance with this goal and submit it to the governor by October 1, 2019. Since 2001, 75% of North Carolina state government new light-duty vehicle (LDV) fleet acquisitions must be alternative-fuel vehicles (AFVs). The state earns vehicle credits for purchased light-duty and heavy-duty AFVs, which may be sold, banked, or traded between fleets. As of September 2017, North Carolina earned a total of 3,023 credits under this program. North Carolina’s Department of Administration is exploring the application and utilization of ZEVs in both state and local government motor fleets and will be submitting the *NC Motor Fleet ZEV Plan* by October of 2019.

**Resilience** The North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (DCM) is addressing sea-level rise and coastal resilience through several research, planning, and policy initiatives. DCM provides staff support to the Coastal Resource Commission (CRC) Science Panel, which develops a *5-Year Sea Level Rise Synthesis and Assessment Report* to monitor changing conditions, evaluate state-specific data, and guide coastal policy development. EO 80 Section 9 requires DEQ, with the support of the cabinet agencies, to submit the *NC Climate Risk Assessment and Resiliency Plan* informed by stakeholder engagement by March 2020. Section 9 also calls for the support of local governments interested in developing community-level adaptation and resilience plans. In addition, DEQ is working with the North Carolina Institute for Climate Science to develop the *NC Climate Science Report* detailing the current climate trends in the state, which will be released in December of 2019.

**Natural and Working Lands** The Division of Mitigation Services restores and protects wetlands and waterways through mitigation programs designed to assist private and public entities in complying with state and federal compensatory mitigation for streams, wetlands, riparian buffers, and nutrients. The DEQ Natural and Working Lands (NWL) stakeholder group is also exploring cost-effective opportunities in land conservation and management practices that provide co-benefits of improving ecosystem health and sequestering carbon and will be working to develop a *NWL Action Plan* to be published by January 2020.