



Recommendations for a People’s NH Climate Action Plan

Recommendations compiled by 350 New Hampshire staff, with support from volunteers, community members, and other environmental organizations.

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Overall Goals

1. Use IPCC data and recommendations to set carbon reduction goals by sector, with the understanding that individuals and communities with a large carbon footprint will need to reduce their footprint by more than 42.5% by 2030 in order to reach the planet's goals of 42.5% by 2030.
2. Establish energy transition goals, such as sourcing 60% of energy for state buildings from 100% renewable energy by 2030, 100% of energy for state buildings by 2035, and a 100% renewable grid by 2035 (5 years behind the target date of 2030 from IPCC).
3. Establish goals to reduce single-occupancy vehicle miles traveled, such as by 5% for 2024 and by 15% for 2030.
4. Establish environmental justice standards that prevent more burden of pollution and negative health impacts on disadvantaged communities.



SUMMARY

A People's NH Climate Action Plan prioritizes climate justice. In order to achieve the climate goals that reduce emissions and address pollution, our recommendations include:

- Creating goals to get to 100% renewable energy by 2040
- Banning any new fossil fuel infrastructure to prioritize a transition to clean energy, increased energy efficiency efforts, and improved transmission systems (this transition cannot include nuclear, biomass, or hydrogen energy)
- Establishing environmental justice standards that prevent more burden of pollution and negative health impacts on disadvantaged communities.
- Improving climate literacy education by including the social, economic, and political impacts of climate change in school curriculum
- Establishing job training programs that prioritize our workers, a just transition, and keeping young people in the state
- Expanding electric vehicle, electric bicycle, and public transportation options to reduce emissions from the transportation sector
- Banning PFAS in industrial processes and requires polluters to be responsible for the messes they make
- Building on climate resiliency programs to protect community health, environmental health, and resiliency from increased storms, droughts, and floods.

Our current energy grid and environmental policy is wholly inadequate to slow the progression of climate change. We know that changing this entire system is not a one-night-project, and some of the suggestions in this plan are going to be difficult to implement. *But we are only limited by our own thinking and our refusal to adjust the systems we have in place to make space for a better, environmentally sound future.*

We can start with the pieces of a climate action plan that are easier for us to achieve, but must not lose sight of the reason for the more ambitious goals: our planet is on fire, and we have the knowledge, resources, and time to fix it. All we need to do is make sure we have the **willpower** to get it done.



Context

Climate change is a priority problem for Granite Staters despite gaps in public understanding of the threat. The [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) found that among residents of New Hampshire:

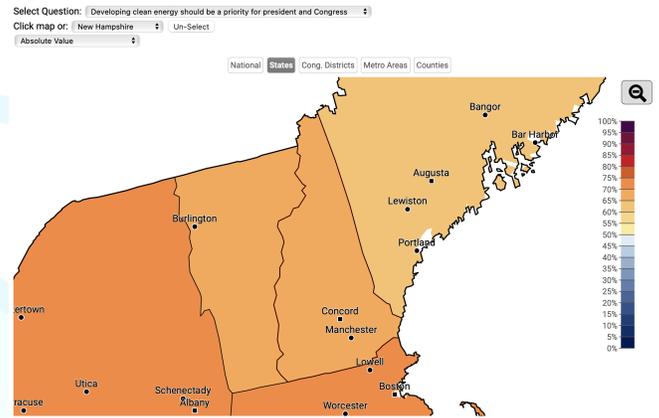
Over 65% of adults think developing clean energy should be a priority for the president and Congress.

Over 75% of adults believe schools should teach about the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to global warming.

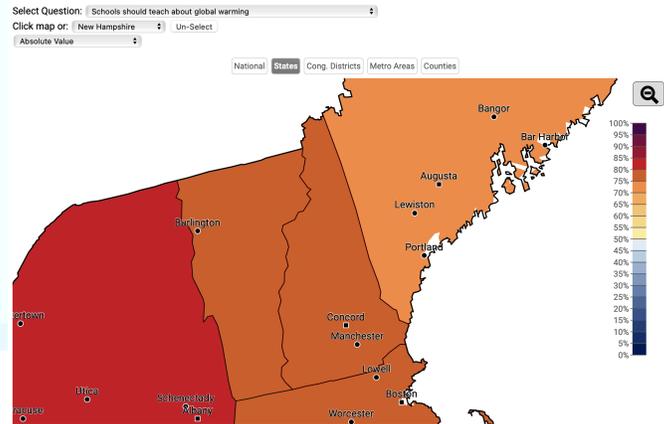
Over 75% of adults support regulating CO2 as a pollutant.

And over 55% of adults think global warming is caused by humans.

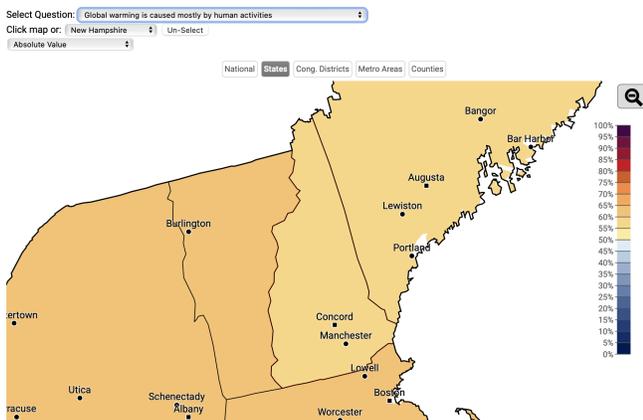
Estimated % of adults who think developing clean energy should be a priority for president and Congress (nat'l avg. 66%), 2023



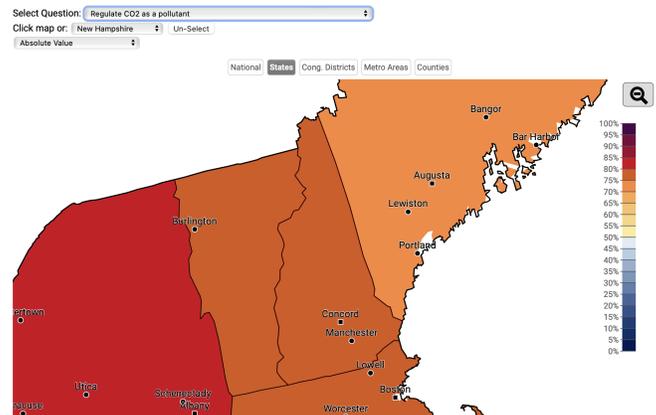
Estimated % of adults who believe schools should teach about the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to global warming (nat'l avg. 75%), 2023



Estimated % of adults who think global warming is caused by humans (nat'l avg. 58%), 2023



Estimated % of adults who support regulating CO2 as a pollutant (nat'l avg. 74%), 2023





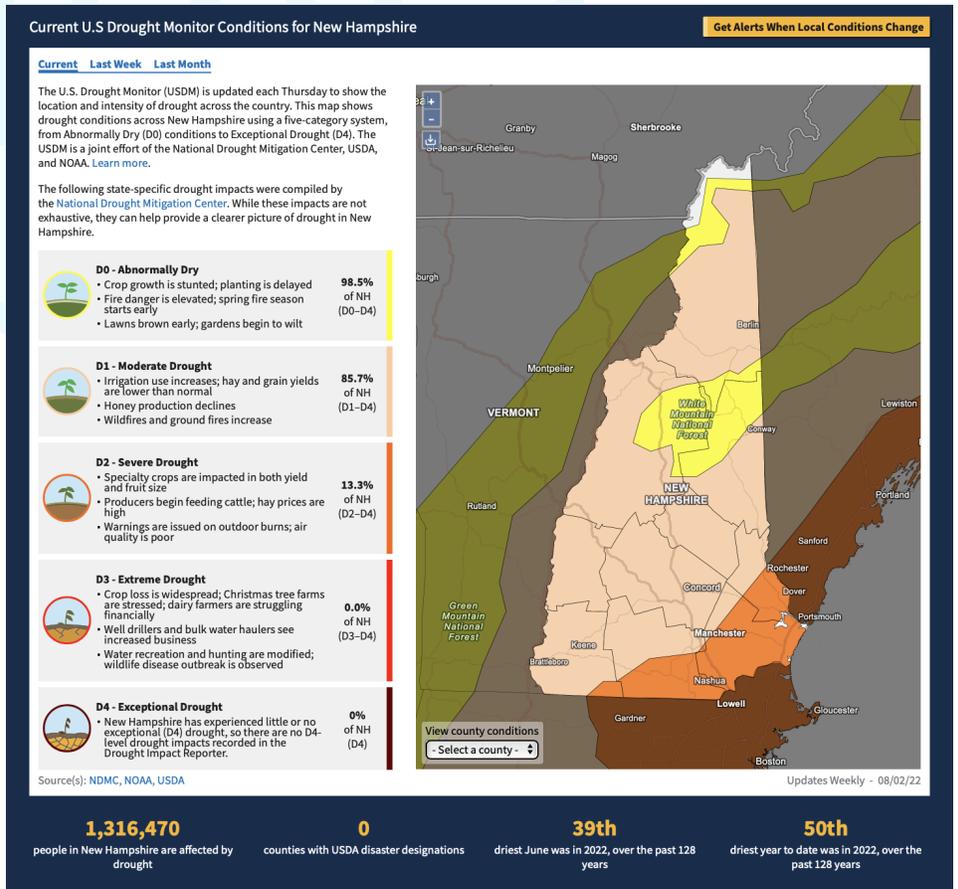
Context

The [impacts of climate change](#) are hitting New Hampshire. Extreme flooding in 2023 and 2024 devastated communities across the state. In prior years, droughts and unpredictable weather posed challenges for our farmers. Increasingly hot heat waves affect the health of our unhoused neighbors and our elderly population. Environmental injustices in our state have burdened low income communities with harmful landfills, created cancer clusters from PFAS chemicals, and threatened water quality across the state.

New Hampshire has failed in the past to establish emission reduction goals. Our dependence on imported fracked gas and failure to transition to renewable energy has led to increased energy rates in our utility bills. We have a chance, with the federal funding available at this time, to prioritize policies and structural changes that center climate justice by prioritizing the people most impacted by climate change over the profits of fossil fuel companies.



The Dilly Cliff Fire burned 75 acres in New Hampshire in 2017, after a similar prolonged drought to one taking place this summer. (Courtesy of Ken Watson/kenwatson.net via NHPR)





Recommendations by Area

Environmental Justice

- Establish a mechanism like [Vermont's Environmental Justice Law](#) to protect communities from disproportionate environmental burdens such as polluted air and water, climate change impacts, and limited access to green spaces, and which requires state agencies to meaningfully engage residents in environmental decision-making processes.
- Require community input, which includes ultimate veto-ability, when building hazardous infrastructure like asphalt plants, landfills, gas pipelines, etc.
- Require flood disclosures for property sales and rentals.
- Require PFAS disclosure for property sales and rentals.
- Prohibit covenants and ordinances that require maintained lawns and/or prohibit vegetable and wildflower gardens.
- Require environmental surety bonds for businesses that pose a significant risk to the state's natural resources.
- Include Climate Justice in the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks at all grade levels. Goals would be developed from a multi-disciplinary perspective, including topics in science, mathematics, and social studies. As a short-term goal for June 2025, NH nonprofits already providing climate change curriculum could lead educator workshops in targeted communities to train New Hampshire teachers in the nuances of climate change and energy efficiency, and then would extend these workshops to different communities each year. Topics would include social implications of climate change, including health impacts, economic impacts, redlining, environmental racism, migration of animals and people, urban planning, sea level rise in cities, and political and economic discourse.
- Establish a Justice initiative like the [Federal Government's Justice 40](#) to direct financial resources that address climate change to historically underserved communities.



Environmental Justice, Cont.

- Establish job training opportunities for NH high school and college students who are interested in exploring jobs in clean energy installation, coastal management, agriculture, and other job fields that will be necessary to address a clean energy transition and climate change in our state. These trainings would be made available with reduced cost to disadvantaged communities.
- Extend utility cut-off restrictions to include June 1-August 31 to protect people from having their power cut off the week before a dangerous heatwave. Researchers in Rhode Island, Maine and New Hampshire concluded in 2017 that the elderly, people who work outside, people from lower-income communities, and people with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma and heart disease, fared much worse when the heat index reached 95 degrees. In urban neighborhoods with lots of asphalt and few trees, so-called heat islands, temperatures can be 10 to 15 degrees higher than in leafy suburbs.
- Form a committee to draft a state-wide Percentage Income Payment Plan (PIPP), which has been adopted in other states such as Pennsylvania. A PIPP would allow low-income Granite Staters to pay only what they can afford for electricity and fuel, such as a maximum 3% of income for each utility or 6% of income if the heating source is also electric.
- Protect worker's rights to unionize and prevent so-called "right to work" laws to ensure that workers implementing climate plan projects and the unions that negotiate on their behalf are treated fairly.
- Working people will build and operate the new grid. We must implement policies that ensure adequate healthcare and time off.
- Increase the amount of state aid available for households struggling to pay electricity bills and commission a study on how effective our state aid programs are in order to improve them.



Electric Generation

- Ban expansions of fracked methane infrastructure (aka no new natural gas pipelines).
- Establish target dates to close NH's remaining coal plant as soon as possible and plan for its transition to clean energy, that includes input from Bow residents.
- Invest in workforce training and infrastructure so that NH participates in the development of the Gulf of Maine wind farm.
- Ban development of new nuclear energy facilities in the state of New Hampshire, as this technology is more expensive than alternatives like wind and solar, more dangerous, and leaves the burden of environmental waste on a community.
- No new subsidies to prop up the existing nuclear energy facility in Seabrook.
- Ensure the RSP does not include nuclear energy as “clean,” as the nuclear waste is harmful and puts undue burden on the communities forced to store the waste long term.
- Ensure NO incentives are created for hydrogen or “green hydrogen” projects, as they take away funding from clean energy projects and require large amounts of water and energy to create when that energy could just be used to power our electric grid.
- Prepare our electric grid for clean energy through policies that are supportive of net-metering, microgrids/ a distributed grid, demand response, and battery storage (behind the meter and utility scale energy storage).
- Enable and fund community solar energy programs (especially for low income communities).
- Establish a gas and electric utilities performance incentive mechanism.
- Investigate opportunities to replace aging natural gas infrastructure with networked geothermal heating and cooling.



Energy Efficiency

- Install heat pumps to replace all electric resistance heating other than that used for backup heating by 2030 (as named in 2024 NH Saves docket).
- Prohibit the sale and registration of two-stroke gas powered engines by 2025 (old boats can be two-stroke engines; electric leaf blowers are in stores and a leaf blower generates 7x more GHG emissions than a pickup). Prohibit publicly funded entities from operating two-stroke gas powered engines by 2028.
- Provide induction stoves for all public education life-skills classes so students can teach their families how to cook on them.
- Reduce commuting by establishing an employee's right to a hybrid environment for jobs that can be performed following a hybrid model.
- Establish a position within the Department of Energy for a State Asset Energy Manager (see the 2009 NH CAP, GLA Actions 1.1 and 1.3)
- Use the existing NHSaves calculator to create an energy efficiency rating for all real estate listings that grades from A (almost zero energy cost) to D (very high energy cost) and F (unable to maintain HVAC temperatures).
- Adequately fund delayed maintenance and other improvements necessary for state-assisted weatherization projects so that they occur within 18 months of a household becoming eligible for fuel/electric assistance.
- Fund positions for community "circuit riders" whose job is to educate NH residents on how to use Inflation Reduction Act and other energy efficiency/electrification rebates and help them plan home projects. Rebates and tax credits usually have to be researched across state and local sources and combined with other funding mechanisms, making it very complex for most residents to take on these projects on their own.
- Support Demand Response efforts by calling on ISO-NE to increase efforts to coordinate regional demand response and empower ratepayers to shave the peak at times of high energy usage.



Transportation

- Place a moratorium on highway and roadway expansion projects for 10 years in order to prioritize infrastructure investments that put communities and people first. Congestion mitigation funds should be restricted to public, shared, and active transportation infrastructure, not be used to widen roadways.
- Use [best practices for successful implementation](#) when introducing a new, emissions-reducing transportation policy.
- Expand the [Upper Valley's E-bike Lending Library](#) to communities and public high schools across the state by following this [model from Colorado](#) as well as [other North America programs](#)) with the goal of avoiding the need for NH highschoolers to have their own cars.
- Study and plan for the adoption of electric scooters in densely populated areas.
- Expand separated bike lanes along common commuter routes by 15% for 2030. All new bike lanes constructed with state funds must be separated from vehicular traffic. All state roads except divided highways should plan to add a separated non-vehicular lane when they are being redone by NH DoT.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy (that includes separated non-vehicular lanes) for the state. Recommend and fund traffic calming techniques for local roads to make them safer for cyclists.
- Help address the needs of our growing elderly population before 2030 by expanding accessible public transportation that's also open to the general public so that it serves every incorporated town center at least every other day (see 2009 NH CAP, TLU Action 2.B.1.a)
- Increase funding for our existing public transportation to encourage more frequent bus schedules.
- Encourage active and shared transportation by enabling parking offsets (cash payments to employees who don't use a parking spot that is equal to or more than the amount saved on their healthcare and by not providing them a parking spot).



Transportation, Cont.

- Consider whether damaged and washed-out roads can be reclaimed for green spaces or multi-use trails, rather than rebuilding those same roads. Plant native trees and flora in those spaces.
- Sponsor a challenge for a month of #NHWithoutDriving, where participants rely as much as possible on active, shared, and public transportation. Pair this effort with fare-free public transportation for the duration of the challenge. Month-long challenges have become a popular way to try a shift in personal habits within a supportive community and can lead to sustained change.
- Charge a NH state gas tax on aviation fuels to fund climate action.
- Sustain and improve existing passenger rail service (Amtrak) and plan for future service immediately through dedicated, long-term financial support.
- Work with the MBTA to expand the Commuter Rail line from Lowell into Nashua, Manchester, and Concord.
- Protect inactive rail corridors.
- Begin economic forecasting this year on the benefits of restoring lost rail connections to support both freight and passenger service to Canada.
- Study and implement additional extensions and restorations of service with the goal of establishing a state-wide passenger rail system, beginning with connections between the Seacoast, Manchester, Concord, Nashua, the I-93 corridor, and the Route 125 corridor ([See 2009 NH CAP](#))



Natural Resources & Land Use

- Change public salt supply to sand-only mix. Treat all roads with salt brining instead of de-icing with road salt as already practiced by some NH communities, including Durham.
- Require any housing built with state funds or benefiting from state incentives (InvestNH) use the most up-to-date ICC building codes for energy efficiency. The definition of gross rent includes estimated utility costs in order to reflect renters' true housing costs.
- Provide NHDES maps of projected groundwater changes to inform their septic and well permitting. Support NHDES in developing policy regulations to ensure septic systems are maintained.
- Mow public lands not more than once every other year to support pollinators and wildflowers, with exceptions for playing fields, trails, and invasive species management.
- End leaf-blowing on public lands; instead lead by example and convert leaves into leaf litter to mulch in place.
- Increase wildlife resiliency by requiring all landscaping on public land use native or naturalized flora. Encourage the same for private land.
- Require all culvert designs be wildlife friendly (natural bottom or open bottom).
- Increase wildlife resiliency by requiring adequate wildlife crossings for all roadways that traverse documented endangered fauna habitat. Require wildlife crossings on both sides of riparian buffers along state highways that are two lanes or larger.
- Require methods such as rain gardens and permeable pavement to reduce projected stormwater runoff.
- Immediately replace the use of FEMA flood maps in any regulations or other state uses with up-to-date flood data like Risk Factor from First Street Foundation.
- Support communities in planning for and direct recovery funds for relocating rather than rebuilding after natural disasters.
- Place 30% of land in each county in permanent conservation by 2030, and 65% of all land in NH in permanent conservation by 2040 (See [2014 Report by the NH SB388 Study Committee](#)). Conservation efforts shall attempt to be equitably distributed amongst towns and ecosystem types and shall include agricultural uses.



Commercial & Industrial

- New construction must include EV charging stations for employees and be south-facing where possible to absorb passive solar benefits.
- Building codes for new construction should also require solar-ready roofs or parking lots if there is solar exposure, as well as adequate plumbing, electrical, and insulation to support heat pumps and induction stoves.
- Continue support for existing buildings to transition to renewable technologies and energy efficient appliances through programs like NH Saves.
- Install water recycling systems for public buildings where relevant and create incentives for commercial and industrial enterprises to do the same.
- Require that new sites large enough to receive NH DOT review be constructed for active and public transportation options, with covered bike racks and bus shelters.
- Develop and implement a program to reclaim and repurpose vacant gas stations for parks or gardens.
- Develop and implement a program to repurpose vacant shopping malls as shared green spaces or public housing.
- Encourage policies that build up instead of out to reduce sprawl and increase green spaces.
- Create a program to support combined heat and power (also known as CHP and cogeneration) similar to the NHSaves commercial and industrial programs.
- Require that waste heat from power generation be repurposed for HVAC uses or greenhouses (like this project in [North Dakota](#)) instead of discharging that heat into waterways where it damages ecosystems.
- Encourage businesses to appoint a building energy manager, a single person in charge of energy efficiency within the organization.
- Ban PFAS in industrial processes and require polluters to be responsible for the messes they make.



Waste Generation

- Ban single-use plastic bags from checkout lines, the use of state funds to pay for single-use plastic utensils, and the distribution of single-use plastic in public lands like state park concession stands and cafeterias.
- Enable right-to-repair across all industries.
- Enable community and commercial composting. Fund using a revolving loan created for municipal source reduction and recycling programs, with revenue for the revolving loan program generated from a one-cent fee on all bottles sold in the state.
- Reform landfill siting regulations to better protect public waters, particularly those that are pristine, and drinking water aquifers. Require community input and ultimate veto-ing power in citing new landfills.
- Create programs to educate residents on the benefits of maintaining leaf litter and brush piles on their property. Fund with a \$1 fee on all leaf bags sold in the state.
- Set up certification processes and encourage the safe composting of human waste for agricultural use.
- Make composting and incinerator toilets legal throughout New Hampshire provided their applications are NHDES-approved.
- Establish a container deposit, refund, recycle, and reuse system for New Hampshire.
- Develop an extended producer responsibility program for packaging.



Agriculture & Forestry

- Sponsor a challenge for a month of #NHEatsLocal to educate the public on the role of local agriculture in reducing transportation emissions and improving carbon capture through better soil health.
- Continue to promote farmer's markets and the use of SNAP at them.
- Establish community garden spaces in low income housing communities and urban centers that can educate the public about growing their own food and provide space for apartment dwellers to grow food.
- All meals funded by state funds must include a vegan option.
- Support solar arrays as an option for agricultural lands as a way to rest and heal the land as well as to conserve high-value agricultural land for future generations.
- Increase funding for preserving agricultural lands through programs such as LCHIP
- Fund and support sustainable forestry management and education programs that reduce NH's wildfire risk.



Adaptation & Mitigation of Climate Impacts

- Re-establish and fund a climate health program in the state's Department of Health and Human Services.
- Require cooling centers in all municipalities over 5,000 people and every 30 miles in remote areas.
- Work with NH university systems to develop climate resilience plans that identify threshold capacity, coping capacity, recovery capacity, adaptive capacity, and transformative capacity for NH to cope with increasing climate disasters.
- Establish a fuel assistance program for the summer time that helps residents with health issues stay cool during heat waves. Include access to fans or air conditioning or funding support to get to a cooling center.
- Use updated forecasting data like Cornell's NorthEast Center for Climate Data to size culverts and estimate stormwater.
- Add consideration of protecting natural resources and identifying environmental threats to the comprehensive state development plan.
- Recognize that extreme heat, storms, flooding, and other climate-related hazards are causing disproportionate impacts on already disadvantaged communities. Communities that are predominantly Black, Brown, Latinx, Asian, or poor tend to have less access to healthcare, social services, and financial resources while they face the highest burdens of environmental pollution and health conditions. Adaptation and resilience measures must direct support to these communities in an equitable way. (Utilize benchmarks like the Justice 40 initiative to support these communities.)



Accountability and Enforcement

- Resilience needs of communities must take priority over infrastructure and development projects.
- Equitable policies must address resilience of all communities.
- NHDES should establish financial incentives to accomplish the goals they set to meet.
- Community member input should be gathered throughout the process of implementing a climate action plan.

