

2026

CARBON PLAN ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



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SHAPING THE CARBON PLAN THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The Carbon Plan is our opportunity to reshape North Carolina's energy future and protect community health.

Lawmakers are currently crafting a statewide roadmap for moving away from fossil fuels and hitting our climate targets—the NC Carbon Plan. From air quality and public health to economic opportunities and environmental sustainability, the Carbon Plan will significantly impact every North Carolina community. So we need to make sure it represents our voices!

How To Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help you effectively communicate about the Carbon Plan and participate in the policy process. Over the next few pages, you'll:

- *Learn about the key agency responsible for creating the Carbon Plan and their public participation process.*
- *Find reliable resources to ensure you're basing your advocacy on trustworthy information.*
- *Discover practical tips and strategies to effectively participate and influence policy decisions.*
- *Leverage the reach of social media to advocate for a strong Carbon Plan.*

Our goal is to help you feel comfortable and confident telling your story and to support your engagement through targeted strategies and resources.

Please let us know if you need help or have any questions. Contact CleanAIRE NC Advocacy Manager Brittany Griffin at brittany@cleanairenc.org

UNDERSTANDING & ENGAGING WITH THE NC UTILITIES COMMISSION

The NCUC plays a critical role in developing and implementing the Carbon Plan, making it a key audience for your advocacy efforts.

What is the North Carolina Utilities Commission?

The NCUC is a state agency created by the General Assembly to regulate the rates and services of all investor-owned public utilities in North Carolina. It is responsible to both the public and utilities and, by law (G. S. 62-2), must:

- *Provide fair regulation of public utilities in the interest of the public.*
- *Promote adequate, reliable, and economical utility service.*
- *Promote least-cost energy planning, accommodating for service changes and growth at the lowest possible cost to customers.*
- *Provide just and reasonable rates and charges for public utility services and promote conservation of energy.*

The NCUC's Role in the Carbon Plan

The NCUC is responsible for crafting a comprehensive Carbon Plan that meets the state's emissions reduction goals. The Commission values community voices and actively solicits public input through hearings, written comments, and outreach initiatives. It also considers input from Duke Energy and other stakeholders. However the NCUC has the final say.

House Bill 951 (HB951) sets specific targets the Carbon Plan must achieve, and directs the Commissioners to take all reasonable steps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the state's power sector. These include achieving net zero carbon emissions by the year 2050. A previous interim target to cut carbon emissions 70% below 2005 levels by the year 2030 has since been repealed by the later Senate Bill 266 (SB266), leaving near-term emission reductions in limbo.

[About the NC Utilities Commission](#)

3.

How to Engage with the NCUC

Attend Public Hearings

Meeting face-to-face with the Commissioners is a vitally important opportunity to offer your testimony, raise concerns, and ask questions. The NCUC has scheduled public hearings throughout the state for North Carolinians to weigh in on the Carbon Plan:

<u>Durham</u>	<u>Wilmington</u>	<u>Virtual</u>	<u>Asheville</u>	<u>Charlotte</u>
Feb. 4, 2026 7:00pm	March 4, 2026 7:00pm	March 16, 2026 6:30pm	March 17, 2026 7:00pm	March 18, 2026 7:00pm
Durham County Courthouse	New Hanover County Courthouse	Register to testify here (by March 9)	Buncombe County Courthouse	Mecklenburg County Courthouse



Submit Written Comments

Share your written opinions and suggestions through the NCUC’s online portal or by mail. The Commission does not directly respond to consumer statements but does consider them, along with all other evidence, in reaching its decisions.

Instructions for submitting comments will be added once that information is available.



See page 6 of this toolkit for tips on crafting effective messages for public engagement.

Additional Resources

NC Utilities Commission Website: ncuc.gov/

NC Carbon Plan Information: publicstaff.nc.gov/public-staff-divisions/energy-division/electric-section/carbon-plan

House Bill 951: ncleg.gov/Sessions/2021/Bills/House/PDF/H951v5.pdf

Senate Bill 266: ncleg.gov/Sessions/2025/Bills/Senate/PDF/S266v7.pdf

4.

FINDING TRUSTWORTHY INFORMATION

To build a solid foundation for your advocacy, it's crucial to gather information from reliable sources about the Carbon Plan, and about the energy options being considered.

Why Trust Matters.

- **Accuracy ensures effective advocacy:** By using credible sources, your arguments carry more weight and influence.
- **Misinformation can hinder progress:** Biased or inaccurate information can lead to harmful or misguided policy decisions
- **Empowering informed choices:** Understanding the trade-offs of different energy sources strengthens your ability to advocate for solutions that truly meet your communities needs.

Remember to diversify your information sources & maintain a critical perspective. Here are some reputable sources where you can find detailed insights, reports, studies, and data:

Independent Research Institutes

These organizations utilize peer-reviewed studies, field experiments, and modeling tools to offer valuable insights and perspectives.

- World Resources Institute (WRI): <https://www.wri.org/>
- Energy Innovation Policy & Technology: <https://energyinnovation.org/>

Government Agencies

With a primary objective to make decisions in the best interests of the public, many agencies consider all factors including cost, reliability, energy security, social impacts, and environmental concerns.

- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ): <https://www.deq.nc.gov/>

5.

News Outlets and Publications

Keep an eye on reputable news outlets for updates and analyses on the Carbon Plan, including the draft plan proposed by Duke Energy.

- Newspapers such as the *Charlotte Observer* and the *News & Observer*.
- Local NPR stations including WFAE, WUNC, BPR, WHQR, and WFDD.
- Inside industry publications such as the Utility Dive.

Environmental Organizations

These organizations frequently work closely on utility-related environmental initiatives, developing deep expertise in areas like renewable energy, climate change, and environmental justice.

- Environmental Defense Fund (EDF): <https://www.edf.org/>
- Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC): <https://www.southernenvironment.org/>
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC): <https://www.nrdc.org/>

Public Hearing Transcripts and Documents:

Check the NCUC's official docket for the Duke Energy Carbon Plan for public hearing transcripts, official documents, and updates:

<https://www.ncuc.gov/Consumer/carbonplan.html>.



Another Perspective: Duke Energy's Proposed Carbon Plan

Duke Energy is pushing its own Carbon Plan, one that's heavy on fossil fuels and light on renewables. While their motivations warrant scrutiny, their presence as a major player in North Carolina's energy landscape makes their perspective key to building a successful emissions reduction plan. Explore Duke Energy's draft Carbon Plan at <https://www.duke-energy.com/our-company/about-us/irp-carolinas>.

Knowledge is power! By equipping yourself with accurate and reliable information, you can become a strong advocate for a clean energy future in North Carolina.

AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE: TIPS & STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Community participation is key to crafting a robust Carbon Plan that delivers on our state's climate goals.

Craft Your Message

Whether you plan to speak at a public hearing or submit written comments, the foundation of any successful advocacy campaign starts with an effective message:

1. **State Your Case:** Start by clearly stating your position and highlighting your key concerns, priorities, and recommendations for the Carbon Plan.
2. **Speak Your Truth:** Firsthand experience is just more impactful. Personalize your message by sharing how the Carbon Plan affects your community, health, and economic well-being. Statements with integrity carry more weight than generic talking points.
3. **Back it Up:** Lead with values and stories, follow with facts. When possible, use facts, data, and credible sources to support your position. Research the arguments made by those with opposing viewpoints, and note any specific opinions or facts you disagree with.
4. **Focus on Solutions and Opportunities:** Don't just talk about problems with Duke Energy's proposed plan. Emphasize the positive outcomes of a strong Carbon Plan, such as cleaner air, public health benefits, and economic opportunities.
5. **Be Respectful:** Always make sure that your comments are courteous, professional, and respectful.
6. **Call to Action:** Close by stressing the urgency of action and the benefits of acting now.

7.

Speaking at a Public Hearing

If you plan on speaking at a public hearing, here are some additional things to keep in mind. **Remember**—you do not have to be an expert in this field to express how this Carbon Plan will directly impact you. Your voice matters!

Attire

Dress for success. Business or smart casual.

Leave an Impression

Introduce yourself (your name, the community you live in, the organization you represent if applicable). Explain why this matters to you, and how you will be impacted by the Carbon Plan. And stay on message!

Respectful Engagement

Your statement will take place in a courtroom and in front of the public—even the virtual hearing will be conducted in a court-like manner. Your audience will always be more receptive to a message delivered respectfully. Let people remember you for your powerful arguments, not an inflammatory exchange of words!

Be Aware of Time

Public hearings typically have time limits for statements, often around 3 to 5 minutes. Time yourself when practicing your statement, and keep your message concise and to the point.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Practice your message before delivering it in public to build your confidence. Ask your friends and family members to listen to your practice and offer feedback. And remember, it's okay to be nervous! But a well-practiced statement will help the Commissioners follow your story and hold their attention.

Bring a Written Copy

Having a written copy of your statement with you on the stand will help you stay on track. The Commission may sometimes ask for a copy of your statement as well.



For more information on speaking at a hearing, visit ncuc.gov/Hearings/testimony.html

SOCIAL MEDIA & CARBON PLAN ADVOCACY

Social media is a powerful tool to connect with others, share information, and build momentum for causes you care about. Here are some ideas for how you can leverage its reach to advocate for a strong Carbon Plan for North Carolina.

Get Connected:

- **Engage with others:** Comment on relevant posts, ask questions, share your own thoughts, and start conversations.
- **Use impactful hashtags:** #NCCarbonPlan #CleanEnergyFuture #FightClimateChange #CommunityVoice
- **Tag relevant organizations and officials:** Increase visibility and encourage dialogue.

Raise Awareness:

- **Share credible information:** Post articles and studies about the importance of the Carbon Plan and its potential impacts on North Carolina.
- **Use visuals:** Images, videos, and memes can grab attention and simplify complex information.
- **Personalize your message:** Share stories of how climate change or air pollution affects your community or family, or a personal message of what you hope to see in the Carbon Plan.

Call Others to Action:

- **Spread the word about public hearings:** Include dates, times, and registration links in your posts.
- **Encourage others to submit written comments:** Feel free to share tips and resources from this toolkit for effective comment submissions.

9.

Sample Posts:

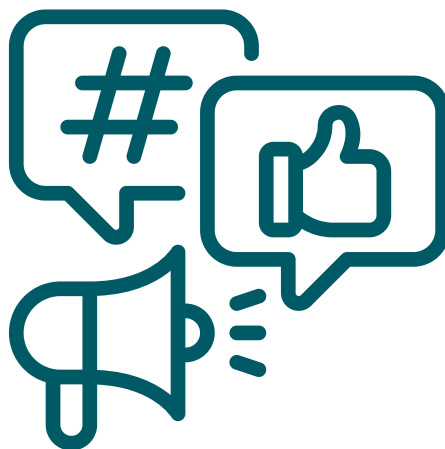
Below are some sample social media posts to get you started:

- The NC Carbon Plan is our chance to get serious about climate action—and we can't afford to wait any longer. I'm going to the public hearing in [YOUR CITY] to make my voice heard! #NCCarbonPlan #ClimateAction
- Why is the Carbon Plan important to me? It's about protecting our health, our planet, and our future. #StandUpForCleanEnergy
- Fossil fuels or clean energy? The NC Carbon Plan decides. We need ambitious goals for a sustainable future! #CleanEnergyFuture

Remember:

- Be respectful and avoid personal attacks.
- Fact-check your information and use trusted sources.
- Respond to comments and questions constructively.
- Keep your posts positive and engaging.
- Use social media as a tool to build partnerships and inspire action.

By using social media strategically, you can amplify your voice, connect with others, and contribute to a strong Carbon Plan for North Carolina.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS: TAKE ACTION FOR A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE!

The Key Takeaways

- The Carbon Plan plays a vital role in shaping North Carolina's energy future, impacting our environment, health, and economy.
- Community voices are critical to ensuring the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of all.
- You have the power to influence the Carbon Plan through meaningful engagement and advocacy.

You're now equipped to actively participate in the Carbon Plan process. Now is the time to act! Here are some ways you can start making a difference today.

Spread the Word:

- Share this toolkit and its resources with your friends, family, and neighbors.
- Discuss the Carbon Plan, and why it's important to you, with your community to raise awareness.
- You can find Talking Points and key messages to use at bit.ly/CarbonPlan-TalkingPoints.

Connect with Decision-Makers:

- Make your voice heard! Attend upcoming public hearings across the state and share your personal stories. **(Page 3 of this toolkit will include hearing dates once they are publicly available; see page 6 for public speaking tips.)**
- Submit written comments to the NC Utilities Commission outlining your concerns and recommendations. **(See page 3 for instructions on submitting comments, and page 7 for help crafting your message.)**
- Contact your elected officials and urge them to support a strong and ambitious Carbon Plan.

11.

Engage with Media

- News coverage and well-placed opinion pieces can play a crucial role in shaping opinions on the Carbon Plan, demonstrating broad public support for clean energy to the policymakers of the NCUC.
- Write an op-ed or letter to the editor of your local newspaper sharing your perspective on the Carbon Plan. [Here is a helpful guide](#) for writing and submitting an op-ed, including a template you can build from.

By utilizing these strategies and staying actively involved, you can play a critical role in shaping a strong Carbon Plan that clears the way for a cleaner, healthier, and more just future for North Carolina. Let's build our collective voice to make a difference!

For more information, please visit CleanAIREnc.org

