

Carolinas Clean Air Coalition

2007 Annual Report



A Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

The Carolinas Clean Air Coalition's (CCAC) ongoing quest to restore clean and healthy air to the Central Carolinas region took on a greater sense of urgency in 2007 as the acceleration of climate change highlighted the critical connection between local energy choices and their impact on global warming.

CCAC worked with dozens of other environmental and public health groups in opposing Duke Energy's plans to expand its Cliffside coal plant 55 miles west of Charlotte. As you'll read in this report, hundreds of citizens motivated by their concerns about climate change, air pollution, mountaintop removal of coal, plus mercury contamination of our waterways, attended public hearings, educational seminars, and rallies to express their opposition to the continued use of coal to produce electricity.

We were very grateful to have Dr. James Hansen, Director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and our nation's leading climatologist, present seminars in Charlotte and Chapel Hill. Dr. Hansen accepts less than five percent of the invitations he receives to speak to groups, so we were especially pleased he chose to bring his important message of a moratorium on new coal plants to North Carolina.

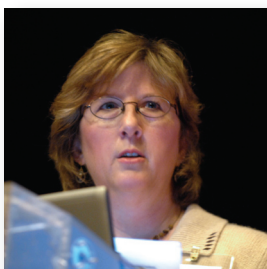
CCAC strengthened its partnership with the national Clean Air Task Force and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy in 2007. We joined forces to coordinate a new statewide campaign to reduce toxic diesel emissions from buses, trucks, and off-road construction equipment. Working with NC Rep. Ruth Samuelson of Charlotte and several other statewide groups, we built public support for legislation which allocated \$2.5 million for school bus retrofits in 24 counties with polluted air. This is the first step in getting a designated funding source to clean up dirty diesel from all other sectors.

We reached out collectively to North Carolina's medical community for the first time in 2007 with the establishment of our new Medical Advisory Team. Physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, asthma educators, and other medical professionals now have a vehicle for informing the public and policymakers regarding the health impact of air pollution. This initiative has enormous potential for affecting public policy debate on issues of air quality and climate change. We look forward to expanding this initiative in the coming years.

CCAC celebrated our 5th anniversary in 2007 and expanded our staff to include an officer manager. We expect to hire additional program staff in 2008 to more effectively advocate for clean air on your behalf. Please feel free to call us with your ideas. We welcome your input!

June Blotnick
Executive Director

Marian Brawer
Board Chair



Our Mission

The **Carolinas Clean Air Coalition** is a nonprofit initiative working to restore clean and healthy air to the Central Carolinas region by raising awareness about air pollution and climate change, building partnerships, and advocating for policy changes and individual action.



Mobilizing Citizens Against Climate Change

Community Events Tackle Problems and Offer Solutions

Carolinas Clean Air Coalition mobilized over 1,000 people in the Charlotte region in 2007 to take a stand against the warming of our planet caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Our campaign against Duke Energy's Cliffside coal plant expansion brought out hundreds of citizens who attended and presented testimony at three public hearings during the course of the year.

On a cold January evening in uptown Charlotte, hundreds rallied against Cliffside outside the public library before going inside to the NC Utilities Commission hearing. It was a standing-room-only crowd, with many people not even permitted into the packed hearing room. Our message against Duke Energy's plans to build two 800 megawatt units at Cliffside was heard loud and clear. Only one unit was approved by the Commission, reducing the amount of carbon dioxide that would have been emitted by almost 7 million tons a year.

Hundreds attended additional public hearings on Duke Energy's air quality permit, including a "People's Hearing" organized by CCAC. Testimony from over 40 citizens was recorded by a court reporter and sent in to the NC Division of Air Quality. Comments focused on the increase in air pollution from ozone-forming nitrous oxide, haze-forming sulfur dioxide, mercury, and other air toxics that will result from the amount of coal burned at this megaplant. Others questioned the logic of increasing the amount of carbon dioxide released into our atmosphere at a time of accelerating climate change. The destructive practice of mountaintop coal removal, the significant public health effects of burning coal, and the need to transition quickly to a clean air and clean energy economy were also addressed by speakers at the hearing.

CCAC's community education efforts around climate change culminated in a free public forum co-sponsored with our partner NC WARN at Queens University of Charlotte. Over 700 people attended the forum "Averting Climate Catastrophe: Power Plants or Clean Energy — Who Decides," which featured our nation's foremost climatologist, NASA's Dr. James Hansen, and Raleigh green architect Mike Nicklas.

Dr. Hansen, Director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and outspoken proponent of rapid greenhouse gas reductions, offered an overview of his 5-Step Action Plan to combat the problem:

- Step 1** – *A Moratorium On New Coal Plants*
- Step 2** – *A Price On Carbon Dioxide Emissions*
- Step 3** – *National Energy Efficiency Standards*
- Step 4** – *Study of Ice-Sheet Instability*
- Step 5** – *Effective Campaign Finance Reform*

Mike Nicklas, green architect and solar energy expert, complemented Dr. Hansen's call for a coal moratorium by offering easy and cost-effective alternatives to new power plants. At the November forum, Nicklas stressed that 46% of greenhouse gases are related to building energy usage and stated that we can combat climate change using innovative building design practices in all new construction. The battle against global warming can be won using energy efficiency and renewable energy. These changes could be implemented immediately, paving our way to a healthier planet.



Clean air advocates gather before the January 2007 Cliffside hearing. Photo by Nancy Pierce

Clear the Air for Kids!

Reducing Children's Exposure to Toxic Diesel Exhaust in School Buses

A Case for the Healthy School Bus

The Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, in partnership with Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, continued to highlight the critical need for diesel pollution controls on all school buses in 2007 with the release of its report, "A Case for the Healthy School Bus: Lessons from the Field." The report summarizes the results of a school bus air quality monitoring project conducted by the Clean Air Task Force in late 2005 and provides tangible solutions for improving air quality in and around school buses. During this pilot project, diesel soot levels from both the engine and the tailpipe built up dramatically inside a conventional school bus.

CCAC is urging state and local officials to prioritize the use of diesel particulate filters combined with closed crankcase ventilation systems to significantly reduce unhealthy pollution inside our school buses and provide our children with a healthier ride to school. The report was distributed to all Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board members, Mecklenburg County Air Quality officials, state legislators, and school superintendents in the 24 counties that don't meet federal standards for ozone pollution. The Coalition met with NC Division of Air Quality and Department of Public Instruction officials to discuss the results of the report and its recommended policy changes.



We created the website www.cleanschoolbusaction.org to publicize the need for school bus retrofits and provide an opportunity for parents and others to easily contact school board members and state officials about the need for more funding for this purpose. Photo courtesy Ohio Environmental Council

Cleaning Up School Buses

CCAC partnered with a number of industry and clean air advocates to secure the passage of legislation that allocated \$2.5 million of federal and state funding to retrofit school buses. The NC Division of Air Quality will administer a special fund to be used to retrofit school buses in 24 ozone non-attainment counties.

Our special thanks to NC Rep. Ruth Samuelson of Charlotte, a primary sponsor of the school bus bill, who worked tirelessly to bring officials from the NC Division of Air Quality, the NC Department of Public Instruction, and the NC Department of Transportation together to shape the details of this legislation.

Raising Air Quality Flags

CCAC marked the beginning of the 2007 ozone season with an Air Quality Flag Raising event at Oakhurst Elementary school in Charlotte. The Coalition donated a set of flags corresponding to the Air Quality Index to help educate and raise awareness among students and school staff about the daily air quality code. The Air Quality Flag Program will be expanded in 2008 to reach more schools in the Charlotte region. "Turn Off Your Engine — Kids Breathe Here" cards were also distributed to remind parents and school staff of the harmful effects vehicle idling has on children's health.

Medical Professionals Join the Cause

Top Area Physicians Pledge to Help Clean the Air

Regional Air Pollution Rallies Doctors

When your neighborhood rivals Atlanta in summer air pollution and gets a failing grade from the American Lung Association, it's time to bring in the professionals — medical professionals, that is. In 2007, to address the unacceptably high ozone levels, rising particle pollution, and disproportionate incidences of respiratory disease, the Carolinas Clean Air Coalition convened a group of concerned medical experts willing and able to make their concerns heard about the need for change in air quality policy.

The Medical Advisory Team adds a highly credible and influential voice to inform the public and decisionmakers of the health-related risks associated with poor air quality. Led by Drs. Lawrence Raymond and William Sugg, Jr., CCAC's Medical Advisory Team jumped into action in 2007 by speaking out against poor air quality at the local, state, and federal level. Members were interviewed by local media about the Charlotte region's air quality.

Comments signed by doctors around the state were sent to the NC Division of Air Quality opposing Duke Energy's Cliffside expansion. They raised concerns about the large amount of toxic pollutants, such as mercury, that would be emitted by the Cliffside expansion and the impact those pollutants would have on public health. The letter was turned into an Op-Ed piece by Dr. Lawrence Raymond, Carolinas Medical Center, and Dr. Stephen Keener, Mecklenburg County Health Department, and published in the *Charlotte Observer*.

On the national level, CCAC's Medical Advisory Team submitted comments to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson demanding swift action to strengthen the federal ozone standard to more accurately protect the public's health.

Forming the Medical Advisory Team serves as another example of how CCAC provides a forum for experts and concerned citizens to speak out on local issues that have national implications. Dr. Raymond, the director of occupational and environmental health at the Carolinas Medical Center, noted that "the opportunity to work with the Coalition has been great. I now have a venue to speak out and a group of supporters who share my concerns about air quality and climate change issues here in the Central Carolinas region."



Dr. Cheryl Walker-McGill, director of Carolinas Medical Center's asthma education program and a member of our Medical Advisory Team, spoke at a Clear the Air for Kids! meeting for parents and medical professionals about diesel exhaust and children's health in September 2007.

2007 Supporters

The Carolinas Clean Air Coalition Would Like to Thank Its Generous Supporters

Sustainers (\$500 and above)

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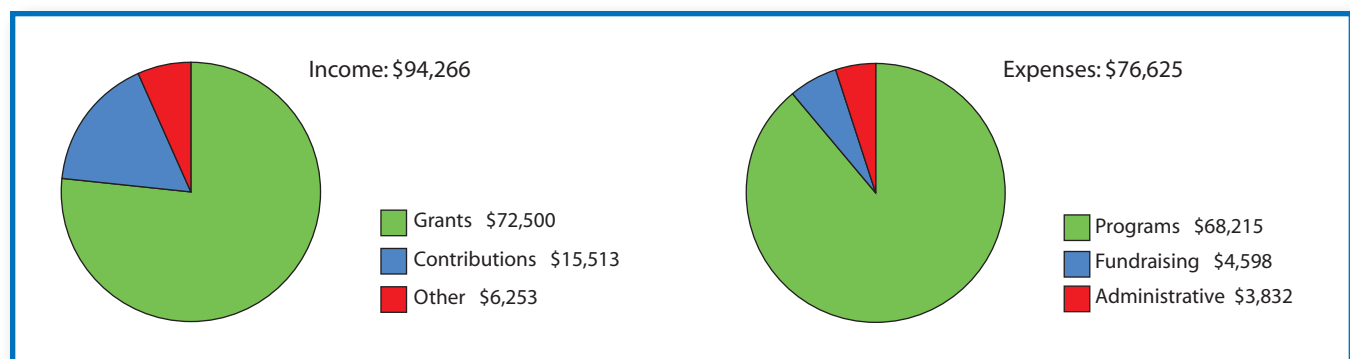
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Financials

January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007



Volunteer of the Year

Katie Oates

The Carolinas Clean Air Coalition honors Katie, a mom and local community activist, who has spent countless hours over the past several years helping CCAC further its mission to restore clean and healthy air to our region. She has volunteered in many ways, from presenting public testimony at hearings, to conducting research and helping with special events. Katie is a founding member of the “Caring for Creation” team at Park Road Baptist Church and has now joined the CCAC Board of Directors.



2007 AirKeepers and Volunteer of the Year (left to right): Rep. Ruth Samuelson, Mark Englander, Katie Oates, Sonya Dyer, Roma Tison, Beth Henry. Photo by June Blotnick

Volunteers

CCAC relies on a dedicated group of volunteers to help carry out its mission. We thank the following people for their support of our cause:

Deb Arnason
Leslie Barden
Diane Black
Jay Brinkley
George Campbell
David Choi
Carol Clasen
Roger Coates
Gene Daniels
Melissa Ferguson

Diane Frederick
Kevin Goodrum
Ken Hausle
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Ted Hogan
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Katie Oates
Susan Odom
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Sonia Perillo

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Nancy Pierce
Susan Shackelford
Mary Shearer
Daphne Simon
Steve Syracuse
Susan Tompkins
Adam Wagner
Kate Wagner

AirKeeper Awards

Congratulations to the following individuals and organizations actively working to help restore clean and healthy air to the Central Carolinas! A Carolina Silverbell tree was planted along the Little Sugar Creek Greenway in their honor.

NC Representative Ruth Samuelson was honored for her leadership in spearheading legislation with a \$2.5 million appropriation for cleaning up diesel school buses in 24 North Carolina counties to make sure children have a healthier ride to school.

EarthKeepers of Myers Park Baptist Church sponsors a ministry encouraging interest in and understanding of the relationship between spirituality, ecology, and their church. Activities include battery and cell phone recycling, having church grounds certified as a wildlife habitat, and educating members about global warming.

Charlotte Energy Solutions and owner Mark Englander help people find ways to reduce their carbon footprint using alternative energy solutions such as solar heating, biofuels, and tankless water heaters. Mark also converts diesel engines so they can use 100% biodiesel fuel like canola oil.

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Samuel Zimmern, MD, FACC

Coalition Staff

June Blotnick, *Executive Director*
Susie Birkhead, *Office Manager*
Kelly Picarsic, *Web Communications Manager*



The Carolinas Clean Air Coalition celebrated its fifth anniversary on May 17, 2007. Photo by Reuben Bloom



PO Box 30204
Charlotte, NC 28230

704.342.9161 (tel)
704.374.1135 (fax)

www.clean-air-coalition.org
www.cleanschoolbusaction.org



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Cover photos (from top left, clockwise):

Leslie Barden (Dr. James Hansen and Winthrop University students), Kelly Picarsic (Charlotte skyline), Bob Rothkopf (Blue Ridge Parkway), Carol Marley (young clean air advocates at Cliffside hearing, January 2007)

Design by Kate Wagner and Melissa Schropp