

Environment: Confront and Address the Growing Climate Crisis

FCNCL 2020 Stewardship Legislative Priority:

We urge greater attention to environmental protection measures, led by the Quaker testimonies of Stewardship and Equality/Social Justice and in support of the Piedmont

Global warming is already making a direct hit on North Carolina. Our state's agriculture, flood-prone neighborhoods, coastal areas, and the health and economic well-being of our people are experiencing increasingly adverse change. Those changes impact our socio-economically vulnerable communities most severely, including immigrants, Native American, and African-American communities. Our response to this crisis must be one of science-based purpose, as well as a call for environmental justice.

We call for action by the North Carolina Legislature to reduce the state's contributions to climate change, consistent with our Quaker testimony of Stewardship and Equality/ Social Justice, as well as with the Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Minute on Climate Change and our FCNCL Minute on Anti-racism. We further call for action by the Legislature to mitigate harms already experienced by the most vulnerable and severely affected communities.

The NC Department of Environmental Quality's Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan was published in June 2020 in response to Governor Roy Cooper's NC Executive Order 80. This plan is extensive and is a thorough overview of how North Carolina will be affected by climate change. It also offers insight into the steps we need to take to make our state more resilient. You can find the Climate Risk Assessment plan here:

<https://deq.nc.gov/energy-climate/climate-change/nc-climate-change-interagency-council/climate-change-clean-energy-17> .

This Plan and other published studies cited below project these consequences of global warming for North Carolina:

- Disruptive sea level rise with encroachment of saltwater onto wetlands, forests, farmland, and freshwater resources
- Higher daytime temperatures that threaten those who work outside as well as those who are sick, old, homeless, or members of socio-economically depressed groups
- Increasing numbers of very warm nights, impacting both human health and agriculture
- Periods of extreme rainfall and inland flooding
- More intense and more frequent hurricanes
- Increased high tide flooding with damage to natural areas and coastal communities
- Periods of severe drought with loss of crops and increased potential for wildfires
- An increase in vector-borne diseases
- More urban heat island effects
- Loss of habitat and natural buffers for wildlife and plants
- Damage to coastal and inland infrastructure

We need our General Assembly to take decisive action to slow the onset of climate emergency. FCNCL will suggest periodic response to specific proposed legislation through its action alerts. In general, we need our legislators to take action in the following areas:

Legislative Action Needed:

1. Promote a rapid, just transition to 100% clean energy in our state
 - Require state utilities to update and maintain the electricity grid in ways that support solar and wind energy generated by multiple sources
 - Accelerate closure of coal-fired electricity plants
 - Expand Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure throughout the state
 - Allow Volkswagen settlement funds to be used for EV infrastructure
 - Oppose added registration fees for EVs and hybrid vehicles
 - Oppose permits for new natural gas pipelines and infrastructure, including the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP Pipeline)
 - Provide for more community solar projects with increased benefits for consumers who invest in them.
 - Oppose moratoria and other measures limiting solar and wind power generation without clear and compelling justification.
 - Require utilities to increase the storage potential of generated clean energy
2. Support conservation strategies to protect and restore forests and coastal wetlands
3. Support agricultural practices that sequester carbon, improve food efficiency, and manage waste responsibly
4. Enhance urban canopy to reduce urban heat island effect
5. Support the employment capacity of our state through clean energy job creation

Other Resources:

350.org, <https://350.org>

NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, *State Climate Summaries, NORTH CAROLINA* (Revised 2019) <https://statesummaries.ncics.org/chapter/nc/>

North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies, *North Carolina Climate Studies Report*
<https://ncics.org/programs/nccsr/>

North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light, <https://ncipl.org>

State of North Carolina, Executive Order 80, October 29, 2018
<https://governor.nc.gov/documents/executive-order-no-80-north-carolinas-commitment-address-climate-change-and-transition>

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