



# Updating New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan

## Greater Monadnock Community Conversation in Winchester, NH

*Summary Report by NH Listens, January 2024  
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### Purpose and Background

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In August 2023, New Hampshire was granted federal funding to update New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The four-year program runs from 2023-2027. Objectives of the plan are to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting the creation of good jobs and lowering energy costs for families.
- Empower community-driven solutions in neighborhoods overburdened from pollution and impacts of climate change by directly seeking input from those communities.
- Deliver cleaner air by reducing harmful air pollution in places where people live, work, play and go to school.

These plans are part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **They lead to additional implementation funding that will support community-engaged projects** with an effort to focus on Justice40 investments among the sectors of air pollution and greenhouse gas reductions ([see more on Justice40 here](#)).

New Hampshire Listens is working on behalf of the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to design and facilitate community engagement—an essential component of NH's Priority (PCAP) and Comprehensive Climate Action Plans (CCAP).

*Each climate action plan requires meaningful community engagement. The design and initial efforts to identify climate action priorities must actively involve the participation of people who live in communities that experience a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards that affect their quality of life [...] There is much to talk and engage about across New Hampshire!*

(NH DES - <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>)

Between December 2023 and early February 2024, NH Listens hosted a series of conversations and gatherings that offered time for people to learn, listen, and talk with each other to help develop a priority climate action plan for the state. From these conversations,



NHDES will identify priority projects and linking measures based on community engagement along with a series of analyses by (March 1, 2024; [see more about the CPRG process and training/technical tools](#)). The PCAP allows the state to apply for implementation funding from the federal government (April 1, 2024) to move projects forward in New Hampshire ([see more about the implementation grants](#)).

The conversations focused on talking about local issues and potential solutions in many different areas of concern:

- Agriculture
- Commercial and Residential Buildings
- Electricity Generation and/or Use
- Industry
- Natural and Working Lands
- Transportation
- Wastewater
- Wastewater & Materials Management

## **Goals, Facilitation, and Participation**

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**On January 25, 2024, NH Listens and NHDES held an in-person community conversation in Winchester, NH. The purpose of the gathering was to share information about the Climate Action Plan and have a conversation about implementation grant goals and projects that can be implemented in Greater Monadnock.** This meeting continued ongoing conversations about key priorities for reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire. Additionally, NH Listens and NHDES were interested in identifying/building a list of local and statewide partnerships, so that projects locally and statewide include a robust mix of perspectives needed to move this work forward.

**Participants engaged in a workshop that allowed them to review near-term, high priority, implement ready priorities, projects, programs, and policies that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions ([see slides and transcriptions on the Carsey School of Public Policy Page](#)).** Projects prepared were derived from previous online meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community conversations. They were organized by sector. The sectors are as follows: Transportation, Electricity Generation and/or Use and Industry, Commercial and Residential Buildings, Natural & Working Lands and Agriculture, and Waste & Materials Management and Wastewater. Participants reviewed projects as they related to the said sectors and worked through the prompts provided.

### **The four overarching questions for the evening's workshop were:**

- What is needed to effectively achieve this project? What would make success possible in NH?
- What successful examples have you seen?
- What prevents progress or acts as a barrier?
- Who needs to be involved? Identify partners on the ground.



During the workshops, NH Listens helped keep time, facilitated group discussion, and made sure everyone who attended had a chance to contribute. **Two people attended the session. The participants were a town administrator from Winchester, and a Clean Energy NH Circuit Rider from Chesterfield, NH.** Collectively, they named key projects and priorities relevant to Greater Monadnock and surrounding localities.

## Themes and Key Points

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During the workshop, community members discussed priorities, barriers, and potential partnerships. Participants provided input across several sectors.

### Transportation & Electricity Generation and/or Use and Industry

- Updating the grid was considered a priority for the Greater Monadnock region.
- Expanding existing infrastructure is necessary to usher in clean energy measures such as solar power and electric vehicle charging.
- Participants noted the various opportunities to expand EV infrastructure (like EV fleets and charging stations) in the region at the municipal, school, and private sector levels.

## Opportunities for Engagement Moving Forward

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Winchester is one of the eight communities where NH Listens and NHDES is hosting in-person meetings during the first phase of engagement under the Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant. Participants spent time reflecting on current projects and discussing potential implications for Greater Monadnock. When debriefing the activity, NH Listens asked participants to identify supplementary priorities for greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction in Greater Monadnock.

### Additional priorities for the Greater Monadnock region include:

- Working with local collaborators who are working around pollution reduction and coordinating efforts through partnerships and knowledge-sharing exchanges.
- Identifying towns that are pursuing existing grants and opportunities that align with the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants to amplify parallel efforts.
- Partnering with schools, at both the secondary and high education levels, to provide solar infrastructure and education for students to learn about careers in the energy sector.

## Additional Resources

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New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Climate Pollution Reduction Grants. <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>.



New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (2023). NHDES using EPA grant to update state's Climate Action Plan. <https://www.des.nh.gov/news-and-media/blog/nhdes-using-epa-grant-update-states-climate-action-plan>.

Executive Office of the President of the United States (n.d.) Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: Frequently asked questions: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CEQ-CEJST-QandA.pdf>.

The White House (n.d.). Justice 40: A whole-of-government initiative. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (2023). Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program: Planning grant question and answer document. <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/climate-pollution-reduction-grants-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>.

## **NH Listens & NH Department of Environmental Services Contacts**

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