



Updating New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan

Online Cross-Sector Stakeholders

Summary Report by NH Listens, February 2024
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Purpose and Background

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](#)).

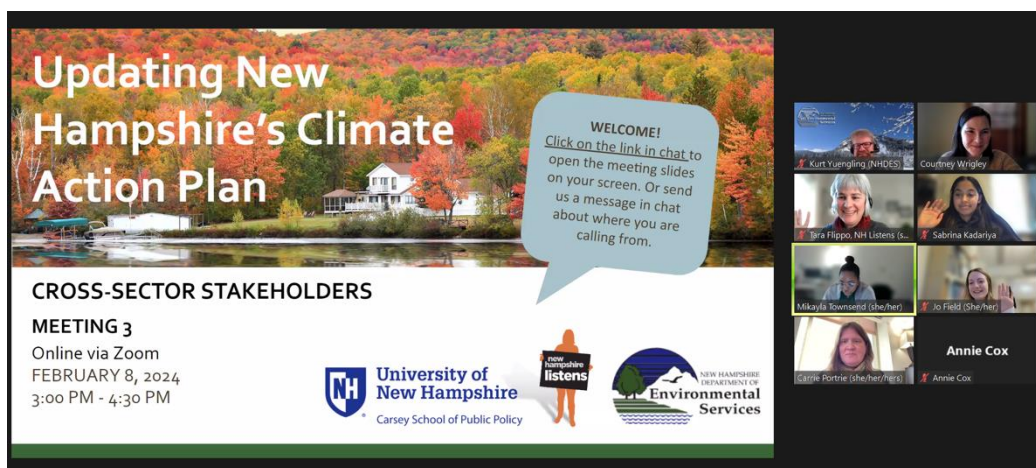


Figure 1. Screenshot of Opening Slide Stakeholder Gathering 3

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 gatherings focused 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

Between December 2023 and February 2024, NH Listens and NHDES held three online Cross-Sector Stakeholder conversations for New Hampshire community members. These sessions were one part of a multi-pronged community engagement approach. The purpose of the gatherings was to share information about the Climate Action Plan and implementation grant goals and to gather input and create connections about projects that can be implemented in New Hampshire. The meetings 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 and 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 three interactive Cross-Sector Stakeholder online conversations. These events were welcoming and inclusive of anyone identifying as a stakeholder or interested



in joining the conversation. Stakeholders included people working in related fields and industries either professionally or in volunteer capacity, anyone who is or is working with groups disproportionately affected by climate pollution, and many others. Participants were welcome to join any one of the three online conversations or as a series. Each session opened with an informational overview, including project and implementation goals, timeline, Justice 40 guidelines and NH Low-Income Disadvantaged Community (LIDAC) mapping, and ‘what we’ve heard so far’ during community engagement.

The majority of session time was spent in small group breakouts to hear directly from stakeholders about project ideas, barriers, partners, and local context in NH to inform the development of NH’s PCAP and CCAP. For a detailed review of agendas, information shared and gathered ([see slides and notes on the Carsey School of Public Policy Page](#)). The online cross-sector stakeholder gatherings included participant breakout sessions that were guided by the following questions:

Cross-Sector Stakeholders Meeting 1 – November 30, 2023

- By sector, what are your ideas for near-term, high priority, implement ready projects, programs, and policies that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in NH?
- What would most benefit and make the biggest difference for communities most affected by climate pollution?

Room 2: ELECTRICITY GENERATION / USE & INDUSTRY

BRAINSTORM: What near-term, high-priority, implement ready priorities, projects, programs, policies would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this sector in NH?

- NH should opt CA air regs
- Small and medium size community solar projects
- Community Microgrids
- Time of use rate tariffs, EV tariffs.
- Electrify everything
- Strengthen renew tax credit
- Lumping solar in the same community for public entities
- Short & long term plan for electric transmission (site infrastructure)
- Affordable energy storage & micro-grids
- Incorporation of env sustainability requirements, state government contracts
- Smart meters & time of use incorporating storage
- High school students - solar for schools
- Low coal powered plant with no shut down date
- Batteries in solar array
- The connection cue is a huge problem

What would most benefit and make the biggest difference for communities most affected by climate pollution?

Figure 2. Screenshot of Google Slides from Online Cross-Sector Stakeholder Gathering 1

Cross-Sector Stakeholders Meeting 2 – January 11, 2024

Review the relevant sector-based projects gathered so far:



- What is needed to effectively achieve projects in this sector? 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.

COMMERCIAL AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS - ROUND 1

Heat-pumps incentive increased adoption for space and water heating by supporting the supply chain, building a workforce, and activating consumer demand.	Create opportunities for renters to secure effective approaches to heating, cooling, and EV charging; support work with landlords and tenants	Install geothermal heat pump-infrastructure in public buildings and schools	Solar on schools combined with infrastructure upgrades, like roof replacements
Decarbonize and electrify buildings, including residential buildings	Funding for audits and monitoring programs (energy, heat loss, and air quality)	Provide incentives for commercial office building owners to install affordable EV charging for their tenants	Incentives and/or cost support for solar energy for town offices, schools, and homes
Support and promote net-zero energy in public buildings as a community approach	Shifting to more efficient lighting and other electrical uses		

We will focus our discussion tonight on a few projects.
GRAB A DOT: What projects will move NH forward on climate emissions reduction, especially projects that serve disadvantaged communities?

Round 1

Figure 3. Screenshot from Interactive Google Slides Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meeting 2

Cross-Sector Stakeholders Meeting 3 – February 8, 2024

- What thoughts and suggestions do you want NHDES to keep in mind as the Priority Climate Action Plan is submitted to US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?
- What does meaningful engagement look like going forward?
- What remaining questions do you have as we continue working together to update NH's Climate Action Plans?

During the online Stakeholder gatherings, NH Listens and NH DES provided information, facilitated small group discussions, recorded information, and made sure all participants could contribute.

Participation

Across all three online Stakeholder gatherings **153 different people attended. Four people attending all three, and thirteen people attended two.** Collectively, their input contributed to identifying key climate pollution reduction projects in NH, identifying barriers and partners on the ground, and providing context and considerations at the local level in NH communities



Table 1. Online Cross-Sector Stakeholder Gathering Participant Count¹

Date and Time	Participant Count*
November 30, 2024, 2:30-4pm	46
January 11, 2024, 3:30-5pm	76
February 8, 2024, 3-4:30pm	53

*Note the participant counts do not add up to a total of 153 as some participants attended more than one gathering.

Themes and Key Points from Online Cross-Sector Stakeholder Gatherings:

Over the three online Cross-Sector Stakeholder gatherings, participants identified key project priorities, implementation barriers, partnerships, and shared takeaways from their work and experiences in NH inform the process. Small group conversations ranged from brainstorming and addressing specific project details to sharing experiences and examples of working on climate pollution efforts across NH and at the local level. For a detailed review of input gathered at each online Stakeholder conversation, please refer to the facilitator notes in the meeting slides in the appendix. The following is a summary of high-level themes and input heard during the three online Cross-Sector Stakeholder gatherings.

Transportation

Participants brainstormed many specific, desired projects to reduce climate pollution in NH's transportation sector. Projects included increasing electric vehicle fleets for municipalities, schools, and university systems to addressing the charging stations, building codes, and infrastructure systems needed. The need for more public transportation, regional bus routes, and safe, accessible infrastructure for transportation alternatives were included. Technical support for municipalities, connections to current programs and funding streams, and adopting low-emissions standards and policies were noted. Stakeholders continue to focus on opportunities to reduce emissions from the transportation sector given its outsized contribution to NH's total emissions.

Projects highlighted for additional discussion:

- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure in residential areas with emphasis on access and affordability in underserved communities / multi-unit rental properties
- Municipal-owned electrification of vehicle fleets, buses, equipment
- Improving public transportation accessibility, connections, and ridership

¹ See full list of where participants attended from and list of affiliations in the appendix



- Funding for infrastructure improvements for low to no-emissions transportation, such as e-bikes, bike lanes, and pedestrian safety

Barriers to highlighted projects:

- Limited use of gas tax not invested in public transit; incentivizing electric vehicle purchases for municipalities
- Renters and landlords have different incentives towards EV charging
Focusing solely on Electric Vehicle charging is not equitable or reduce car-dependency

Potential partners for highlighted projects:

- NH Department of Transportation
- Regional Planning Commissions
- local governments
- Service Link Community Action Programs,
- Workforce development

Electricity Generation and/or Use and Industry

Priorities in this sector include adding renewable energy to the grid, notably community solar projects, offshore wind, municipal sources such as landfills, and virtual power plant concept of distributed sources. Modernizing the system, accounting for energy storage, and addressing the Bow Power plant were discussed. Providing technical assistance to municipalities trying to move community solar and other projects forward was emphasized.

Projects highlighted for additional discussion:

- Small and medium size community solar projects and storage systems
- Community microgrids
- District heating and cooling systems

Barriers to highlighted projects:

- Community support and cost to municipalities; technical support to municipalities
- Utility cooperation and communication
- Local zoning for solar
- State regulatory issues

Potential partners for highlighted projects:

- Community Power Coalition of NH
- Clean Energy NH
- Revision Energy
- Biomass industry



Commercial and Residential Buildings

Participants discussed expanding and connecting financing and incentive programs that homeowners, landlords, and commercial buildings have access to. While residential and multi-unit buildings were a focus, it was noted that renters face barriers in benefiting from available programs. Opportunities for commercial and municipal owned buildings were discussed. Specific projects ideas around weatherization, energy audits, heat pumps, and adaptive building reuse were shared. Workforce and skills training are needed to meet demand.

Projects highlighted for additional discussion:

- Support and promote net-zero energy in public buildings as a community approach
- Provide incentives for commercial/ office building owners to (e.g., install affordable EV charging for their tenants)
- Incentives and/or cost support for solar energy for town offices, schools
- Heat-pumps incentives – increased adoption for space and water heating by supporting the supply chain, building a workforce, and activating consumer demand
- Weatherization incentive programs and electrical system improvements

Barriers to highlighted projects:

- Lack of centralized place for all weatherization information and funding
- Siloed funding streams that result in stalled projects
Community buy-in and project champions; technical assistance needed for municipalities
- Few qualified contractors and lack of training opportunity and time
- Renters cannot access incentive programs and landlords unable or unwilling
- Housing affordability

Potential partners for highlighted projects:

- Town energy committees
- Resident Owned Communities (ROC)
- NH Saves, Community Action Program weatherization programs
- Contractors,
- Workforce development and community colleges
- Multi-family housing developers

Natural & Working Lands and Agriculture

Priorities in this sector include preserving and expanding green space, forests, wetlands, and farms. Supporting local, small farms, electrical farm equipment, healthy soils, and local food systems was emphasized and reducing food waste and composting. Education and raising community awareness to how our food systems and open lands are connected to climate pollution was encouraged.



Projects highlighted for additional discussion:

- Preserve wetlands and forests, and other green infrastructure
- Funding land conservation; agricultural lands for preservation and conservation
- Sustainable agriculture practice, supporting small farmers
- Maintain trees and plants in urban areas
- Incentivize sustainable agriculture practices

Barriers to highlighted projects:

- Policy and political barriers; conservation funding
- Community buy-in; available open space and pressure to develop land for housing and uses

Potential partners for highlighted projects:

- Local Conservation Commissions
- Land Trusts
- Regenerative Roots
- Freshstart Farms
- Farming businesses,
- County Conservation Districts
- NH Food Alliance
- NH Department of Agriculture
- Arbor Day Foundation
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- Society for the Protection of NH Forests
- UNH Sustainability Institute

Waste & Materials Management and Wastewater

Participants discussed recycling waste back into the grid, including anaerobic digesters, and reducing waste at the local level. Reducing food waste, composting, required recycling, eliminating plastics were shared. The sector also included the need for upgrading infrastructure and technical assistance to municipalities.

Projects highlighted for additional discussion:

- Incentives for anaerobic digesters to recycle waste for energy back to grid
- Incentives for subsidizing composting to get food scraps out of the waste stream (aerobic digestion)
- Authority for NHDES to proactively addressing waste and transportation of waste

Barriers to highlighted projects:

- Educating the public



- Patterns of consumption
- Legislation and political will
- Expense for new composting facilities
- Infrastructure
- Technical assistance
- Funding

Potential partners for highlighted projects:

- NHDES
- Residents
- Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Municipalities
- Legislators
- Product manufacturers

Workforce Development

Participants also discussed priorities for workforce development in recognition that the topic cuts across all the sectors. Select projects discussed include:

- Industry training for contractors, HVAC professionals, other building trades
- Build out contractor capacity and Career Tech program needs for NH's students, including High Roads Training Partnership Programs
- Address barriers to licensure of skilled trades people

Linkages to Public Health

Connection to public health cuts across all sectors and is important in addressing Justice40 principles in NH. The following select projects, concerns, and barriers were discussed:

- Air quality in urban areas
- Improving public transportation, electrifying buses, more options for walking and alternative transportation modes
- Locating power plants, incinerators, and other greenhouse gas emissions infrastructure disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities
- Greenspace, tree canopy, plants in urban areas
- Access to local foods and farms

Opportunities for Engagement Moving Forward

The Cross-Sector Stakeholders online meetings were one layer of community engagement hosted by NH Listens and NHDES during the first phase of engagement under the Climate



Pollution Reduction Planning Grant. Participants spent time brainstorming climate pollution reduction projects that were near-term, high-priority, and implement-ready to provide input to the PCAP and CCAP efforts. Specific projects were discussed in more detail to learn about the barriers and potential partners to move these projects forward. Participants shared what was happening in their work and NH communities related to projects reducing climate pollution. Finally, participants shared takeaways for NHDES to keep in mind as NH's Climate Action Plans are updated and ideas for meaningful community engagement going forward. The following are themes heard during these discussions and opportunities for engagement moving forward.

Additional priorities heard from Cross-Sector Stakeholders:

- **Informed, community-based approaches and funding structures:** Increasing education and awareness of climate pollution and emissions reduction projects in all areas of NH is important, especially to ensure that low-income communities benefit from funding opportunities. Strengthening connections with local organizations, volunteer groups, and municipalities is key. Youth education and workforce development for the future is important.
- **Move towards the future and transition away from emissions-reliant systems:** Our homes, municipal buildings, transportation infrastructure have opportunities for using less energy and cleaner sources. Bow Power plant is a focus. Community power, municipal solar, weatherization programs, energy audits, upgraded systems help to move us in the right direction.
- **Continue community engagement and key outreach:** Opportunity to continue outreach to key partners, industries, affected communities to build awareness and learn about priorities. Transparency, communication, and participation are key in large scale efforts.
- **The transportation sector is a major focus:** Incentivizing electric vehicles and infrastructure at scale, expanding public transportation and active transportation options, and ensuring that there is benefit to all NH communities continue to be priorities.
- **Ensure that NH receives fair funding to make a difference:** Stakeholders at all levels of NH climate action work are eager to learn how implementation and funding will be structured if NH is awarded. Participants have some concern that NH does not have robust available matching funds that would help an implementation grant go further. Coordinate with elected officials, NH's other departments, and maximize the opportunity. Develop implementation structures that support coalition-based projects and address the capacity challenges faced by many towns.

Remaining questions participants shared about the process going forward:

Implementation Process and Programs:

- How will businesses, municipalities apply for funds? What's the process and how will it be communicated?



- How will NH make sub grants? Will these federal funds be able to serve as a match for other federal grants?
- Where do existing energy efficiency programs fit in with the PCAP and proposed projects/measures?

Community Engagement and Inclusivity:

- Will there be a focus on getting underserved communities and schools involved in the implementation of the projects for jobs?
- Will there be movement towards transparency and simplicity in helping community members understand and implement projects?

Coordination and Authority:

- Who will be responsible for managing implementation funds for the projects? How are we coordinating these large picture projects?
- Has there been any engagement or feedback from the legislatures?
- As NHDES leads this effort in the state, how is the department coordinating with other state agencies and will NHDES have the authority and buy-in to get the implementation funds to go where they are needed?
- Did the planning grant include funds to maintain organizing office and coordination of projects and state agencies as projects are (hopefully) implemented?

Additional Resources

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 and NH Department of Environmental Services Contacts

NH Listens

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NH Department of Environmental Services

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Appendix

Participants attended from across NH Communities:

- Albrightsville
- Alton (x2)
- Alton
- Atkinson
- Bedford (x4)
- Berlin
- Bethlehem (x2)
- Bradford
- Brookline
- Campton
- Chesterfield
- Claremont (x3)
- Concord (x25)
- Conway (x2)
- Dover (x5)
- Dublin
- Durham (x11)
- Enfield
- Epping
- Exeter (x5)
- Franconia
- Glen
- Goffstown (x2)
- Grantham (x2)
- Hampton (x2)
- Hampton Falls
- Henniker
- Hill
- Holderness (x2)
- Hollis
- Hopkinton (x3)
- Jackson (x2)
- Keene (x5)
- Kennebunk
- Kittery
- Lebanon (x9)
- Littleton (x2)
- Loudon
- Lyme
- Manchester (x4)
- Meredith
- Merrimack
- Nashua (x4)
- Nelson
- New Boston
- Newmarket
- North Haverhill
- Northfield
- Pembroke
- Penacook (x2)
- Peterborough (x3)
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth (x6)
- Raymond (x3)
- Rye (x2)
- Salem (x2)
- Sandwich (x2)
- Shrewsbury
- Somersworth
- State of NH
- Stratford (x4)
- Sugar Hill
- Swanzey



- Tamworth (x3)
- Walpole
- Warner (x2)
- Washington, DC (x3)
- Weare (x2)
- Westmoreland
- Windham
- Wolfeboro
- Did not share community (x6)

Participant organizations/affiliations:

- 350 New Hampshire (x6)
- Ammonoosuc Community Health Services
- ACTS Now; NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action
- American Institute of Architects, NH Chapter Committee on the Environment
- Appalachian Mountain Club (x2)
- Bedford Energy Commission (x2)
- Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire
- Ceres, Inc.
- Cheshire County Conservation District
- Citizen
- Citizens' Climate Lobby (x2)
- City of Concord
- City of Dover
- City of Keene
- City of Lebanon
- Clean Energy NH (x2)
- Collaborative Solid Waste Strategies
- Community Development Finance Authority
- Concord Energy Committee
- Conservation Law Foundation (x4)
- Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki (x2)
- Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail and NH Rail Trails Coalition
- Dover Energy Commission/CPCNH Regulatory & Legislative Affairs Committee
- Durham resident
- Ecological Solutions, LLC
- Endowment for Health
- Energy Committee (x2)
- Energy Committee, Town of Sandwich
- Enfield Energy Committee
- Fairman Marketing
- FEMA
- Fine Furniture Master
- Franklin Pierce University
- Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail
- Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (x2)
- Fuss & O'Neill
- Granite State Organizing Project
- Hannah Grimes Center
- Hopkinton Waste Reduction Committee; Hopkinton Conservation Commission
- InDepthNH.org
- Lebanon Energy Advisory Committee (x6)
- Lebanon NH (x2)
- Meredith Energy Committee
- Merrimack Energy Committee
- MLK & Company



- Mount Washington Valley Climate Change Working Group
- Mt Washington Valley Climate Change Working Group
- Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- Nelson Clean Energy; Monadnock Sustainability Hub; NH Network
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition
- NH Association of Conservation Commissions
- NH Audubon
- NH Bureau of Trails
- NH Businesses for Social Responsibility
- NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs
- NH Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Services
- NH Fish and Game
- NH Food Alliance
- NH House (x2)
- NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action (x6)
- NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action, 350NH, NAACP Manchester - volunteer w/these and other organizations
- NH Network: Environment, Energy, Climate
- NH Office of Planning & Development (BEA)
- NH Rail Trails Coalition
- NH Department of Environmental Services (x5)
- North Country Council Regional Planning Commission
- Office of Senator Shaheen
- Pembroke Energy Committee
- Peterborough Renewable Energy Project (x2)
- Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership/NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (NHCAW) (x2)
- ReGenerative Roots (x2)
- Resident
- Resilience Planning and Design
- Resilient Buildings Group (x2)
- Retired from Department of Defense
- River Ridge Condo Association
- Rye Energy Committee/community Power Coalition of NH
- SAU 67 Bow-Dunbarton School District
- Self (x3)
- Sen. Shaheen
- Sensiba LLP
- Ski New Hampshire
- Society for the Protection of NH Forests
- Somersworth Conservation Commission
- Southern NH Planning Commission
- Southwest Region Planning Commission (x2)
- St. David's Episcopal
- Star Island Corporation (x3)
- Sullivan County Conservation District
- Tallwood House
- Tamworth Energy Committee (x3)
- The Nature Conservancy NH (x3)
- Town of Bedford



- Town of Durham
- Town of Exeter
- Town of Hampton
- Town of Stratford
- Trout Unlimited
- Unital (x2)
- Unital Service Corp
- University of New Hampshire (x6)
- University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy
- University of New Hampshire Extension (x2)
- University of New Hampshire Extension/NH Sea Grant
- Unitarian Universalist Action NH
- Unitarian Universalist Society of Laco-
nia
- Wagner Forest Management
- No affiliation shared (x16)