Developing New Hampshire's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

Technical Input Session 3: Transportation

Summary Report by NH Listens, March 2025

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 investments in Low Income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC) across the economic sectors of air pollution and greenhouse gas reductions.

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

Between January 2025 and May 2025, NH Listens is hosting a series of conversations, or Technical Input Sessions, for people to learn, listen, and inform a CCAP for the state. The CCAP allows NHDES to identify strategies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the near- and long-term. The CCAP must touch on all significant GHG sources and sinks across economic sectors present in New Hampshire.

Technical Input Sessions provide opportunities for NH agencies, outside experts, stakeholders, and the public to discuss and vet potential GHG emission reduction measures for inclusion in the CCAP. The five Technical Input Session conversations are organized by these economic sectors defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Transportation
- Commercial and Residential Buildings
- Electrical Generation and/or Use
- Agriculture and Natural/Working Lands

- Industry and Waste/Materials Management

Goals, Facilitation, and Participation

On March 11, 2025, NH Listens and NHDES held the third technical input session for the Transportation sector. The purpose of this gathering was to:

- Provide context about New Hampshire's greenhouse gas inventory.
- Draft preliminary strategies to reduce GHG emissions in the sector.
- Share models for analyzing measures.

In addition, NHDES engaged participants in discussions about their experience in the sector regarding modeling, innovative practices, cross-collaboration, and barriers to implementation.

Participants engaged in a workshop that allowed them to review possible strategies that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase efficiency. The potential strategies prepared were derived from previous meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community conversations.

During the workshops, NH Listens helped keep time, facilitated group discussion, and made sure everyone who attended had a chance to contribute. **18 people attended the session, 25 people registered.** Collectively, they named key considerations and priorities relevant to CCAP planning in the Transportation sector.

Focus Areas

The focus areas for this session were:

- Promote Cost Benefits of High-Efficiency Passenger Vehicles
- Promote Benefits of Efficient Driving Habits
- Expand Publicly Available Charging Infrastructure for Passenger LDVs

NHDES provided relevant information through slides and corresponding guidance documents to inform participants on the measures' alignments with EPA's required elements. **Participants reviewed these measures and provided feedback on their appropriateness; they also suggested additional actions to ensure a comprehensive and effective implementation approach (find agendas and guidance documents on the NHDES CCAP landing page)**. The potential measures prepared were derived from previous meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community conversations.

Themes and Key Points

During the technical input sessions, participants provided information and resources related to their experience in the sector. See **Resources** for the full list of organizations, programs, reports, and case studies shared by participants in this session.

General Feedback on Measures

- **Gas Tax and electric vehicle (EV) Registration Fee**: Some participants supported increasing the gasoline tax and reconsidering the $200 EV registration tax, potentially shifting it to a credit to incentivize EV adoption. However, concerns were raised about funding sources for such a credit and a lack of authority to implement.
- **Vehicle Inspection Policy Change**: With the passage of HB 649-FN, there was concern about potential increases in emissions due to the removal of vehicle inspections.
- **Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Tax**: A VMT tax was suggested as a more equitable solution than a blanket EV credit, aiming to reduce driving overall by addressing externalities like noise, road dust, and decreased property values. However, there is a lack of authority to implement this as a measure.

Volkswagen Mitigation Fund Projects

Discussion focused on the allocation and impact of VW Mitigation Trust funds.

- **Shore Power Pedestals**: Questions arose about the purpose and function of idle reduction shore power pedestals.
- **Project Tracking**: Participants inquired about maps showing the locations of installed infrastructure funded by VW settlement money. The Alternative Fuels Data Center (AFDC) Station Locator and Committed and Expended VW Funds lists were cited as resources for tracking fund distribution.

Promoting High-Efficiency Passenger Vehicles

- **Efficiency vs. Full Electrification**: Some participants argued that efforts should focus on full electrification rather than incremental improvements to internal combustion engine vehicles.
- **Smaller Vehicle Promotion**: Concerns were raised about state and municipal road design regulations that continue to accommodate larger vehicles rather than incentivizing smaller, more efficient ones.
- **State-Facilitated EV Use**: Suggestions included the state purchasing EVs for public car-sharing and opening state-owned chargers to public use.
- **Existing Programs**: References were made to NHDES initiatives, including Drive Electric events and the Total Cost of Ownership data available through the State Vehicle Contract.

Encouraging Efficient Transportation Habits

- **Education and Outreach**: Driving schools were identified as an effective channel for promoting efficient driving habits, with an emphasis on cost savings to increase receptivity.
- **Existing Resources**: Granite State Clean Cities' fuel efficiency strategies and Complete Streets initiatives were cited as relevant programs to support these efforts.
- **Micromobility**: Encouraging other modes of micromobility, like walking, biking, or taking public transit, was also mentioned in this discussion.

Expanding Public EV Charging Infrastructure

- **Infrastructure Prioritization**: Participants emphasized the need for more Level 2 charging stations, as 240V power is widely available.
- **Political and Market Barriers**: Concerns were raised about the feasibility of expanding charging infrastructure given the current political climate and shifts in automaker priorities toward hybrids over EVs.
- **Municipal Zoning Updates**: Several municipalities, including Lebanon and Nashua, have updated or are considering updates to zoning codes to require EV-ready spaces in new developments. Dover's site plan regulations were also highlighted as a reference.
- **Funding Mechanisms**: A suggestion was made for municipalities to impose a $5 vehicle registration fee to help fund local EV charging infrastructure.

Climate Action in New Hampshire

Across the five technical input sessions hosted in February, participants identified the following programs and projects as being instances of great climate action work being done in New Hampshire and the greater New England Region.

Transportation	The Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund has committed and expended $10 million to support emission reduction in the state.
Buildings	In New Hampshire, municipal energy has been decreasing since 2005 as the state has shifted to energy efficiency interventions.
Electricity Generation	The NH Network brings together energy committees that share resources, ideas, and information.
Agriculture and Natural & Working Lands	UNH is working with the NH Timberland Owners Association on identifying research needs for invasive species management.
Industry and Waste & Materials Management	The town of Atrim, NH was awarded $5,000 for a new electric fork truck to assist in transporting bales of recyclables—without the need for gas.

Resources

Participant-Shared Resources

Alternative Fueling Station Locator. U.S. Department of Energy. https://afdc.energy.gov/stations#/find/nearest

Complete Streets. NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. https://www.nheconomy.com/office-of-planning-and-development/resources/complete-streets

EV Guide. Plug In America. https://pluginamerica.org/learn/guide/

Events. Drive Electric NH. https://www.driveelectricnh.org/events

Fuel Efficiency Strategies. Granite State Clean Cities. https://www.granitestatecleancities.nh.gov/clean-transportation-solutions/fuel-efficiency-strategies

Green Wave Electric Vehicles. https://www.greenwaveev.com/

VW Mitigation Trust. https://www.vwtrustfund.com/

Local-Level Zoning Ordinances & Regulations

Land Use Code. City of Nashua. https://www.nashuanh.gov/296/Land-Use-Code (EV charging requirements at new developments)

Site Plan Regulations (2018): Chapter 149, p. 29. City of Dover. https://www.dover.nh.gov/Assets/government/city-operations/2document/planning/Regulations/Site%20Plan%20Regulations%202018.pdf (Parking and EV Charging)

Zoning Ordinance & Map (updated 2023). City of Lebanon. https://lebanonnh.gov/570/Zoning-Ordinance-Map (Considering EV Ready spaces for new residential developments)

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