



Meaningful Engagement to Inform the Development of New Hampshire's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

Executive Summary



This resource was drafted by New Hampshire Listens to share the outcomes of the engagement processes that supported the development of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), a deliverable for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program.

Note: *The inclusion of any specific measure or strategy in this report does not indicate endorsement by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), nor does it reflect what will or will not be included in the final CCAP. This work is not reflective of the views of the NHDES Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) team, NHDES as an agency, or the EPA CPRG program officer. For the most current information on specific initiatives, readers should refer to the original sources or contact the administering organizations directly. For more information, readers should contact the NHDES CPRG team at cprg@des.nh.gov.*

New Hampshire Listens is a civic engagement initiative nestled in the Carsey School of Public Policy's Center for Engaged Communities at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) – www.nhlistens.org. If you have any questions about this resource, contact: Jo.Field@unh.edu and Carrie.Portrie@unh.edu.



Background

As part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires states to demonstrate meaningful engagement in the development of their Comprehensive Climate Action Plans (CCAPs). Engagement efforts are expected to go beyond standard public comment periods by creating opportunities for ongoing, two-way dialogue that informs planning decisions and reflects a range of community perspectives.

To meet this requirement of the EPA's CPRG program, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), in partnership with New Hampshire Listens, designed and facilitated a series of public and stakeholder engagement activities to inform the development of the New Hampshire CCAP. Visit the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants webpage](#) for additional information and guidance from the EPA.

Engagement Activities

The CCAP development included the following engagement activities:

- Two Kickoff Events (December 2024): To provide updates on the CCAP development process and introduce the next phase for public and stakeholder engagement opportunities.
- Sector-Based Technical Input Sessions (January to May 2025): To provide a venue for stakeholders to assist in identifying, selecting, and developing potential voluntary GHG reduction measures for the CCAP.
- Ongoing Public Comments: NHDES accepted feedback from the public throughout the CCAP development process via email at cprg@des.nh.gov.

Technical Input Session Process and Design

The Technical Input Sessions served as a central component of the stakeholder engagement process to inform the New Hampshire CCAP. They provided a structured forum for stakeholders to review and provide input on potential voluntary greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures that could be included in the CCAP. Given that NHDES lacks the statutory authority to establish new mandates or additional regulations, the sessions focused on measures that are innovative, non-regulatory, voluntary strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that aligned with existing authority to implement and funding opportunities.

Each session included presentations from state agency staff and, in some cases, guest speakers who shared practical insights from relevant projects or program implementation. Agendas, background materials, and summary documents were made publicly available to support transparency and ongoing engagement throughout the process.

The Technical Input Sessions were sector-specific, covering each of the key sectors for greenhouse gas emissions identified by the EPA. Five sessions were dedicated to each sector, totaling 25 sessions held between January 2025 and May 2025. Each Technical Input Session lasted up to two hours and took place via Zoom.



The CCAP Technical Input Sessions were organized by the following sectors:

- **Transportation:** Addressing measures that may involve alternative fuel vehicles, fuel efficiency, public transit, and alternative modes of travel.
- **Commercial and Residential Buildings:** Cleaner HVAC systems and appliances, improved energy efficiency, and small-scale renewable energy systems.
- **Electricity Generation and Supply:** Electricity generation, transmission, distribution, and storage.
- **Natural Lands, Forestry, and Agriculture:** Land conservation and restoration, sustainable forestry, and agriculture practices.
- **Industry, Waste, and Materials Management:** Manufacturing, recycling, composting, and waste management practices.

Technical Input Session Participation

The Technical Input Sessions were open to any person who wanted to attend, registered for the session, and lives, works or holds an interest in New Hampshire. In total, 605 people registered to attend a Technical Input Session, and there were 220 participants across the 25 sessions. 113 unique stakeholder groups were represented by the Technical Input Session participants:

Members of the Public (not affiliated with a stakeholder group)	24
Stakeholder Groups Represented	113
Advocacy Group	22
Business/Corporation	22
Citizen Committee	1
Community Action Agency/Program	1
Consultant	11
County Conservation District	1
Environmental Studies Partnership	2
Higher Education	3
Municipality (city/town)	14
Non-Profit	3
Press/Media	1
Regional Planning Commission	7
State Agency/Authority	9
State Legislature	1
Trade Group	10
Utility	5



Technical Input Session Findings

After each CCAP Technical Input Session, New Hampshire Listens produced a summary of the meeting. These summary reports were made publicly available on the [Engage in the CCAP Process](#) webpage.

To view the summary reports for the Technical Input Sessions, visit the New Hampshire Listens [Engage in the CCAP Process](#) webpage, or contact the NHDES CPRG team at cprg@des.nh.gov for more information.

Cross-Sector Themes

Localized Solutions

Projects, programs, and policies that support GHG emissions reductions already exist across New Hampshire. Much of this ongoing implementation is taking place at the local and regional level.

- **Transportation:** Municipal zoning reforms to support emissions reductions in local transportation systems.
- **Electricity Generation and Use:** Community power programs to help local consumers choose cleaner energy portfolios.
- **Agriculture:** Regional farm equipment loan programs to support farmers in adopting lower-emission agricultural technologies.
- **Industry, Waste Management and Agriculture:** Mixed land use exploration for renewable energy projects at agricultural, industrial, and waste management facilities.
- **Industry:** Local businesses are adopting energy efficiency, waste reduction, and process optimization strategies to lower operational emissions and cut costs.

Public Education Needs

Stakeholders consistently emphasized that GHG emission reduction strategies should prioritize and communicate co-benefits, such as public health, safety, cost savings, and economic development.

- **Agriculture:** Education efforts around the economic and soil health benefits of climate-smart practices could support uptake from farmers.
- **Waste Management:** Efforts to reduce consumption and increase circularity depend on widespread consumer education and behavioral change.
- **Commercial and Residential Buildings:** Efficiency upgrades are more appealing when framed as reducing energy cost burdens and improving comfort.
- **Transportation:** Mode shifts (e.g., reducing single-occupancy vehicles) are more palatable when associated with safety improvements and economic mobility.

Challenges with Coordinating Efforts

Many sectors face barriers to GHG emissions reductions through unclear authority or a lack of statewide coordination, making it harder to plan and act effectively.



- **Electricity Generation and Use:** Decisions around grid investments and renewable siting involve multiple entities with differing authorities.
- **Waste Management:** The lack of a coordinated statewide approach has led to inconsistent recycling and landfill practices.

Rural-Urban Differences Require Tailored Approaches

There was strong recognition that solutions must be context-specific, with rural areas facing distinct challenges in infrastructure, capacity, and access.

- **Residential Buildings:** Rural renters and homeowners often live in older, less efficient homes but have fewer resources or programs tailored to them.
- **Transportation:** Low-density development makes it harder to scale traditional public transit, requiring flexible mobility options.

Capacity-Building and Peer Learning

Stakeholders across sectors expressed a desire for structured opportunities to learn from one another, build capacity, and share best practices.

- **Municipalities:** Smaller towns want access to regional networks or technical hubs that can provide support and guidance.
- **Local Businesses:** Businesses can exchange tools and guidance for adopting waste reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainable transportation practices that maximize cost savings and revenue generation.

Outcomes for Next Steps of the CCAP Process

During the Technical Input Sessions, participants shared examples of existing funding sources and existing projects and programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions within New Hampshire. NHDES and New Hampshire Listens gathered these stories into the *Existing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Projects and Programs Inventory*. The goal of creating this inventory was to document what is already being implemented and successfully contributing to GHG emissions reductions in and around New Hampshire. This process was heavily informed by the Technical Input Sessions and allowed NHDES to gather concrete examples of measures that could be considered for inclusion in the CCAP. The inventory also helped to identify existing funding mechanisms, key implementation organizations, and implementation timelines of potential measures.

Resources

The Technical Input Sessions similarly informed the development of other inventories: the *Existing Funding Resources Inventory*, the *GHG-Related New Hampshire State Legislation Inventory*, and the *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Measures Inventory*. To view the summary reports for these inventories or to learn more about the CCAP engagement process, visit the New Hampshire Listens [Engage in the CCAP Process](#) webpage, or contact the NHDES CPRG team at cprg@des.nh.gov.