



March 14, 2023

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Governor of North Carolina
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

The Honorable Phil Berger
Senate President Pro Tempore
16 W. Jones Street, Rm 2007
Raleigh, NC 27601

The Honorable Tim Moore
Speaker of the House
16 W. Jones Street, Rm 2304
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Business Support for Advancement of Clean Energy Policies and Programs in 2023

Dear Governor Cooper, President Pro Tempore Berger, and Speaker Moore:

As the North Carolina General Assembly begins the 2023 legislative session, we write to you to reaffirm our support for North Carolina’s 70% carbon emissions reduction in the electric system by 2030¹ and 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050, as required by House Bill 951 (*S.L. 2021-165*). Additionally, we urge North Carolina decision makers to build upon our state’s existing laws by supporting and delivering to customers expanded access to cost-effective, proven clean energy technologies in order to achieve the necessary carbon emissions reductions by 2030 and 2050, grow our state’s clean energy economy, and meet electricity customers’ needs.

As large employers, major energy consumers, and trade associations, we understand firsthand how North Carolina’s energy policies affect the cost of doing business and the state’s economic competitiveness. We are businesses with operations, employees, and investments in communities across North Carolina and, like many hundreds of businesses across the country, we have made public commitments to reduce emissions, become more energy efficient, scale up our use of clean and renewable energy, and increase our use of electric vehicles. Clean energy helps businesses save money, reduce risks, lock in predictable energy rates,

¹ From a 2005 baseline.

stay competitive, and meet the expectations of our customers, employees, and shareholders.² Furthermore, several of us are among the [more than 85 companies in North Carolina that have set ambitious goals to power our operations with 100% renewable energy sources](#) – because it makes business sense.

North Carolina was an early leader on clean energy, beginning with bipartisan passage of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS/Senate Bill 3) in 2007, followed by House Bill 589 in 2017 and House Bill 951 in 2021. Now, North Carolina is home to over 2,000 clean energy and electric vehicle companies in the Research Triangle Region alone³, with over 103,000 employees across the state – and our state ranks first in the nation in clean energy jobs located in rural areas.⁴ As a hub of industry and technological innovation, North Carolina can maintain its competitive advantage as a clean energy and economic leader through new, forward-thinking policies and programs.

This year, we encourage decision makers to build upon your previous successful policies by taking additional action. Strong, decisive clean energy policies and customer programs will signal that North Carolina is “open for business” — thereby attracting in-state investments, creating jobs, and helping businesses access additional opportunities to save money and strengthen their competitive advantage. In particular, we encourage you to consider policies that:

- **Ensure electric utilities meet the legislative mandates in House Bill 951** (*S.L. 2021-165*) to decarbonize our electricity grid, offer new clean energy programs to customers, and continue to invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and battery storage, while retiring outdated, uneconomic and underperforming assets;
- **Maximize energy efficiency programs and investments.** Energy efficiency is the lowest-cost energy resource available, and all North Carolina energy users benefit when we eliminate energy waste. By increasing investments in energy efficiency, we can also mitigate the impact of fuel and electricity price increases, and build a more affordable, reliable electricity system for the businesses and citizens of the state.
- **Increase certainty and predictability via policies and customer programs** to ensure clean energy and clean transportation investments can be made with confidence;
- **Follow the lead of other states and/or utilities in offering financing tools and programs that help customers finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects**, so higher upfront costs do not become a barrier to unlocking significant long-term savings.^{5,6} Offering Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing and enabling more customers to participate in net energy metering (NEM) or leasing are potential options for increasing customer access to clean energy;

² Ceres, 2017. Power Forward 3.0: How the largest U.S. companies are capturing business value while addressing climate change, <https://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/power-forward-3>

³ Research Triangle Regional Partnership, 2023. CleanTech, <https://www.researchtriangle.org/industries/cleantech/>

⁴ E2, 2022. Clean Jobs North Carolina, <https://e2.org/reports/clean-jobs-nc-2022/>

⁵ States with C-PACE enabling legislation include Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, <https://www.pacenation.org/pace-programs/>.

⁶ States with higher NEM system capacities than North Carolina include Connecticut, Florida, Illinois (5 MW), Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania (3 MW). States like New Jersey and Georgia enable higher capacities for customer-owned systems by basing limits on annual on-site electric demand (100% and 125% respectively). North Carolina is the only state that limits capacities for leased systems, www.dsireusa.org.

- **Leverage and maximize the funding that North Carolina communities can receive from recently-enacted federal legislation**, including the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- **Expand transportation electrification** by continuing to recruit electric vehicle (light-, medium-, and heavy-duty) and battery manufacturers — among other companies — to North Carolina, expand the state’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and increase purchasing options and expanded supply choices for customers.
- **Increase customer choices, market competition, and grid resiliency.** Customer choice and competition in the renewable energy sector is critical to the viability of our businesses and supply chains, while strengthening the resiliency and security of our power grid. More options to access renewable energy would give North Carolina businesses a competitive edge and allow us to keep our energy investment dollars here in the state. Establishing a cost-competitive corporate renewable purchasing mechanism that works for diverse sectors of businesses and energy customers has been successfully achieved in 20 other states and many international markets — leading to over \$15 billion in direct corporate investment.

As companies that operate in multiple jurisdictions and electricity markets, we would be happy to share our experiences with policies and utility-offered customer programs that have been successful in other states. Please let us know if we can provide additional information or answer any questions.

Thank you for your service on behalf of all North Carolinians and helping our great state embrace clean energy innovation and prepare for the future.

Sincerely,

Altura Architects
American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)
Atom Power
Catawba College
Chambers for Innovation & Clean Energy
(CICE)
Circuitwise
DEVITA
Gaia Herbs
Leyline Renewable Capital
National Association of Energy Service
Companies (NAESCO)

New Belgium Brewing Co.
Nestlé
Plantd
SAS
Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.
SJF Ventures
Sustaera
Tacklebox Brand Partners
Trane
Unilever
Uplight
VF Corporation

For more information, please contact: Mel Mackin, Senior Manager, State Policy, at Ceres (mackin@ceres.org).