

Investing in a Clean, Healthy North Carolina

The Governor's Recommended Budget invests over \$474 million to conserve our natural resources, expand parks and trails, advance clean energy implementation and economic development, and protect our water and air. Investing in these areas will improve North Carolinians' quality of life by enhancing parks and natural lands, spurring our transition to a clean economy, and ensuring clean air and water.

Safeguarding and Improving Access to Our Natural Resources

The budget invests over \$300 million into environmental stewardship, increasing access to parks, and enhancing the state's resiliency with protection from future flooding events. The budget dedicates \$150 million for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and \$60 million for the Land and Water fund. Floodplain buyout programs totaling \$56 million over the biennium enhance the state's resiliency while investing in conservation. A total of \$7 million in each year is invested in the Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust and Forest Development Program, protecting small family farms and providing landowners with cost-share assistance for forestry management.

Enhancement of North Carolina's parks and natural areas promotes equitable access to outdoor recreation. The budget provides \$20 million over the biennium for paved and natural surface trail planning and construction. It provides \$1 million recurring for Outdoor Experiential Science Education, which funds teacher workshops to increase the use of the outdoors for school children and invests \$200,000 recurring in the Conservation Corps of North Carolina, which connects young adults to North Carolina's natural and cultural resources through work experience in state parks.

Advancing Clean Energy Development and Business

The budget invests over \$100 million in expanding access to clean energy technologies, investing in clean energy economic development and building the clean energy workforce pipeline to catalyze North Carolina's economy. The Clean Energy Communities and Schools programs provide \$50 million to local communities and schools over the biennium for clean energy and transportation. An additional \$23 million assists low-income households with home weatherization, energy-efficiency measures, and clean energy sources, saving energy and reducing utility bills.

The budget invests \$10 million for clean energy economic development and \$4.5 million in clean energy grants for start-ups and small businesses. It provides \$4 million to NC Community Colleges for workforce development in the fields of clean energy, clean transportation, energy efficiency, and sustainability. The budget provides \$4 million for the State Energy Centers to support operations, innovative research, and work-based student fellowships.

Protecting Clean Air and Water

Clean, safe water and air is essential for the health and well-being of North Carolinians. The budget invests in clean water through \$3.8 million in each year of the biennium for emerging compounds testing and abatement and funds four positions to measure exposure to PFAS in North Carolina residents through the collection and analysis of biospecimens in the Cape Fear Region. It also budgets \$67.3 million in FY 2021-22 to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions through North Carolina's second phase of distributing Volkswagen Settlement funds.