



NC SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY ASSOCIATION

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Clean Energy Award Winners Reflect Public-Private Support for Clean Energy Across the Aisle

Organizations, businesses, and individuals recognized for significant contributions to expanding clean energy access and development in state

RALEIGH, N.C. – Today, the NC Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) announces the recipients of its annual clean energy leadership awards. Awardees were selected based on their years of commitment to expanding economic opportunities through clean energy for all North Carolinians. Awards were announced in each of the following categories: Sustainable Energy Business of the Year, Individual Sustainable Energy Leader of the Year, Diversity and Inclusion in Sustainable Energy, Women in Clean Energy, Lifetime Achievement, Clean Energy Leadership Award, Representative of the Year Award, Senator of the Year Award, and Clean Energy Legacy Award.

“This year’s pool of award winners is continued evidence that North Carolina is home to one of the most vibrant and robust clean energy ecosystems across the country,” said Matt Abele, executive director of NCSEA. “To be able to grow to our stature in clean energy leadership nationally requires collaboration across the public and private sector, and amongst elected officials on both sides of the aisle. North Carolina continues to demonstrate that clean energy is a winner across the board and is a critical component to reducing utility rates, driving private investment, and lowering taxes for residents throughout the state.”

Recipients of the 2024 NC Sustainable Energy Association Clean Energy Awards include:

8MSolar LLC, winner of the *Sustainable Energy Business of the Year Award*: 8MSolar installed more than 9 megawatts (MW) of solar in 2023, including locations such as pharmaceutical companies, churches, fire stations, universities, and college campuses across the Southeast. The organization continues to spearhead adoption of new technologies in the solar industry and has expanded to several neighboring states including Virginia, South Carolina and Ohio.

Tom Bean, winner of the *Lifetime Achievement Award*: Bean has been educating legislators and executive branch staff about clean energy, energy efficiency, and clean energy jobs on behalf of NCSEA since 2004. When Bean started with NCSEA, he lobbied for clean energy tax credits and then later was deeply involved in the effort to get North Carolina’s Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) passed. North Carolina was the first state in the



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Southeast to pass a REPS bill. Bean also played an important role in supporting major state clean energy legislation such as House Bills 589 and 951. He's a valued member of the NCSEA team who can always be counted on and who has built great relationships with decision-makers on energy policy in the state. Bean is known for his strong work ethic and commitment to advancing clean energy policy while defending past energy policy wins.

Laura Combs, winner of the *Individual Sustainable Energy Leader of the Year Award*: Combs has been a tireless advocate for underserved communities across North Carolina, consistently connecting communities to funding and grant programs to help accelerate the deployment of renewable energy projects (especially rooftop solar). She's particularly focused on communities of faith across the state and nonprofits that serve diverse communities. She helped spearhead the first solar installation on tribal lands in North Carolina with the Lumbee Regional Development Association. Combs is also a very active member of NCSEA's board, helping to identify strategic policy and funding opportunities for the organization.

Tina Clossick, winner of the *Diversity & Inclusion in Sustainable Energy Award*: Clossick and Coastal Credit Union's support of NCSEA throughout the years has been transformative for low-to-moderate income communities across North Carolina. With Coastal Credit's support, NCSEA has been able to successfully advocate for and implement innovative energy efficiency programs that have supported thousands of households in the state. Their support has helped open the door for Duke Energy's new Improve and Save program, the first of its kind for an investor-owned utility inclusive energy efficiency investment program for all Duke customers across the state. They also were instrumental in helping to ensure the success of Carrboro and Orange counties' neighborhood energy resilience programs.

Jennifer Mundt, winner of the *Women in Clean Energy Award*: When Mundt started working for the NC Department of Commerce, the state had one offshore wind area. Since then, North Carolina has seen approximately \$475 million invested in offshore wind (\$160 million by TotalEnergies, \$155 million by Duke Energy, and approximately \$160 million by Dominion Energy for the purchase of their wind energy area). Both Duke Energy and Dominion Energy have announced their intentions to move forward with offshore wind in North Carolina, with Dominion purchasing the Kitty Hawk North wind energy area to develop 800 MW of offshore wind in the 2030s and Duke Energy's proposed carbon plan including 2,400 MW of offshore wind by 2035. This offshore wind success is due in large part to Mundt's tireless efforts to advance the industry in North Carolina. She has spearheaded the NC TOWERS taskforce, led North Carolina's engagement with the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management on offshore wind leases, and represented North Carolina with prospective businesses and investors.



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Governor Roy Cooper, winner of the *Clean Energy Leadership Award*: Throughout Gov. Roy Cooper's two terms, he has cemented his legacy as a champion of clean energy and the significant economic benefits it brings to North Carolina, building the foundation for extraordinary growth in the clean energy sector. From Executive Order No. 80, which kicked off the clean energy plan and mapped out an outline for House Bill 951, to other executive orders establishing targets for offshore wind and electric vehicle deployment, to appointing positions across his cabinet agencies to focus on clean energy, Gov. Cooper has built a robust framework for clean energy to thrive for years to come across North Carolina.

Representative Erin Paré, winner of the *Representative of the Year Award*: Rep. Paré (R – Wake) has stood strong on clean energy issues, including working to increase accessibility through championing a bill that would increase the lease cap on solar, which would unlock the benefits of solar energy leasing for many more homeowners and organizations across the state, as well as net metering. She has continued to show support in the caucus for expanding rooftop solar opportunities and often discusses the need for increased urban and suburban access to clean energy solutions. Rep. Paré has consistently demonstrated that she's a strong advocate of policies designed to lower bills for ratepayers across North Carolina.

Senator Michael Lee, winner of the *Senator of the Year Award*: Sen. Lee (R – New Hanover) led the multiyear effort to pass Commercial Property Assessed Capital Expenditure (C-PACE) in North Carolina, which led to Senate Bill 802 being passed in 2024. Through the authorization of C-PACE, commercial property owners will have the opportunity to access low-cost, long-term financing for qualifying energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resiliency improvements to their properties.

Senator Mike Woodard, winner of the *Clean Energy Legacy Award*: Sen. Woodard (D – Durham) has consistently supported clean energy and energy efficiency throughout his six terms in the Senate. He played an important role in helping to negotiate House Bill 951 "Energy Solutions for North Carolina," the bipartisan bill passed in 2021 that put carbon emission reduction goals in state law. Sen. Woodard is known and respected for working across the aisle to bridge differences and find solutions for complicated environmental and energy legislation.

This year's award winners were recognized in-person at the 2024 Making Energy Work conference in Raleigh. This year's conference was attended by hundreds of clean energy influencers and leaders from across the country, and featured several keynote speakers including Chris Chung, chief executive officer of the Economic Development Partnership of NC; Will Heegaard, operations director of the Footprint Project; and Katie Ottenweller, Southeast lead of Energy & Policy Markets for Google. Additionally, the NC League of Conservation Voters, NC Governor's Office, NC Business Committee for Education, and the NC Department of Commerce hosted pre-conference workshops for energy leaders from across the region.



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NCSEA extends congratulations and sincerest thanks to our members and the 2024 award winners.

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About North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association

North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) is the leading 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that drives public policy and market development for clean energy. Our work enables clean energy jobs, economic opportunities, and affordable energy options for North Carolinians. Learn more about NCSEA, our mission, and our vision at www.energync.org.