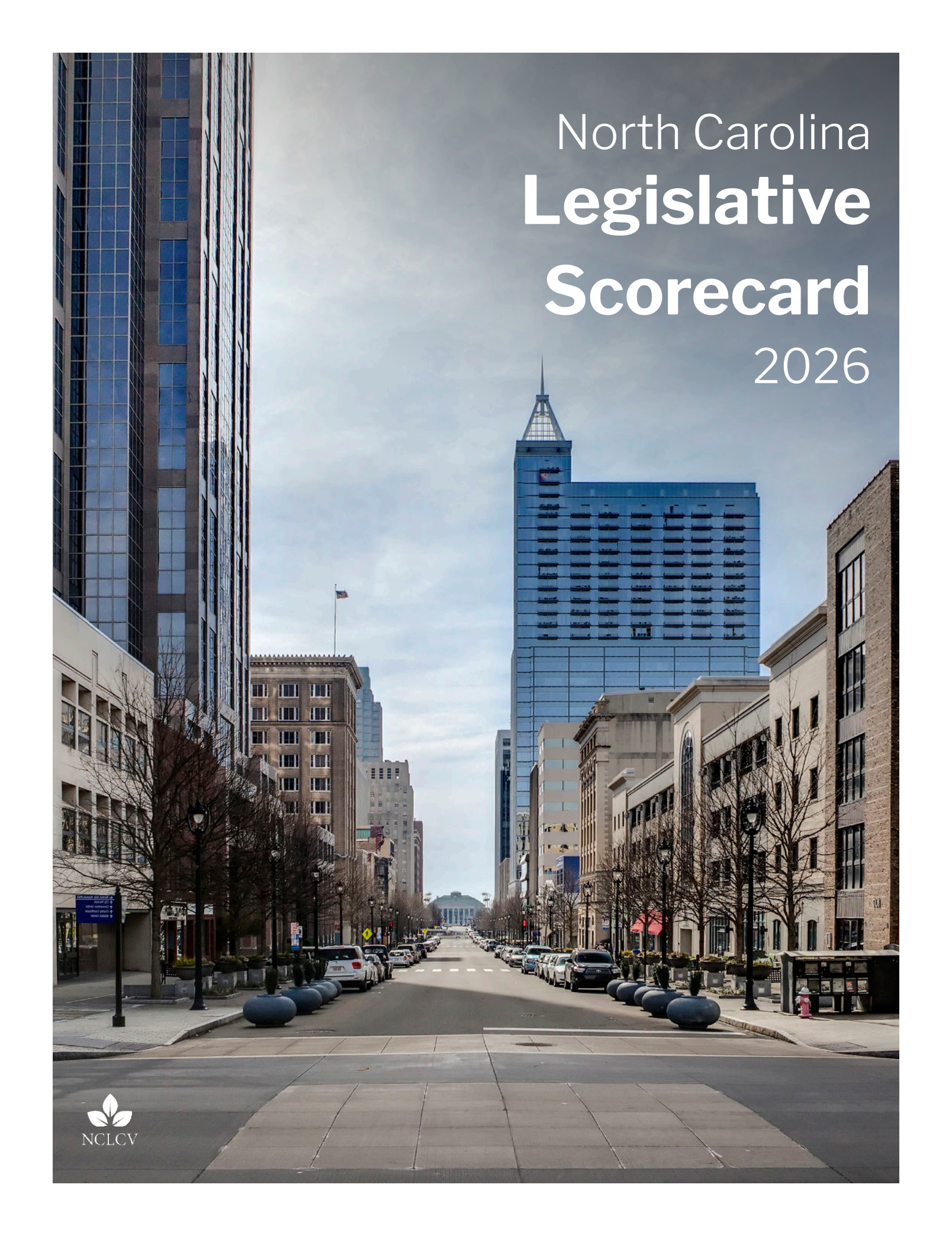




North Carolina Legislative Scorecard 2026

A Message From Our Executive Director

Dear Conservation Voter,

Thank you for your continued dedication to protecting our state's unique environment and its wonderful people. Despite all the setbacks we have seen over the years, your continued support gives me hope for a better future for all North Carolinians.

The NC General Assembly only passed a handful of bills this “short” legislative session—too few to create a full scorecard. And the pro-polluter majority will come back after the election—regardless of what the voters say—to further their agenda. However, we still think it is important to share the stories of the 2026 legislative session with you as you head to the ballot box this November. In this scorecard, we cover this year's biggest environmental stories through four narratives.

While families across our state struggle with rising utility costs, Duke Energy continues to make billions in profit. Instead of reining in this monopoly, lawmakers have stood by while Duke pushes for unreasonable rate hikes. At the same time, speculative data centers are expanding across our state, bringing significant threats to our health, natural resources, and local communities. However, we are deeply inspired by communities across our state—spanning all political backgrounds—rising up to demand community protection and justice.

From dirty, expensive energy to toxic PFAS contamination, our state leaders continue to prioritize corporate profits over public good. While families are left paying for expensive water infrastructure upgrades, recent legislative maneuvers have eroded voting access, hidden pollution records, and limited public oversight. Accountability cannot exist without a fair, representative democracy. Polluters—not taxpayers—should pay to clean up their mess.

We hope that this scorecard both provides insight and ignites a fervor as you head to the polls this year. You can look forward to more detailed scores and votes from this year's session to be included in next year's scorecard. The lifetime scores of your legislators, however, have been included. With a critical midterm ahead, it is more important than ever to elect champions who will prioritize our communities, our democracy, and our environment.

Take Care,

Carrie



Carrie Clark
Executive Director

Duke's Insane Profits, ■ NC Foots the Bill

Duke Energy Boasts Billions in Profits—Families & Environment Face Consequences

Families all across the United States are struggling with the cost of living. Energy rate hikes have become the fastest driver of inflation¹ because utility companies continue to put profit over people.

Here in North Carolina, every new energy rate hike is *deja vu*. Duke Energy justifies ever-increasing rates because of fuel costs and necessary investments, yet Duke still posts record revenue² year after year. In fact, Duke has made a \$2.6 billion profit³ through the first half of 2026, putting them on track to exceed last year's record of \$5 billion in profit.

The pattern is simple: Duke can keep raising customers' rates—protected by their monopoly status and little resistance from regulators, legislators, and the courts.

Duke's Pattern of Rate Hikes

Despite Duke's massive profits, the N.C. Utilities Commission (NCUC) has continually let Duke milk us dry. Between May 2021 and late 2023, Duke Energy consistently raised utility rates across North Carolina, frequently shifting a disproportionate load onto residential consumers. Early rate hikes—including an

unannounced 12.8% surge in December 2021 and fuel-cost recoveries in late 2022—systematically charged residents higher percentage increases than industrial power users. Then, NCUC approved Duke Energy Progress' first multi-year plan, locking in annual increases through 2025 alongside additional seasonal fuel rate hikes that left consumers facing drastically higher bills despite static energy usage.

Last year, Duke requested another aggressive two-year rate plan seeking an 18% cumulative residential hike by 2028, compared to less than 12% for industrial clients. After significant public outcry, Duke lowered its request to 12%. They then agreed to a settlement of 9.5% for residential customers. Attorney General Jeff Jackson is legally intervening in the case on behalf of North Carolinians and said that is still too high.

Bigger Monopoly, Fewer Safeguards

Additionally, Duke Energy is now preparing to merge DEC and DEP, a merger that was approved by North and South Carolina regulators on May 1 and is set to start in the new year.⁴ Although DEC and DEP operate under the same parent company, their merger raises questions about further entrenching Duke's monopoly. Separate subsidiaries introduce differentiation, including



¹ North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (2026, February 23). Fastest driver of inflation: Utility rate hikes. <https://nclcv.org/cib02232026-fastest-driver-of-inflation/>

² Macrotrends. (n.d.). Duke Energy revenue 2010–2026. Retrieved September 21, 2026, from <https://www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/DUK/duke-energy/revenue>

³ Yahoo Finance. (2025, August 7). Duke Energy posts strong Q2. <https://finance.yahoo.com/energy/articles/duke-energy-posts-strong-q2-115203311.html>

⁴ Charlotte Business Journal. (2026, May 12). Duke Energy merger savings report. <https://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/news/2026/05/12/duke-energy-merger-savings.html>

separate rate cases, that better reflect local needs.⁵

Duke Doesn't Do It Alone

Duke is not the only party to blame. In 2021, lawmakers passed legislation⁶ requiring Duke Energy and NCUC to take “all reasonable steps” to reduce carbon emissions by 70% by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Although these goals were a step in the right direction, we opposed the passage of this legislation because it gave Duke too much power.⁷ We are now seeing the undoing of those climate goals by Duke Energy and the legislature.

Last year, we reported on how our legislature bet your money on a future of dirty Duke Energy. Lawmakers passed Senate Bill 266—which removed the 2030 target date⁸—even after an independent study by NC State found this law would shift over \$23 billion⁹ in costs onto ratepayers. The legislation also increases reliance on fossil fuels, delays coal plant retirement, and reduces clean energy commitments.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the NCGA is still putting ratepayers on the backburner, continuing to allow Duke Energy to put profit over people.

But it isn't just the legislative branch; the judicial branch has a role too. In February 2025, the N.C. Supreme Court finally heard a 2023 appeal against Duke Energy's rate hikes. Over a year later—and right before Memorial Day weekend—the Court tried to bury a decision¹¹ giving full deference to the NCUC's rate hike approval.¹² This decision guarantees corporate payouts at the expense of working families, proving once again how deep Duke's influence runs in North Carolina politics. Duke Energy continues to line their pockets with record profits while the legislature, Supreme Court, and NCUC fail to reign them in.

Duke and Democracy

This pattern of pandering to Duke's profit margins has been exacerbated by the legislature's focus on systematically clawing back the constitutional powers of our governor starting in 2016, when Governor Cooper (a Democrat) was first

elected. In 2023 and 2024, the legislature took aim at the NCUC. Previously, the governor had appointment power for a majority of the NCUC's members, but the legislature reduced the number of seats on the commission, and transferred the majority of appointments¹³ to the Republican-controlled legislature and the state treasurer, a Republican. Then in 2025, the State Treasurer appointed Donald van der Vaart, a known climate skeptic,¹⁴ to the commission. Van der Vaart will now play an important role in deciding whether to raise residential rates or not.

These systematic maneuvers to weaken gubernatorial powers have further enabled Duke Energy to put its profits over people.



⁵ NC Newsline. (2026, May 12). Duke Energy doubles down in the Carolinas: What consumers stand to lose and gain. <https://ncnewsline.com/2026/05/12/duke-energy-doubles-down-in-the-carolinas-what-consumers-stand-to-lose-and-gain/> ⁶ North Carolina General Assembly. (2021). House Bill 951 / SL 2021-165: Energy transition bill (Session 2021). <http://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2021/Bills/House/PDF/H951v6.pdf> ⁷ North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (n.d.). Duke's dirty dealing again. Retrieved September 21, 2026, from <https://nclcv.org/dukes-dirty-dealing-again/> ⁸ NC Sustainable Energy Association. (n.d.). North Carolina Senate Bill 266 overview. <https://www.energync.org/north-carolina-senate-bill-266/> ⁹ Environmental Defense Fund. (n.d.). Report on North Carolina utility regulation and carbon targets [PDF document]. <https://library.edf.org/AssetLink/65448scc1t1q78kop8y848leb1lhd4t.pdf> ¹⁰ North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (2025, October 6). Duke Energy's plan: More carbon, higher rates. <https://nclcv.org/cib10092025-duke-energys-carbon-plan/> ¹¹ North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (2026, May 26). Justice Earls dissents, blisters court ruling for Duke rate hikes. <https://nclcv.org/cib05262026-court-ruling-for-duke-rate-hikes/> ¹² Supreme Court of North Carolina. (2026). State of North Carolina court opinion file 45891 [PDF document]. <https://appellate.nccourts.org/opinions/?c=1&pdf=45891> ¹³ North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (2024, December 9). Polluter power grab in NC House. <https://nclcv.org/cib12092024-polluter-power-grab-in-nc-house/> ¹⁴ NC Newsline. (2025, April 30). N.C. Treasurer names conservative climate skeptic to State Utilities Commission. <https://ncnewsline.com/2025/04/30/n-c-treasurer-names-conservative-climate-skeptic-to-state-utilities-commission/>

The Insane Costs of Data Centers

With the advent of the artificial intelligence (AI) boom, the U.S. has seen explosive growth in the demand for data centers and the energy required to power them. North Carolina is no exception. Over 20 new data centers have been proposed in our state, many of which—of those disclosed—are expected to operate at a capacity upward of 200 megawatts (MW), the energy needed to power roughly over 130,000 homes.¹

While big tech spend hundreds of thousands of dollars² to spread lies about the impacts of data centers, residents across the state are raising their concerns. Across party lines, communities have been organizing—speaking at local council meetings, demanding moratoriums, and even showing up at the NC General Assembly (NCGA).

Economic Drawbacks

Preliminary economic data show clear cause for concern. Data centers do not create meaningful, sustained economic opportunities for host communities, especially when weighed against the immense public infrastructure costs required to build and operate them. Drawbacks include:

- **Minimal Local Employment:** Facilities require vast land footprints but yield very few permanent jobs³ once construction ends.
- **Corporate Subsidies:** Tax abatements for data

center operators cost North Carolina taxpayers an estimated \$75 million in lost revenue.⁴

- **Housing Competition:** Data center developers routinely outbid homebuilders for land and grid connections. In a state facing a five-year housing shortage exceeding 760,000 units,⁵ diverting capital and land to tech giants further drives up housing costs and exacerbates local wealth inequality.

Recognizing these risks, Governor Stein proposed ending tax exemptions for facilities and established the N.C. Energy Policy Task Force to focus on electricity affordability for residential ratepayers.

Health and Environmental Dangers

Researchers project data centers will consume up to 12% of total U.S. electricity by 2028.⁶ The rush to supply this power has directly driven up residential electric bills, which have surged 22% over the last five years⁷ for North Carolina families. There is no



¹ Taylor, J. (2023, August 23). Expert speaks on how many homes can be powered by 1 MW, when peak demand sits at 85,000+ MW. CBS Austin. <https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/expert-speaks-on-how-many-homes-can-be-powered-by-1-mw-when-peak-demand-sits-at-85000-mw> ² Bonner, L. (2026, July 22). Pro-data center group trying to change opinions in NC with ad campaign. NC Newsline. <https://ncnewsline.com/2026/07/22/pro-data-center-group-trying-to-change-opinions-in-nc-with-ad-campaign/> ³ Good Jobs First. (2025, June 20). Big tech promised jobs, cities gave millions: Where are the workers? <https://goodjobsfirst.org/big-tech-promised-jobs-cities-gave-millions-where-are-the-workers/> ⁴ VPM Newsroom. (2026, May 11). Data center energy supply and tax breaks in North Carolina. VPM. <https://www.vpm.org/news/2026-05-11/nc-newsroom-data-center-supply-energy-tax-breaks-north-carolina> ⁵ NC Chamber Foundation, North Carolina Home Builders Association, & NC REALTORS®. (2025, February 5). New report details significant housing supply gap in North Carolina. NC Chamber. <https://ncchamber.com/2025/02/05/new-report-details-significant-housing-supply-gap-in-north-carolina/> ⁶ Shehabi, A., Newkirk, A., Smith, S. J., Hubbard, A., Lei, N., Siddik, M. A. B., Holecce, B., Koomey, J., Masanet, E., & Sartor, D. (2024). 2024 United States data center energy usage report. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. eScholarship, University of California. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/32d6m0d1> ⁷ North Carolina Energy Policy Task Force. (2026, February 15). Interim report: Strategies for managing load growth, affordability, and reliability. Office of the Governor of North Carolina. <https://governor.nc.gov/documents/files/nc-energy-policy-task-force-2026-report/open>

Data Center Impacts On Our Environment & Communities

Impact Category	Environmental & Community Consequences
Water Quality & PFAS	Supposed “closed-loop” cooling systems still require water draws from local watersheds. System chemical flushes (“blow-downs”) risk releasing toxic contaminants like PFAS, “forever chemicals,” into municipal water systems.
Air Pollution	Relying on continuous natural gas generation and backup diesel generators releases hazardous fine particulate matter linked to elevated rates of asthma, heart disease, and cancer. A study from Caltech and UC Riverside estimated that data center air pollution could contribute to 1,300 premature deaths annually by 2030. ⁸
Noise & Health	Constant high-frequency cooling turbines generate relentless low-frequency noise pollution, causing neighboring residents to suffer chronic headaches, insomnia, and severe anxiety. No research has been conducted to show the impact noise could have on livestock and wildlife.

law currently in place that would protect ratepayers from subsidizing this increase for electricity demand. And communities are rarely in the room when these decisions are made, though they are on the frontlines of the health and environmental impacts.

What Leaders Are (Not) Doing About It

Since almost half of North Carolinians oppose the construction of data centers in their communities,⁹ why isn’t greater action taken by lawmakers to protect their constituents?

Last summer, the Republican-controlled General Assembly missed a key opportunity to regulate data centers. While Senate Bill (S.B.) 730 could have required some basic regulations—including

a ban on local government subsidies—the law ultimately stalled in the Senate.

However, S.B. 730¹⁰ had some environmentally destructive policies as well. As environmental champions like Representative Maria Cervania (D) pointed out, S.B. 730 could have forced our state to delay planned coal plant retirements—locking ratepayers into expensive, dirty energy while undermining our state’s climate goals.

Governor Stein called on lawmakers to phase out tax incentives for data centers. “I’ve called on the legislature to be clear-eyed about the real cost of these tax breaks given to corporations,” Stein said, “and I’m eager to work together to find the best path forward for our people. We can welcome innovation and give businesses certainty without

⁸ California Institute of Technology. (2024, December 10). Air pollution and the public health costs of AI. Caltech News. <https://www.caltech.edu/about/news/air-pollution-and-the-public-health-costs-of-ai> ⁹ Kathers, M. (2026, July 26). North Carolina residents push to stay data center-free as AI strains water and power. The Cooldown. <https://www.thecooldown.com/green-tech/north-carolina-residents-stop-data-center/> ¹⁰ General Assembly of North Carolina. (2025). Senate Bill 730: Ratepayer Protection Act (2025–2026 Session). <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/S730> ¹¹ WUNC News. (2026, June 15). Proposal introduced to phase out North Carolina tax incentives for data centers. WUNC. <https://www.wunc.org/politics/2026-06-15/north-carolina-tax-incentives-data-centers-phase-out-proposal>

requiring taxpayers to bankroll in perpetuity an industry with trillions of dollars already backing it.¹¹”

Despite overwhelming public concern, Republican leadership hasn’t taken these issues seriously enough. Instead, they are using data centers as an excuse to further entrench our reliance on dirty fossil fuels.

Connection to Duke Energy

Last year, Duke Energy earned \$4.9 billion, an 8% gain from 2024. Now, they’re planning to increase

rates by 9.5% over the next two years, starting this November. In part, the rate hike¹² is Duke Energy’s attempt to meet the energy demands of incoming data centers,¹³ by asking consumers to help carry the costs of expansion. While North Carolinians are encouraged to conserve energy, Duke Energy wants to subsidize data centers and guarantee a significant profit on the biggest fossil-fuel gas plant build-out across the U.S.



¹² Consumer Reports. (2026). Data center growth and the affordability crisis: Utility bills, rate hikes, and corporate profits. <https://www.consumerreports.org/data-centers/affordability-crisis-utility-bills-rate-hikes-profits-a6567329925/> ¹³ North Carolina Energy Policy Task Force. (2026, February 15). Interim report: Strategies for managing load growth, affordability, and reliability. Office of the Governor of North Carolina. <https://governor.nc.gov/documents/files/nc-energy-policy-task-force-2026-report/open>

PFAS: Forever Infamous

in North Carolina

State Lawmakers Fail to Address Toxic Chemicals in Our Drinking Water

Despite multiple opportunities this year, pro-polluter lawmakers have once again failed to address the dangerous discharge of toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) into our surface and drinking water.

North Carolina has been a ground zero for these “forever chemicals” for years. In 2017, public health scientists alerted the nation to the widespread contamination of GenX (a hazardous type of PFAS) in the Cape Fear River Basin. Traced directly back to Chemours’ Fayetteville Works facility, the pollution compromised the drinking water supply for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians¹. Nearly a decade later, Republican leadership has failed to deliver relief while corporate polluters escape full accountability.

Polluting Company Gets Sliver of a Settlement; Leaves North Carolinians Footing the Bill

Under the Trump Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency reached a recent settlement with the chemical giant Chemours. The settlement requires Chemours to pay \$450 million² in civil penalties and

mitigation funds. While that figure might sound substantial, the reality is stark: the money is split among three states: North Carolina, West Virginia, and New Jersey. With North Carolina receiving the least amount of funding, this drastically dilutes its impact.

To put it in perspective, PFAS removal technology costs a single municipality tens of millions in upfront construction, plus millions more in annual operating expenses. For instance, Brunswick County, N.C., saw estimates for its water infrastructure rise from \$63 million to \$75 million in 2024 alone—roughly \$1,000 per resident,³ excluding ongoing operations. When polluters fail to pay, government grants step in, indirectly shifting the burden onto taxpayers through higher rates and local taxes.

At a statewide scale, Chemours’ settlement is a drop in the bucket. It leaves North Carolinians footing the bill for toxic cleanup while ignoring the unquantifiable human cost: the chronic illnesses, medical bills, and lost lives tied to forever chemical exposure. It is a facade of accountability that ultimately lets a major polluter off the hook.



¹ North Carolina Coastal Federation. GenX and Emerging Industrial Contaminants. NC Coast. <https://www.nccoast.org/water-quality/genx-and-emerging-industrial-contaminants/> ² CBS News. Chemours agrees to pay \$450 million to settle PFAS ‘forever chemical’ claims. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/chemours-forever-chemicals-pfas-450-million/> ³ WUNC Public Radio. State water systems grapple with high cost of PFAS compliance standards. WUNC. <https://www.wunc.org/environment/2024-06-13/state-water-systems-grapple-with-high-cost-of-pfas-compliance-standards>

Environmental Champion Secures More Funding for PFAS Remediation

In stark contrast to federal shortcomings, state leaders are stepping up to hold polluters accountable and directly protect local communities. N.C. Attorney General Jeff Jackson and the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality recently secured nearly \$600 million⁴ in dedicated funding for statewide PFAS remediation and water infrastructure recovery.

Unlike broad, multi-state settlements that leave local governments scrambling, these funds are specifically targeted to reach the water utilities and communities hit hardest by Chemours' contamination. By aggressively pursuing direct legal remedies, Jackson's actions ensure that clean water initiatives are funded by legal accountability rather than municipal debt or rate hikes on hardworking families. While removing PFAS out of the Cape Fear River watershed remains a monumental task, securing dedicated resources marks an important step in the fight to regulate PFAS pollution.

Why Are PFAS So Concerning for North Carolinians?

Exposure to some of the most well-studied PFAS, such as PFOA and PFOS, has consistently been linked to serious conditions⁵ including cancer, liver disease, heart attacks, and strokes as well as harm to children, infants, and pregnant people. Moreover, thousands of other chemicals that fall under the PFAS umbrella are chronically understudied, making appropriate risk assessments limited at best and impossible at worst. PFAS are now estimated to be present in the blood of 95% of the U.S. population.⁶

Regulatory Backsliding at Federal and State Levels

Recent regulatory maneuvers demonstrate how political decisions directly threaten clean water safeguards:

- **Federal Safeguards Delayed:** Following landmark 2024 EPA rules establishing maximum contaminant levels under the Safe Drinking Water Act, Trump's EPA pushed back compliance deadlines and proposed repealing restrictions on four major PFAS compounds.
- **State Commission Inaction:** The North Carolina Environmental Management Commission—dominated by political appointees—caved to industrial pressures by stalling surface water limits and placing monitoring rules largely in the hands of corporate polluters. Today, more than 3.5 million North Carolinians⁷ drink water contaminated with unsafe PFAS levels.
- **Legislative Failure in Raleigh:** During the 2026 short session, lawmakers ignored comprehensive safeguards like the Water Safety Act⁸ (Senate Bill 1043) and PFAS Free NC⁹ (House Bill 881). Instead, they passed budget provisions in Senate Bill 257¹⁰ that reclassify state research staff as legislative staff, making crucial legislative communications regarding pollution hidden from public records requests.

While corporate polluters like Chemours walk away with bargain-bin settlements, and federal and state regulators roll back critical safeguards, everyday citizens are left to pay the price—both with their utility bills and their health. Until Raleigh and Washington align regulatory power with public safety, North Carolina communities must continue demanding full transparency, rigorous enforcement, and real accountability from the entities sworn to protect them.

⁴ WECT News. NC Attorney General Jeff Jackson announces historic settlement with Chemours. WECT. <https://www.wect.com/2026/09/10/nc-attorney-general-jeff-jackson-announces-historic-settlement-with-chemours/> ⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Our Current Understanding of the Human Health and Environmental Risks of PFAS. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas> ⁶ WUNC Public Radio. State water systems grapple with high cost of PFAS compliance standards. WUNC. <https://www.wunc.org/environment/2024-06-13/state-water-systems-grapple-with-high-cost-of-pfas-compliance-standards> ⁷ Natural Resources Defense Council. The History of PFAS Contamination in North Carolina. NRDC. <https://www.nrdc.org/media/history-pfas-contamination-north-carolina> ⁸ North Carolina General Assembly. Senate Bill 1043 (2025-2026 Session). NCGA Legislative Information. <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/S1043> ⁹ North Carolina General Assembly. House Bill 881 (2025-2026 Session). NCGA Legislative Information. <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/H881> ¹⁰ North Carolina General Assembly. Senate Bill 257 (2025-2026 Session). NCGA Legislative Information. <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/S257>

Attacks on Our Democracy

■ Continue at the Federal and State Level

Our Democracy Holds Strong Despite Concerted Attacks

We all want free, fair, and transparent elections, but powerful Republican politicians are sowing distrust, then restricting voting rights, all to avoid accountability for their unpopular policies. Instead of addressing voters' top concerns—like the economy, climate resilience, and rising utility costs—state and federal politicians are focused on policies that will have big implications for our elections. Unfortunately, voters on both sides of the aisle will pay the price for these self-serving schemes.

Attacks from D.C.

Fixated on past election outcomes, President Donald Trump and his extreme allies in Washington have continued to leverage their hold on the party to push national legislation that would make it significantly harder for tens of millions of eligible Americans to cast a ballot.¹

Sweeping federal proposals seek to impose strict photo identification mandates and dismantle accessible voter registration pathways, including eliminating online registration portals and restricting voter registration by mail. While these restrictive policies threaten every voter regardless of political party or age, their damage falls most heavily on specific groups: married women whose legal names may not match older identity documents, rural residents who live far from full-service election offices, low-income citizens lacking flexible work hours, and active-duty military service members serving away from home.

Meanwhile, federal judicial rulings have exacerbated these legislative attacks. Decisions like *Louisiana v. Callais* signal a troubling willingness in federal courts to weaken key protections under the Voting Rights Act, making it easier for politicians to redraw maps that dilute the voting power of historically underrepresented communities.

Attacks at Home

Here in North Carolina, legislative leaders and partisan appointees are actively undermining the foundations of our local democracy. By changing procedural rules and erecting unnecessary barriers, anti-environmental lawmakers are trying to ensure that polluters and special interests retain power at the expense of everyday citizens.

- **Targeting Young Voters:** The North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE) has eliminated Sunday voting in certain counties and key early voting locations² on college campuses across the state. This move directly targets younger voters, making it significantly harder for students to participate in the democratic process.
- **Partisan Disfranchisement:** NCSBE also passed rules to allow local boards of elections to reject absentee ballots on strict 3-2 party-line votes and mandate the rejection of absentee-by-mail votes over minor technical errors or typos—disenfranchising eligible voters over harmless administrative mistakes.³
- **Legislative Power Grabs (HB 958):** House Bill 958⁴ represents yet another attempt to strip executive oversight and centralize control over

¹ Ingram, K. (2024, November 19). NC House passes bill to give Republicans majority on elections board, strip governor's power. News & Observer. <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/election/article295785424.html> ² McFarlane, M. (2025, July 2). Gov. Josh Stein Vetos REINS Act in North Carolina. Broadband Breakfast. <https://broadbandbreakfast.com/gov-josh-stein-vetos-reins-act-in-north-carolina/> ³ North Carolina General Assembly. (2025, April 30). Bill summary for H870-SMRI-21(e1). Legislative Analysis Division. Retrieved from <https://dashboard.ncleg.gov/api/Services/BillSummary/2025/H870-SMRI-21%28e1%29-v-3> ⁴ Leslie, L. (2025, February 14). Republican proposal would ban voter registration drives in NC. WRAL News. <https://www.wral.com/story/republican-proposal-would-ban-voter-registration-drives-in-nc/21860685/>

election administration within the General Assembly. By attempting to restructure board appointments, shorten early vote periods and ballot-counting windows, legislative leaders are attempting to tilt the scales in their favor before a single vote is cast. Governor Stein has vetoed HB 958, and it is not likely to pass before the 2026 election.

How Our Democracy Is Standing Strong

Despite these persistent attacks, North Carolinians are proving that our democracy remains resilient. From campus organizers fighting for their early voting sites to coalition partners mobilizing grass-roots voter drives across rural counties, citizens are showing up, speaking out, and refusing to let their power be taken away. Community defense networks, nonpartisan civic groups, and environmental champions are coming together to demand transparency and ensure every eligible vote is counted.

Why Is Democracy So Important for Environmental Protections?

Why does an environmental advocacy organization dedicate time and resources to democracy issues? The answer is simple: we all depend on a free, fair, and representative democracy to truly protect our air, water, and communities from pollution and degradation.

When power-hungry politicians diminish our vote, they diminish our power to hold polluters accountable. When frontline communities have a seat at the table, they protect their health, their drinking water, and their local environment. The power to decide what happens to our natural resources must stay with the people—particularly those who face the direct consequences of pollution and extreme weather. Defending the ballot box is the first and most critical step in defending North Carolina's future.



Lifetime Scores

Number of legislators who scored...

0%: **1**

10% and Below: **33**

85% and Above: **55**

100%: **26**

Average Scores Over Time	Lifetime
House Democrats	94%
House Republicans	16%
Senate Democrats	92%
Senate Republicans	8%
Total House Average	48%
Total Senate Average	39%

HOUSE

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Adams, Jay • R	Catawba	17%
Ager, Eric • D	Buncombe	100%
Almond, Jonathan • R	Cabarrus	17%
Alston, Vernetta • D	Durham	98%
Arp, Dean • R	Union	9%
Baker, Amber • D	Forsyth	92%
Balkcom, Jennifer • R	Henderson	14%
Ball, Cynthia • D	Wake	98%
Belk, Mary • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Bell, John R. • R	Greene, Johnston, Wayne	7%
Biggs, Brian • R	Randolph	14%
Blackwell, Hugh • R	Burke	21%
Blust, John M. • R	Guilford	36%
Branson, Jerry • R	Guilford	17%
Brisson, William D. • R	Bladen, Sampson	28%
Brody, Mark • R	Anson, Union	10%
Brown, Gloristine • D	Pitt	97%
Brown, Kanika • D	Forsyth	100%
Brown Jr., Terry • D	Mecklenberg	96%
Buansi, Allen • D	Orange	100%
Budd, Laura • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Butler, Deb • D	New Hanover	98%
Cairns, Celeste • R	Carteret, Craven	14%
Campbell, Grant • R	Cabarrus, Rowan	15%
Carney, Becky • D	Mecklenburg	85%
Carver, Todd • R	Iredell	15%
Cervania, Maria • D	Wake	100%
Chesser, Allen • R	Nash	17%

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Clark, Tracy • D	Guilford	100%
Cohn, Bryan • D	Granville, Vance	92%
Colvin, Mike • D	Cumberland	92%
Cook, Amanda P. • D	Guilford	NA
Cotham, Tricia Ann • R	Mecklenburg	61%
Crawford, Sarah • D	Wake	100%
Cunningham, Carla D. • D	Mecklenburg	68%
Dahle, Allison • D	Wake	89%
Davis, Jr., Ted • R	New Hanover	19%
Dew, Aisha • D	Mecklenburg	89%
Dixon, Jimmy • R	Duplin, Onslow	10%
Echevarria, Brian • R	Cabarrus	15%
Eddins, Blair • R	Alexander, Wilkes	15%
Ferguson, Anna • R	Jackson, Swain, Transylvania	NA
Gable, Wyatt • R	Onslow	11%
Gillespie, Karl • R	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon	13%
Goodwin, Edward C. • R	Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington	21%
Greene, Dudley • R	Avery, McDowell, Mitchell	15%
Greenfield, Julie • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Hall, Destin • R	Caldwell	18%
Hall, Kyle • R	Rockingham, Stokes, Surry	16%
Harrison, Pricey • D	Guilford	100%
Hastings, Kelly E. • R	Cleveland, Gaston	8%
Hawkins, Zack • D	Durham	94%
Helfrich, Beth • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Howard, Julia C. • R	Davie, Rowan	36%
Humphrey, Chris • R	Lenoir, Pitt	22%

HOUSE

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Jackson, Frances • D	Cumberland	92%
Huneycutt, Cody • R	Montgomery, Stanly	11%
Iler, Frank • R	Brunswick	13%
Jackson, Neal • R	Moore, Randolph	9%
Jeffers, B. Ray • D	Durham, Person	79%
Johnson, Jake • R	Henderson, Polk, Transylvania	14%
Johnson-Hostler, Monika • D	Wake	100%
Jones, Abe • D	Wake	88%
Jones, Brenden • R	Columbus, Robeson	16%
Kidwell, Keith • R	Beaufort, Craven	12%
Kiger, Dan • R	Surry, Wilkes	NA
Lambeth, Donny • R	Forsyth	10%
Liu, Ya • D	Wake	97%
Loftis, Donnie • R	Gaston	11%
Lofton, Brandon • D	Mecklenburg	98%
Logan, Carolyn G. • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Longest, Tim • D	Wake	100%
Lopez, Jordan • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Lowery, John L. • R	Robeson	NA
Majeed, Nasif • D	Mecklenburg	70%
McNeely, Jeffrey C. • R	Iredell	14%
Miller, Charles • R	Brunswick, New Hanover	15%
Morey, Marcia • D	Durham	98%
Moss, Ben • R	Montgomery, Richmond, Stanly	18%
Paré, Erin • R	Wake	17%
Penny, Jr., Howard • R	Harnett	15%
Pickett, Ray • R	Ashe, Watauga	15%

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Pierce, Garland E. • D	Hoke, Scotland	77%
Pierce, Rodney • D	Halifax, Northampton, Warren	100%
Pike, Joseph • R	Harnett	12%
Pittman, Dante • D	Nash, Wilson	92%
Pless, Mark • R	Haywood, Madison, Yancey	22%
Potts, Larry • R	Davidson	14%
Prather, Lindsey • D	Buncombe	100%
Price, Renée • D	Caswell, Orange	97%
Pyrtle, A. Reece • R	Rockingham	13%
Quick III, Amos • D	Guilford	94%
Reeder, MD, Timothy • R	Pitt	11%
Reives, II, Robert T. • D	Chatham, Durham	92%
Rhyne, Heather • R	Lincoln	15%
Riddell, Dennis • R	Alamance	11%
Roberson, James • D	Wake	89%
Ross, Stephen M. • R	Alamance	11%
Rubin, Phil • D	Wake	100%
Sauls, John • R	Harnett, Lee	17%
Schietzelt, Mike • R	Wake	8%
Scott, Paul • R	Cleveland, Rutherford	15%
Setzer, Mitchell S. • R	Catawba	30%
Shepard, Phil • R	Onslow	10%
Smith, Carson • R	Onslow, Pender	16%
Smith, Charles • D	Cumberland	81%
Strickland, Larry • R	Johnston	19%
Torbett, John A. • R	Gaston	13%
Turner, Brian • D	Buncombe	96%

HOUSE

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Tyson, Steve • R	Craven	15%
von Haefen, Julie • D	Wake	100%
Ward, Bill • R	Camden, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank	14%
Warren, Harry • R	Rowan	9%
Watford, Sam • R	Davidson	12%
Wheatley, Diane • R	Cumberland	17%
White, Donna McDowell • R	Johnston	17%
Willingham, Shelly • D	Bertie, Edgecombe, Martin	67%
Willis, David • R	Union	14%
Winslow, Matthew • R	Franklin, Nash	13%
Zenger, Jeff • R	Forsyth	13%

SENATE

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Adcock, Gale • D	Wake	91%
Alexander, W. Ted • R	Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln	7%
Applewhite, Val • D	Cumberland	96%
Barnes, Lisa • R	Franklin, Nash, Vance	4%
Batch, Sydney • D	Wake	88%
Berger, Philip • R	Guilford, Rockingham	21%
Blue, Jr., Daniel T. • D	Wake	81%
Bradley, Woodson • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Brinson, Bob • R	Beaufort, Craven, Lenoir	14%
Britt, Jr., Danny Earl • R	Hoke, Robeson, Scotland	4%
Burgin, Jim • R	Harnett, Lee, Sampson	8%
Chaudhuri, Jay • D	Wake	100%
Chitlik, Sophia • D	Durham	100%
Corbin, Kevin • R	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Transylvania	6%
Craven Jr., David • R	Anson, Montgomery, Randolph, Richmond, Union	3%
Daniel, Warren T. • R	Buncombe, Burke, McDowell	7%
Fatmi, Haseeb • D	Granville, Wake	NA
Ford, Carl • R	Rowan, Stanly	5%
Galey, Amy • R	Alamance, Randolph	3%
Garrett, Michael • D	Guilford	97%
Garson, Jonah • D	Caswell, Orange, Person	NA
Grafstein, Lisa • D	Wake	100%
Hanig, Bobby • R	Bertie, Camden, Currituck, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Tyrrell, Warren	14%
Hise, Ralph E. • R	Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, Yancey	5%

Representative • Party	Counties	Lifetime Score
Hollo, Mark • R	Caldwell, Catawba	14%
Jackson, Brent • R	Bladen, Duplin, Jones, Pender, Sampson	5%
Jarvis, Steve • R	Davidson, Davie	10%
Johnson, Todd • R	Cabarrus, Union	5%
Jones, Dana • R	Forsyth, Stokes	17%
Lazzara, Michael • R	Onslow	6%
Lee, Michael • R	New Hanover	9%
Lowe, Jr., Paul A. • D	Forsyth	62%
Mayfield, Julie • D	Buncombe	97%
McInnis, Tom • R	Cumberland, Moore	4%
Measmer, Chris • R	Cabarrus	14%
Moffit, Timothy D. • R	Henderson, Polk, Rutherford	8%
Mohammed, Mujtaba • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Murdock, Natalie • D	Chatham, Durham	100%
Newton, E.S. (Buck) • R	Greene, Wayne, Wilson	3%
Overcash, Brad • R	Gaston	0%
Rabon, Bill • R	Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover	4%
Robinson, Gladys A. • D	Guilford	82%
Salvador, DeAndrea • D	Mecklenburg	95%
Sanderson, Norman W. • R	Carteret, Chowan, Dare, Hyde, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Washington	5%
Sawrey, Benton • R	Johnston	4%
Sawyer, Vickie • R	Iredell, Mecklenburg	13%
Settle, Eddie • R	Alexander, Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin	4%
Smith, Kandie D. • D	Edgecombe, Pitt	81%
Theodros, Caleb • D	Mecklenburg	100%
Waddell, Joyce • D	Mecklenburg	82%

What To Do Now

Hold your legislators accountable.

Thank legislators who stood up for sound environmental policies. If they earned a low score or cast an anti-conservation vote, let your elected officials know how this impacts you and your values.

Ask your local, state, and federal candidates where they stand on these issues.

Use this scorecard to make informed decisions when choosing which state candidates deserve your support in the upcoming election. Visit [LCV.org](https://www.lcv.org) to see how your members of Congress are voting on federal issues.

Join NCLCV to help reclaim North Carolina's natural identity.

You can help turn environmental values into North Carolina priorities by becoming a NCLCV member today at [nclcv.org/donate](https://www.nclcv.org/donate). On our website, you can also sign up for our weekly Conservation Insider Bulletin to keep up with political and environmental policy news here in North Carolina and nationally.





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