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### **A Letter from our Executive Director**

For the life of me, I have no idea how to write a letter about the last year, especially as I had scheduled time to write this in the afternoon of January 6, 2021, just as the United States Capitol was being overrun. **As crazy as 2020 was, we just had 2021 say, "hold my beer."** 

2020 started with such promise for NCSEA, our members, and the state. Organizationally, NCSEA was and still is in excellent shape, thanks to the longtime leadership of Ivan Urlaub. And during a planning retreat in 2019 facilitated by NCSEA Lifetime Achievement winner and EOS coach Maria Kingery, Ivan made clear his interest and need to create a different role for himself that better utilized his unique skills as a visionary. Under Ivan's leadership, the team put together a plan to create that position and worked along with the board to flesh it out as much as possible. The board approved our plan to make a leadership transition.

And then everything changed. I don't have to tell you about how life has changed. You've lived it.

So I'm going to take this opportunity to do something a little different. I'm going to thank you for sticking with us, sticking with clean energy, and helping to make North Carolina a better place. Thank you.

And huge kudos to the full team at NCSEA. They have taken every hit in stride and have continued to put out great work on behalf of our members. They have changed virtually everything about what we do and how we do it. Virtual meetings with dogs barking in the background, or kids on laps.

The Policy team actually doubled the number of filings completed at the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) while also negotiating and guiding a number of settlements to move the needle on energy efficiency and renewable energy. We completed a groundbreaking quality project with the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). We completed numerous studies and reports, like the study of property tax impacts of solar installations. We intervened in South Carolina in a net energy metering docket that will be the model for North Carolina. We participated in about six million hours of NCUC rate case hearings. And, we even achieved a 4-star rating on Charity Navigator, proving the exceptional financial health and transparency of our organization as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

You have stuck with us, and I am so appreciative of that. Our member retention during 2020 was actually higher than in previous years, and many new companies, organizations, and individuals joined for the first time. I feel like that is a testament to the Membership team and to the recognition that clean energy continues to be an up and coming sector with remarkable resilience and opportunity. Your companies and organizations create jobs and opportunities that improve everyone's lives.

There is a lot more about each of the teams, reports, and programs from the past year later in this report. Please take a look at where we've been as a guide to where we are going. 2021 represents new opportunities for sustainable energy and our members. **We'll be here for you.** 

Ward Lenz Executive Director

Swad In



### **Weathering the Storm**

We don't need to tell you that 2020 was an unprecedented year; you know, because you experienced it for yourself. In North Carolina and throughout the world, people were forced to reckon with the total upending of life as we knew it. We'd like to be able to say that we all came out unscathed, but we know that's just not true. Over 12,500 of our fellow North Carolinians have passed away due to COVID-19, and hundreds of thousands more fell ill. Businesses across the state have struggled to keep their doors open as a result of the virus, and over one million North Carolinians are facing unemployment and economic uncertainty as a result. What's worse, the pandemic further exacerbated pre-existing health and economic disparities—impacting people of color and those in the most rural parts of our state the most. Though we're starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, there's no denying that we are living in some hard times.

North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) has weathered this storm with you. We've seen our friends, members, partners, and supporters suffer both devastating losses and incredible recoveries. We've seen communities come together to support one another through their greatest challenges. We've seen businesses partner with one another to develop innovative solutions to today's problems. **What we've seen is resilience.** 

NCSEA knows resilience, because we know clean energy. And, we know that the benefits of clean energy to North Carolinians are more important than ever.

- Clean energy attracts and supports investments in local communities
- · Clean energy lowers bills and reduces negative economic impacts of fossil-fuel dependence
- Clean energy increases energy independence and resilience
- Clean energy means cleaner air and less consumption of natural resources

Despite all the barriers in front of us in 2020, (actually, because of the barriers in front of us), we worked together with our friends, members, partners, and supporters to continue growing North Carolina's clean energy economy. We're proud of what we accomplished despite the challenges thrown our way, and we can't wait to share them with you here.

It's a new year, but our mission stays the same. We will continue to work with you to drive policy and market development to create clean energy jobs, economic opportunities, and affordable energy options that benefit all of North Carolina. *Lives, and livelihoods, depend on it.* 



Reminded each other 475 times (approximately) that "you're on mute."

NCSEA was awarded a 4-star rating on Charity Navigator—the highest rating a charitable non-profit can achieve.



NCSEA signed on 99 new members in 2020.

Over the course of 2020, NCSEA sent over 150 newsletters with an average open rate of 30 percent.



NCSEA made 97 filings at the North Carolina Utilities Commission with a total of 3,238 pages. NCSEA held 19 member calls to discuss some of the most important issues impacting clean energy in North Carolina.



NCSEA hosted 34 (mostly virtual) events throughout the year!

Squeaky Clean was played over 12,494 times across 50 countries.



Shared over 85 clean energy jobs on our jobs page.



# Advance

#### ADAPTING I PARTNER COLLABORATION I STANDING UP FOR RACIAL EQUITY

In 2020, we saw 15 percent of all electricity generated in North Carolina come from clean sources—a 17 percent increase from 2019!

- Rooftop solar registrations increased by 6,754, a 38 percent increase from the end of 2019 and 54 MW, a 24 percent increase from the end of 2019;
- NCSEA struck a deal with Duke Energy and environmental groups to expand solar access in the Carolinas;
- Through the end of 2020, there were 37 additional utility-scale solar systems installed in North Carolina, a 6 percent increase compared to the end of 2019; and there were 474 MW of additional capacity, a 10.4 percent increase over the end of 2019;
- While North Carolina is 14th in the number of EV charging stations,
   we're 26th for the number of stations per 1,000 people; and
- Clean energy brought North Carolina \$2.16 billion in revenue in 2018 and North Carolina remained a leader in the nation for installed solar capacity.



Working virtually enabled more collaboration, with more partners, producing both near and long-term results.

- Despite the pandemic, NCSEA signed on new 99 members in 2020, adding instrumental voices from local government, non-profits, and large businesses to our collective influence;
- After years of producing separate reports on clean energy jobs in North Carolina, NCSEA partnered with another leading clean energy advocacy organization, E2, to produce the 2019 Clean Jobs Report introducing thousands more clean energy supporters to NCSEA's mission and vision;
- Our team helped lead three educational webinars to inform 23 Duke
   Collaborative participants in preparation for a potential tarriffed on-bill pilot program;
- Together with our economic development partners, we were actively engaged in the Duke Energy Efficiency Collaborative and expanded access to clean energy for North Carolinians from low-to-moderate income households after our proposal for a tarriffed on-bill pilot program was approved; and
- We partnered with nearly 40 clean energy experts from across the country to deliver our 10-part Making Energy Work Webinar Series, which saw almost 500 unique attendees!



## ADVANCE: Standing Up for Racial Equity

2020 was also a year of ugly truths. Many Americans were challenged by the history of systemic racism in the United States, and NCSEA was no exception. For the first time in recent history, we publicly condemned the epidemic of violence against Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). We re-committed ourselves to dismantling white supremacy in the clean energy industry and in North Carolina at large, and we started with ourselves.

In the last half of the year, the NCSEA team engaged in an anti-racist continuing education program. We read about systemic racism and engaged with one another about specific ways we could alter our work to become more anti-racist in our practices and policies. And, we continued our endeavor to amplify the voices of BIPOC clean energy professionals.



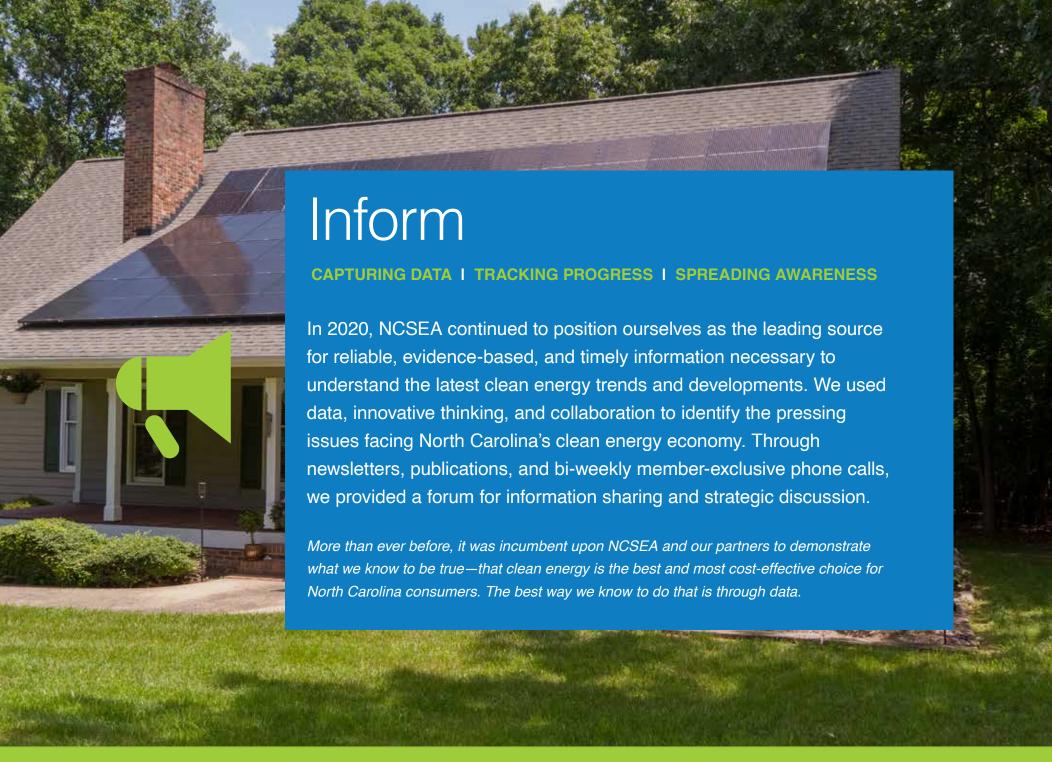
# ADVANCE: Standing Up for Racial Equity

#### **ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY**

At NCSEA, we are committed to taking risks, setting ambitious goals, and accepting responsibility—and helping our partners do the same. That goal of ours to only host events that featured a diverse speaker list? That's an ambitious goal, and one we still stand by. But we will be the first to admit that we didn't live up to our own expectations in 2020. You might have seen some MANELS (all male panels) and WANELS (all white panels) at our events, and for that we are truly sorry.

Looking for diverse clean energy experts in North Carolina isn't quite looking for a needle in a haystack...but it's pretty close. The number of BIPOC clean energy professionals in North Carolina is staggeringly low compared to the number of white clean energy professionals. In North Carolina, 80 percent of clean energy employees identify as white, and 76 percent identify as male. This isn't an excuse for our misstep, but it was a reminder to all of us just how much work we have left to do to create a clean energy industry that is fully reflective of the people







#### RENEWABLE ENERGY DATABASE

Using the Renewable Energy Database (REDB), the NCSEA team was able to track the development of clean energy systems throughout North Carolina. This information served particularly useful in 2020 as we watched carefully to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the clean energy industry in our state. The REDB is a comprehensive source of information on renewable energy projects in North Carolina. All the information contained in the REDB comes from filings to the NCUC, primarily from Reports of Proposed Construction (ROPCs) and Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCNs). NCSEA is the only organization in the Southeast to maintain a database of this type.

In early 2020, we created a new member benefit: a once-monthly summary of REDB data that compares system registrations in the current year-to-date to the previous year-to-date and ranks the top 10 installer companies.

#### Systems Registered (Year-to-Date 2020)

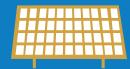
Residential 6,823



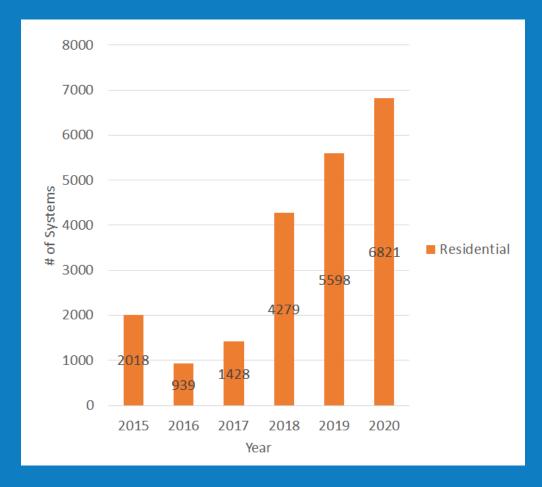
Commercial and Industrial 123



Utility-Scale 33

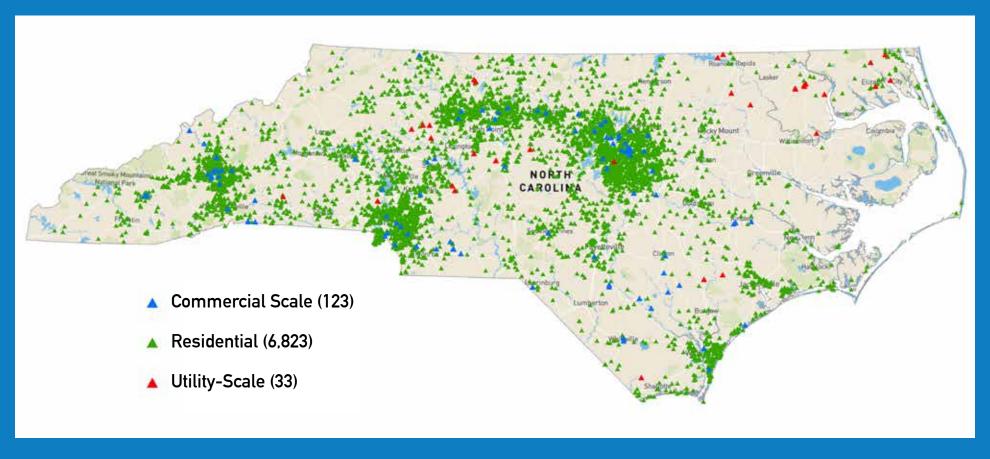


# INFORM: Capturing Data



This chart shows the total number of residential solar PV registrations for each year from 2015 through December 2020. The growth seen in the last three years can be attributed to a dramatic increase in the number of residential solar PV registrations due to the Solar Rebate Program.

# INFORM: Capturing Data



This map shows the registrations of new renewable energy facilities across the state in 2020.



#### **PROPERTY TAX STUDY**

After the success of our first report on the impact of solar development on property tax income in North Carolina, our 2020 update revealed similarly impressive numbers: properties that developed solar saw a nearly 1,900 percent increase in tax revenue.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT CLEAN ENERGY DASHBOARD

To support local governments' efforts in setting clean energy goals and tracking progress, NCSEA created a local government clean energy dashboard that is informed by the REDB. This dashboard can be used to generate customized clean energy reports that quantify energy capacity and compare metrics to similar cities/counties.

In North Carolina, a county's property tax revenue increases an average of

\$18,862 1,900%

after a utility-scale solar PV system is installed.



# INFORM: Capturing Data

#### **CLEAN JOBS NORTH CAROLINA**

Of the many heartbreaks that came out of 2020, the sheer number of Americans who suffered a pandemic related job loss is one that we'll be recovering from for quite some time. Unfortunately, North Carolina's clean energy industry wasn't immune to these losses—after ending 2019 with 112,720 clean energy jobs in the state, nearly 19 percent of those were lost due to the COVID-19 economic crisis.

### Statewide Clean Energy Employment



88,001
Energy Efficiency

12,349
Renewable Energy



3,727

**Grid and Storage** 



7,105

Clean Vehicles



1,538 Fuels 112,**72**0 TOTAL

In the <u>NCSEA Clean Jobs North Carolina 2020</u> report, we outlined the sheer size of North Carolina's clean energy industry, the impact that the pandemic had on the sector, and why focusing on clean energy in the recovery will set us up to come back from the pandemic stronger and better.





### **INFORM: Spreading Awareness**

In 2020, we kept you informed by keeping up with the communications you know and love.

NCSEA sent over 152 newsletters to our subscribers with just under half of these newsletters reaching about 3,000 people! Even with such a large audience, our newsletters consistently achieved higher-than-average open rates for non-profit organizations, with an average open rate of 30.07 percent (10 percent over the national average!)

We shared timely topics with members in Clean Energy Insights; promoted new members and shared how clean energy impacts the daily life of North Carolinians in Clean Energy Storyteller; advertised NCSEA and partner events in Clean Energy Events Radar; and navigated the short session at the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) in Clean Energy Policy Update.

Clean Energy Insights



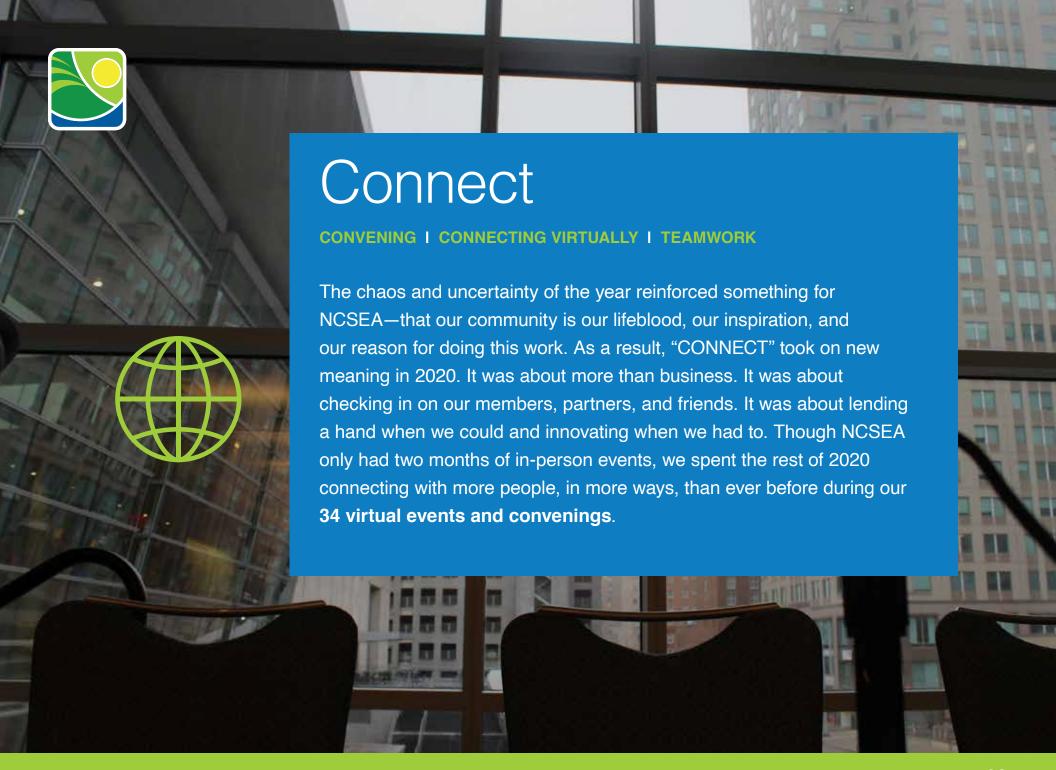
Clean Energy Storyteller



Policy Update









Building on the success of the first two years of WICE, NCSEA launched the Women in Clean Energy Mentorship Program in February. And, what a party! Over 120 of us channeled our inner Leslie Knope and celebrated WICE

with a Galentine's Day themed party. There

were waffles, there were cocktails, and there

was so much camaraderie.

WI Women in CE Clean Energy

The WICE Mentorship Program was a huge success, with 98 participants (44 pairs) joining in the first year. When we launched the program in February 2020, we had no idea just how important it would be for participants to have someone they could rely on for support, learning, and networking. We didn't know what was in store for us in 2020. Particularly for the young women just entering the clean energy industry, the Mentorship Program was not just a source of comfort, but a source of opportunity.

"My mentor provided support, guidance, resources, and even friendship!"

- Ondrea Austen

"My mentor-mentee relationship provided me with a direct line for advice any time I had a question or felt I needed guidance relating to my current position."

- Vanessa Luthringer



## CONNECT: Making Energy Work Webinar Series

Initially, we had big plans to bring back our Making Energy Work conference in 2020. But with the closing of the outside world, we had to become a little more creative. So we did the next best thing—turned it into a webinar series! The **2020 Making Energy Work Webinar Series** included 10 sessions that brought greater content and thought leadership to more people than we could have ever anticipated.

- 10 webinars
- Seven months
- 500 unique attendees or over 1,700 total attendees
- · 40 subject matter experts including
  - Sushma Masemore, NC Dept. of Environmental Quality
  - Jigar Shah, Generate Capital, The Energy Gang Podcast
  - Holmes Hummel, Clean Energy Works
  - · John Hardin, NC Dept. of Commerce
  - · Amory Lovins, Rocky Mountain Institute



Featured from left to right















Since 2020 was such a challenging year, celebrating our members and their achievements was more important than ever before.

#### IN DECEMBER, WE PRESENTED SIX NCSEA MEMBERS WITH AWARDS:

Lifetime Achievement Award: Anne Tazewell, NC Clean Energy Technology Center
Individual Clean Energy Leader of the Year Award: Heather Bolick, City of Charlotte
Diversity and Inclusion in Clean Energy Award: Good Solar USA
Clean Energy Project of the Year Award: Jones County K-12 School, SfL+a Architects

Clean Energy Innovator of the Year Award: Leyline Renewable Capital

Clean Energy Business of the Year Award: Pisgah Energy



## **CONNECT: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work**

Though we couldn't huddle in person, NCSEA had the opportunity to work with dozens of new and returning partners on a variety of projects in 2020.

- We worked with NC WAP to pilot a project that evaluates the effectiveness of, and provides suggestions for, improvement for three agencies providing weatherization services to counties in Northeast North Carolina;
  - Our work was so successful that we secured an additional contract to continue this work across
    the state.
- We worked with the **Blue Horizons Project** to put together a summary report of the work that was done in Asheville to expand energy efficiency in low-income homes; and
- We worked with the Environmental Defense Fund, Southern Environmental Law Center, Vote Solar, the North Carolina Clean Energy Business Alliance, and so many others to help us advocate for cleaner, cheaper, energy in front of the NCUC and NCGA.

Our work with such a variety of partners positioned NCSEA well to negotiate with Duke Energy now and in the future.













# Advocate

The NCGA convened a short session in 2020, and while NCSEA wasn't always "in the building," we were still advocating for smart public policies that consider the diverse needs of North Carolina consumers and support the growth of our state's clean energy economy. During a very economically, physically, and mentally challenging year, we fought tirelessly with our partners to protect the interests of North Carolina energy consumers.

Fun Fact: In 2020, NCSEA's Policy team completed 97 filings amounting to 3,238 pages—this is nearly DOUBLE the total filings from 2019!









Throughout 2020, we cultivated relationships with local governments across North Carolina—offering ourselves as a resource with the Local Government Clean Energy Dashboard and fighting restrictive anti-clean energy ordinances. The work continues, though, as even more counties enacted restrictive ordinances or moratoriums on solar development in 2020. NCSEA continues to fight for the right of every North Carolinian to have clean, affordable, and accessible energy, but we need our members, donors, and friends to help us ensure that large swaths of the state aren't excluded from clean energy development.



As with previous years, NCSEA's programmatic work demonstrates our thought leadership, passion, and perseverance to the public. During a year in crisis, though, our **Core Services team** proved to be the true heroes of the organization. The team did an exceptional job guiding and supporting our team members through the uncertainty of COVID-19.

- Modified several policies to allow staff more flexibility to navigate their personal and professional responsibilities;
- Applied for and received a fully forgivable loan to cover operational and payroll costs, which
  resulted in zero lay-offs or furloughs across the organization;
- Facilitated the transition of our Executive Leadership, with Ward Lenz elevating to Executive Director and Ivan Urlaub starting his new role as Chief, Strategy and Innovation;
- Demonstrated NCSEA's commitment to being good stewards of financial support when we were awarded a 4-star rating on Charity Navigator—the highest rating a charitable non-profit can achieve;
- Started a parent support group to help staff navigate the unique challenges of working while managing remote learning for their children;
- Used a \$100K allowance negotiated during our lease re-up to manage a construction project that added 4 new offices and made other much needed improvements to our suite. We can't wait to finally be able to use our new and improved space; and
- Facilitated the search and hiring of two key additions to our team, a Director of Development and a Marketing Communications Specialist.

**Four Star Charity** 









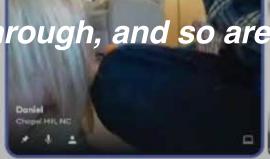


Yes, we worked hard, but we had some fun while we were at it. The NCSEA team got together for virtual happy hours, we said "hello" to each other's pets and/or children when they made ill-timed appearances on Zoom calls, and we laughed when someone started speaking while they were still on mute (again).

It was a rough year. It was also a year that showed us, individually and at an industry level, just how resilient we can be. We kept our mission to ensure affordable, accessible, and reliable clean energy for all North Carolinians top of mind, and we powered through.





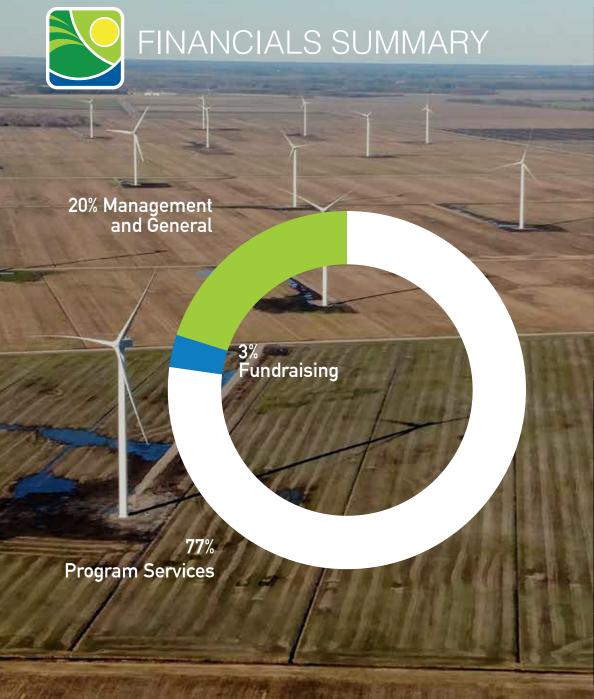












REVENUE AND	SUPPORT
Grants	\$358,497.00
Direct Public Support	\$1,129,294.00
Indirect Public Support	\$291,034.00
Sponsorship	\$26,550.00
Membership	\$119,546.00
Program Income	\$117,155.00
Interest Income	\$7,528.00
MISC Income	\$288,497
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$2,338,101.00

EXPENSES	
Management and General	\$456,331.00
Fundraising	\$76,333.00
Program Services	\$1,739,256.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,271,920.00
TOTAL EXPENSES  Net Assets - Beginning of Year	<b>\$2,271,920.00</b> \$1,323,509.00
	. , ,





### NCSEA'S 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Thank you to our 2020 Board of Directors:

Cris Masselle, CM Marketing

Vanessa King, VGK Consulting

Ron DiFelice, Energy Intel Partners

Rogelio Sullivan, NC State University

Steve Kalland, NC Clean Energy Technology Center

Riza Jenkins, Summit Ridge Energy

Cyrus Bhedwar, Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance

Tarek Abdel-Salam, East Carolina University

Beth Clark, Leyline Renewable Capital

Ben Prochazka, Electrification Coalition

Owen Smith, Trane Energy Services/Ingersoll Rand

Cullen Morris, Cooperative Solar

Sara Telano, Air Force Research Laboratory

James Ortega, Pine Gate Renewables





### THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS ADVANCED LARGE MEMBERS





























# **Connect with Us**

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