

MI HEALTHY CLIMATE PLAN

2023 Report





MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

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Introduction

2023 was a year marked by historic investments in the clean energy economy, legislative victories that enshrined the recommendations of the [MI Healthy Climate Plan](#) into law, and a continued commitment to support Michigan communities through outreach and collaboration – especially those that have been underserved.

The milestones of 2023 would not have been possible without the bold climate leadership that came before, including Governor Whitmer’s Executive Directive 2020-10, which charged the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), through its Office of Climate and Energy (OCE), with developing the MI Healthy Climate Plan (the Plan). The Plan was released on April 21, 2022, after extensive stakeholder engagement that included consultation with tribal governments, meetings with the Council on Climate Solutions, workgroup members and key stakeholders, and with consultation from the Michigan Advisory Council on Environmental Justice (MAC-EJ). Similarly, Governor Whitmer’s Executive Directive 2019-12 entered Michigan into the U.S. Climate Alliance and committed Michigan to pursue at least a 26-28 percent reduction below 2005 levels in GHG emissions by 2025. [As of 2023](#), the Alliance has reduced its collective net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 18% between 2005 and 2021, and is now on track to meet its near-term climate goal by reducing collective GHG emissions 26% below 2005 levels by 2025.

As 2023 comes to a close, just over 18 months since the issuance of the Plan, many of its goals have already been codified via legislation or advanced via executive actions. And with the support of unprecedented climate investments from both the federal and state governments, Michigan is better-positioned than ever before to make all of the MI Healthy Climate Plan a reality for Michigan residents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MI HEALTHY CLIMATE PLAN

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Mitigate the worst impacts of climate change
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Spur economic development and create good-paying jobs
- 

Protect and improve the health of Michiganders
- 

Position Michigan as a leader in climate action
- 

Protect our natural resources and wildlife
- 

Make Michigan energy independent
- 

Address environmental injustices

Since the issuance of the Plan in 2022, EGLE has provided an annual report to the Governor on activities in support of its implementation. Executive Order 2020-182 also calls for a regular report to the Governor on the activities of the [Council on Climate Solutions](#). The following document provides a snapshot of activities undertaken in 2023 by the Council on Climate Solutions and a brief summary of some of the key activities state government and stakeholders have taken across Michigan to support implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan. This report is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the many actions being taken across the state toward reaching a carbon neutral Michigan.

Activities of the Council on Climate Solutions

Throughout 2021 and 2022, the Council on Climate Solutions played a foundational role in the development and roll out of the Plan. In 2023, the Council on Climate Solutions held three meetings related to Plan implementation. The Council held these meetings on February 28, May 23, and August 22, covering topics including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, the 2023-24 State Budget, climate action at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), updates of the Office of Environmental Justice Public Advocate and the Michigan Advisory Council on Environmental Justice, the Clean Energy Future legislative package, and general Plan implementation updates. The meetings also included presentations from outside speakers, including Evergreen Action and RMI.

Legislation to Implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan

The first quarter of 2023 was marked by momentum around climate action in Michigan, with notable activities across state government, including in the executive branch, the legislature, and in statewide pursuit of climate-related federal funding opportunities.

In January, after hearing from EGLE acting director Dan Eichinger, the legislature invited Climate and Energy Advisor Cory Connolly, EGLE Office of Climate and Energy, to [testify before the House Energy, Communications, and Technology committee on March 1, 2023](#), about the MI Healthy Climate Plan. On March 9, 2023, Connolly was invited to testify before the [Senate Energy and Environment Committee](#), also on the MI Healthy Climate Plan. Climate and energy initiatives were highlighted among legislators’ top priorities, as reported on by MLive:

“Legislative leaders said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s climate action plan is a blueprint for the next two years. That means renewable energy initiatives, electric vehicle programs, a faster end to burning coal for energy, home improvement and weatherization investment, and energy affordability measures.” ([MLive 3/8/2023](#))

On January 25, 2023, Governor Whitmer emphasized the importance of climate in her [2023 State of the State address](#):

“Last, but certainly not least, it is our shared duty to face climate change head-on and protect our land and water. We must pursue climate action while creating jobs, lowering costs, and becoming a hub of clean energy production. Last year, we unveiled the MI Healthy Climate Plan, and this year, we should make bold investments in climate action to deliver on its targets. Let’s get it done.”

In July and in November, the legislature passed, and the Governor signed a series of bills implementing key provisions of the MI Healthy Climate Plan.

MI HEALTHY CLIMATE PLAN LEGISLATIVE WINS

MI Healthy Climate Plan Recommendation	2023 Clean Energy Legislation
Meet a goal of 100% clean energy no later than 2050.	Requires 80% clean energy by 2035 and 100% by 2040.
Set a 50% renewable energy standard by 2030.	Commits to 50% renewable energy by 2030 and 60% by 2035.
Increase options for customer-driven renewable energy, such as rooftop solar and voluntary green pricing programs.	Increases the cap on distributed generation resources like rooftop solar from 1% to 10%.
Statewide storage target to deploy 4,000 MW of grid-scale storage by 2040, with an interim goal of 2,500 MW by 2030	Establishes an energy storage mandate of 2,500 MW by 2030.
Address barriers to siting renewable energy.	<p>Streamlines the siting process for large-scale wind, solar, and storage projects.</p> <p>Clarifies solar energy taxation, allows local governments and commercial solar energy developments to opt into payments in lieu of taxes (PILT).</p> <p>Guarantees farmers can utilize their properties as they see fit, including to host solar projects.</p>
Achieve at least 2% annual electric energy efficiency savings by increasing the current energy waste reduction target for electric utilities.	<p>Increases Michigan’s Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) standard to 1.5% and sets a goal of 2% for electric utilities (with corresponding increases for natural gas utilities).</p> <p>Requires low-income programming with increasing minimum spend levels that ramp up to 25% by 2030.</p> <p>Requires Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) assess energy efficiency every four years.</p>
Restore the energy waste reduction target for municipal and cooperative electric utilities.	Reestablishes energy waste reduction standards for municipal and cooperative utilities.

MI Healthy Climate Plan Recommendation	2023 Clean Energy Legislation
<p>Incentivize energy efficient appliances that yield immediate energy cost savings.</p>	<p>Creates new opportunities for efficient electrification, fuel switching, and whole home improvement.</p> <p>Requires MPSC assess electrification every four years.</p>
<p>Calls for additional funding for the Utility Consumer Representation Fund, managed by the Utility Consumer Participation Board (UCPB), to support ratepayer advocates in their interventions at the MPSC.</p>	<p>Doubles UCPB funding, expands the number of cases the UCPB can intervene in, and prioritizes UCPB grants in environmental justice communities and communities with high energy burden.</p>
<p>Adopt and promote property assessed clean energy programs (PACE).</p>	<p>Expands the eligibility of properties and projects for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing.</p>
<p>Expand on the efforts of the MPSC to conduct an environmental justice and health impact analysis as part of Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) so the potential community impacts of utility investment decisions are more fully considered.</p>	<p>Allows the MPSC, for the first time, to consider climate, affordability, and environmental justice in utility IRPs.</p> <p>Expands EGLE’s IRP advisory opinion to include new evaluations including the potential impacts of the IRP on EJ and public health.</p> <p>Requires MPSC EJ impacts and programs every four years.</p> <p>Requires the MPSC to conduct an EJ analysis on the siting of any proposed new, abated natural gas facility and requires the utilities to undertake a similar analysis on fossil fuel peaker plant retirements to ensure community impact is taken into consideration in addition to economics.</p>
<p>Provide support and best practices to communities addressing economic transitions from closures of fossil fuel facilities and other large industrial operations.</p>	<p>Creates the Office of Worker and Community Economic Transition within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to assist workers, communities, and employers during the transition to clean energy and electric vehicles.</p>

MI Healthy Climate Plan Recommendation	2023 Clean Energy Legislation
Strengthen and create workforce development, job training, pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship, joint labor management training, and other such programs for in-demand clean energy jobs. Ensure these programs are federally certified by the Department of Labor where applicable.	Requires all projects approved in IRPs and renewable siting cases pay workers prevailing wage, enter into project labor agreements, and utilize Department of Labor certified apprenticeships.
Incentivize workforce development and training for workers experiencing energy-related employment transitions and those in underrepresented or disproportionately impacted communities.	Encourages diverse workforce development and hiring from environmental justice and low-income communities for EWR programs.

In July, Governor Whitmer signed key legislation to help implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan. To help deploy renewable energy at scale and to improve conditions for siting solar, House Bills 4317 and 4318 allow local governments and commercial solar energy developments to opt into payments in lieu of taxes (PILT). The MI Healthy Climate Plan also called for expansion of Michigan’s successful Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing program. Senate Bills 302 and 303 expand the eligibility of properties and projects for C-PACE financing. C-PACE is a program that allows local government units to work with building owners and contractors on energy efficient and climate resilient projects and has led to over [\\$332 million in energy savings for Michigan businesses](#) over the last decade.

Legislation to clean the electric grid, covering some of the most important components of the Plan, was passed and signed into law in November and December 2023. The legislation helps make Michigan a national clean energy leader and ensures our state’s ambition meets the urgency of the climate crisis. These bills balance reliability and affordability while allowing the state to protect our land, air, and water for current and future generations, meet our energy-related climate goals, shore up energy independence, protect private property rights, support family-sustaining jobs, and lower energy costs while making Michigan more competitive for federal funding and private sector investment. These policies are essential to meeting the goals of the Plan.

Key topics of the bills as passed:

SB 271 (sponsored by Senator Geiss): Adopts 100% clean energy, renewable energy, storage standards, expands the distributed generation cap

SB 502 (sponsored by Senator Shink): Embeds climate, workers, and justice in IRPs, expands participation at MPSC

SB 273 (sponsored by Senator Singh): Expands energy waste reduction leadership, boosts low-income programs

SB 519 (sponsored by Senator Singh): Creates Office of Worker and Community Economic Transition

HB 5120, HB 5121 (sponsored by Representatives Aiyash and Puri): Streamlines renewable siting, supports host communities

HB 4706 (sponsored by Representative MacDonnell): Allows entities to own or operate electric vehicle chargers without being considered a public utility so they can qualify for funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

SB 277 (sponsored by Senator McDonald Rivet): Protects farmers' rights to host solar projects

Collectively, this package of bills, building from the legislation passed in July, does the following:



Makes Michigan a clean energy leader among states: Michigan's 100% clean energy standard by 2040 surges Michigan to national leadership, becoming one of the most progressive states in the nation on clean energy and the strongest state on clean energy policy in the Midwest.



Includes historic increases in renewable energy. Currently, [just 16% of Michigan's electricity is generated from renewable energy](#). Michigan's new 50% renewable energy standard by 2030 and 60% by 2035 will account for a 4x increase in renewables in just over ten years. Additionally, this legislation creates new pathways for deploying renewables at the scope and scale necessary to meet our renewable goals, including streamlining the siting process for large-scale wind, solar, and storage projects, and supporting communities that host projects. The new laws also require the study of long-duration storage and establishes a new energy storage standard of 2,500MW, making Michigan one of just a few states that require energy storage standards.



Increases access to rooftop solar and customer-driven renewables: To help accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, the legislation maintained the existing voluntary green pricing programs, allowing customers to choose renewables from their utility providers. It also expands the number of families and businesses able to generate electricity with rooftop solar. Many of Michigan's utilities have allowed distributed generation to the previous 1% limit (DTE Energy at 6%, Consumer's Energy at 4%). The new laws build on that progress by increasing the cap to 10%.



Lowers energy costs with expanded energy waste reduction and protects ratepayers. Michigan has long shown a commitment to energy waste reduction, and the legislation signed by Governor Whitmer in November increases Michigan's EWR standard to 1.5% and sets a goal of 2% for electric and gas utilities. It also brings back standards for municipal and cooperative utilities, which had previously sunset. Additionally, the new laws create opportunities for efficient electrification and whole home improvement programs and require minimum spending levels for low-income programming. The laws also require that

all savings from renewable energy or energy efficiency realized from these bills are returned to customers, not utility shareholders. The new laws are expected to save Michigan households an average of \$145 a year in energy costs.



Centers environmental justice and equity in clean energy programs. For the first time, thanks to legislation passed in 2023, the MPSC can consider climate, environmental justice (EJ), and non-discrimination in their decision-making around long-term utility plans, expanding their toolbox to ensure equitable implementation of clean energy laws. The new laws also expand public engagement and opportunities for residential ratepayer voices to be heard in proceedings, with a focus on EJ communities and those facing the highest energy burden. The new laws also require the MPSC to conduct an environmental justice review on all new abated natural gas facilities and on fossil fuel plant retirements. Additionally, the laws expand EGLE’s advisory opinion for long-term utility plans to include new evaluations on the potential impacts of and alternatives to the proposed plan, whether the utility’s plan is consistent with the state’s climate goals, and identification of potential impacts of the utility’s plan on environmental justice and public health.



Secures living wages for clean energy workers and builds Michigan’s clean energy workforce. Michigan is number one in the Midwest for clean energy jobs, according to the [most recent report from Clean Jobs Midwest](#). These new laws build on that leadership by creating thousands of jobs and adopting some of the strongest labor standards for clean energy projects in the country. The new laws also allow the MPSC to prioritize worker benefits in long-term utility plans, including the requirement of paying prevailing wage, entering into project labor agreements, and utilizing union apprenticeships. The laws also encourage diverse workforce development, hiring from EJ and low-income communities for EWR programs, and utilizing union apprentices. They also create an Office of Worker and Community Transition to protect workers and communities who have hosted fossil generation during the ongoing energy transition.

Climate in the State Budget

On February 8, 2023, Governor Whitmer’s [Executive Budget](#) recommendation for the FY 2023 supplemental budget and the FY 2024 budget included over \$1 billion in investments to help implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan.

In June, the budget passed, tracking to the Governor’s initial vision. The budget closely followed the Plan’s Roadmap to 2030, covering several economic sectors and action areas: energy production, transportation and mobility, and the built environment – the three sectors that present the greatest opportunities for greenhouse gas reduction – along with natural and working lands, environmental justice, and more.

CLEAN THE ELECTRIC GRID

The Plan sets a goal of generating 60% of the state’s electricity from renewable resources, as well as limiting the consumer cost of powering and heating homes to not more than 6% of annual income for low-income households. The combined FY 2023 supplemental and the FY 2024 budget includes approximately \$265 million related to the energy sector:

- \$150 million to restart the Palisades Nuclear Facility, a plant that provides 800 megawatts of clean energy.
- \$43 million to enhance the electric grid and reduce power outages.
- \$30 million to EGLE to launch Renewable-Ready Communities, a program that will incentivize communities to host utility-scale renewables.
- \$21.3 million to help nonprofits, communities, and businesses expand clean energy infrastructure.
- \$10.5 million to provide community energy upgrades, including a community solar array and undergrounding of power lines.
- \$8.4 million to expand energy efficiency programming.
- \$1.8 million to increase opportunities for low-income residents to participate in energy rate cases.

ELECTRIFY VEHICLES AND INCREASE PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Plan calls for the infrastructure necessary to support two million electric vehicles on Michigan roads by 2030, along with increasing access to clean transportation options – including public transit – by 15% a year. The combined FY 2023 supplemental and the FY 2024 budget includes about \$261 million for mobility upgrades:

- \$125 million to help school districts buy clean school buses.
- \$70 million to expand clean transportation options, such as transit and high-speed rail.
- \$45 million to expand operating budgets for transit agencies.
- \$7 million to test and deploy new mobility technologies and fill mobility gaps.
- \$5 million to build out the [Lake Michigan Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Circuit](#), an electric vehicle road trip around Lake Michigan.
- \$5 million to support proving, testing, and demonstration efforts in the mobility industry.
- \$3.5 million to make streets shared and safe for all users, including cyclists.
- \$1 million to study the needs associated with transitioning 100% of the state’s fleet to electric power.

REPAIR AND DECARBONIZE HOMES AND BUSINESSES

The Plan includes reducing emissions from heating Michigan homes and businesses by 17%, along with increasing investments in building repair and improvement to lower costs for working families and small businesses. The combined FY 2023 supplemental and the FY 2024 budget directed about \$312 million to this sector:

- \$212 million to provide rebates for energy efficient home upgrades.

- \$50 million to upgrade school water systems and energy, including building on-site renewables.
- \$25 million to repair and weatherize homes to enable clean energy upgrades.
- \$20 million to conduct energy audits to enable clean energy in schools.
- \$5 million to the [Michigan Saves](#) green bank to fund clean energy in homes and businesses.

PROTECT MICHIGAN’S LAND AND WATER

Agricultural soil management is a major source of emissions from working lands, primarily from large-scale farm operations in southern Michigan, while forests and wetlands in the north are the state’s major carbon sink. The Plan includes protecting 30% of Michigan’s land and water to naturally capture GHG emissions supporting farmers’ best management practices to improve soil health, store carbon, utilize other GHG emissions, and protect water quality; and funding programs to encourage the purchase of Michigan-grown and -raised products, address food insecurity challenges, and counter supply chain issues. The combined FY 2023 supplemental and the FY 2024 budget for natural and working lands includes about \$14.4 million:

- \$13 million for agricultural climate resiliency and soil health to research new regenerative agriculture practices and help farmers reduce run off and increase crop diversity.
- \$1.4 million to expand capacity around climate and natural lands programs.

COMMIT TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PURSUE A JUST TRANSITION

The Plan prioritizes [environmental justice](#) as necessary to drive better health outcomes, good jobs, and economic prosperity for all Michiganders. The Plan includes goals to ensure that at least 40% of state funding for climate-related and water infrastructure initiatives benefit disadvantaged communities and that Michigan fosters a just transition for all workers through proactive engagement, job training, and workforce development. The budget includes about \$21 million for EJ climate initiatives:

- \$20 million to EGLE to improve air quality and clean up contamination in EJ communities.
- \$1 million to EGLE to expand activities that reduce environmental impacts in EJ communities.

CROSS-SECTOR INVESTMENTS

In other climate-related investments, the combined FY 2023 supplemental and the FY 2024 budget also includes:

- \$350 million to start the [Make it in Michigan](#) Match Competitiveness Fund to leverage federal funding.
- \$14 million to implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan, including planning, staffing, and new programs.
- \$10.3 million to address all of Michigan’s [orphan wells](#).
- \$5 million to support the Kent County Sustainable Business Park.
- \$2.1 million to launch the [MI Healthy Climate Corps](#), helping communities take climate action.
- \$1.7 million to pilot new carbon tracking software and metrics for EGLE operations.

Climate-Related Federal Funding

Atlas Public Policy's [Issue Brief on The State of Federal Climate Implementation By State](#) lists Michigan as having received more federal climate funding, nearly \$1.3 billion, than any state in the nation, except California. Similarly, according to a [Climate Power Clean Energy Boom report](#), Michigan is leading all other states with 30 new projects announced since the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). These new clean energy projects have already spurred \$21.3 billion in investment and helped create or move forward over 16,699 good-paying clean energy jobs in the state. According to [the White House](#), under the Biden Administration \$9.6 billion has been invested in Michigan's public infrastructure and clean energy.

The IRA created the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund \(GGRF\)](#)—a \$27 billion investment to mobilize financing and private capital to address the climate crisis, ensure our country's economic competitiveness, and promote energy independence while delivering lower energy costs and economic revitalization to communities that have historically been left behind. The GGRF consists of three prongs – the National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF), Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA), and Solar for All (SFA). In October, EGLE submitted an application for \$250 million in funding from Solar for All, the maximum award amount Michigan is able to pursue, titled the MI Healthy Solar for All program. Despite the State of Michigan not being eligible to apply for funding under the NCIF or CCIA, EGLE and many other state and local partners are collaborating on developing a comprehensive strategy to leverage as much federal funding as possible.

The [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants \(CPRG\)](#) program provides \$5 billion in grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement ambitious plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. EGLE was named as the lead entity for the State of Michigan and [received a \\$3 million planning grant](#) to pursue the development of a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and complete a state-wide greenhouse gas inventory, meant to supplement and work towards implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan. Through the development of the PCAP, Michigan will become eligible to compete under the broader \$4.6 billion CPRG implementation grant competition and aims to bring home as many federal dollars as possible.

The OCE identifies, evaluates, and tracks federal funding opportunities that align with the goals of the Plan from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This work is coordinated with efforts to secure federal funding across EGLE, the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO) in the Governor's office, and other state departments. As a result, the State of Michigan is leveraging unprecedented climate-related federal funding opportunities to help implement the goals of the Plan.

Other federal funding secured across Michigan to further implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan includes but is not limited to:

- [State Energy Program \(SEP\) Formula Grant Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Addition](#) allocated \$11.3 million to the State of Michigan.
- [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant \(EECBG\)](#) Program allocated \$2.7 million to the State of Michigan.

- [Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund \(EERLF\)](#) allocated \$12.7 million to the State of Michigan, which is anticipated to be received in spring 2024.
- [Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of Electric Grid Grant](#) allocated \$14.9 million to the State of Michigan over two years.
- [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(NEVI\)](#) Formula Program allocated \$23.4 million to the State of Michigan.
- [Building Codes Implementation for Efficiency and Resilience](#) grant awarded \$9.6 million for the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy of which Michigan is a partner.
- [Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships \(GRIP\) Program](#) awarded \$100 million to [Consumers Energy](#) to mitigate power outages in Michigan’s most underserved communities and \$22.9 million to [DTE Electric Company](#) to increase real-time responses via adaptive networked microgrids.
- [Home Energy Rebate Programs](#) allocated \$211 million for [Home Efficiency Rebates](#) and [Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates](#) at the end of 2022.

Cross-Cutting State Activities Supporting Implementation of the Plan

The following are brief summaries of just some of the cross-cutting work the State of Michigan is doing to implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan. This is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the many actions being taken across the state toward reaching a carbon neutral Michigan.

CLIMATE EQUITY AND A JUST TRANSITION

Principles of environmental justice and climate equity are woven throughout the state’s activities to implement the Plan. The Plan calls for a commitment to 40% of the benefits of climate-related funding to go to disadvantaged communities, in alignment with federal obligations. The OCE, in partnership with EGLE’s Office of the Environmental Justice Public Advocate (OEJPA), regularly meets with both the MAC-EJ and tribal nations across Michigan to provide updates and gather input on activities to implement the Plan. The MAC-EJ provided feedback on a variety of programs and activities, including but not limited to Michigan’s application for the EPA’s Solar for All program, a request for information soliciting public feedback on implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan, and the annual MI Healthy Climate Conference. Similarly, tribal nations are deeply integrated into Michigan’s approach to the EPA’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) and are integral to preserving tribal sovereignty and Michigan’s natural lands and resources.

EGLE has been diligently working to receive input on the development of the Priority Climate Action Plan, especially from disadvantaged communities, throughout the CPRG development process. The OCE has been partnering with a variety of other grant recipients, such as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Grand Valley Metro Council, and all tribal grant recipients, to ensure that relevant information reaches beyond traditional channels and that environmental justice concerns are integrated into each potential measure. Additionally, EGLE is collaborating with a variety of community-based organizations across the state to foster relationships with communities and engage residents. Furthermore, EGLE is working to ensure that federal Justice40 standards are met or

exceeded in each deliverable, including soliciting feedback via a Request for Information (RFI) on program design to support securing climate and energy-related funding for Michigan’s Justice40 communities. More information on this RFI can be found in the “Communications and Engagement” section of this report.

In its application to the EPA’s Solar for All program, EGLE proposed to design and deploy residential rooftop and community-serving solar projects to serve approximately 30,000 low-income and disadvantaged community (LIDAC) households across the state. If awarded funding for this project in 2024, the State will collaboratively establish criteria for financial and technical assistance that best serves Michigan’s LIDAC households and maximizes the use of complementary public and private funding sources to support residential rooftop and community solar installation, as well as storage and enabling upgrades for homes in need.

In June 2023, EGLE, led by OEJPA, the MAC-EJ, and the Michigan Interagency Environmental Justice Response Team collaborated to hold the first in-person Michigan Environmental Justice Conference. The sold-out conference was held in Detroit, and attracted roughly 250 attendees including environmental justice advocates, community members, government representatives, academia, change agents and the business sector. The conference featured sessions on a wide range of topics including federal and state priorities, energy affordability, just transitions, strategies for addressing environmental injustices and cross-sector collaboration.

BUILDING CLIMATE CAPACITY FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Through the Catalyst Communities program, EGLE works with communities across the state to align priorities around the MI Healthy Climate Plan. EGLE’s 2023 Michigan Sustainability Conference, held on October 24-25 in Gaylord, featured a Pre-Conference Catalyst Communities Workshop to discuss sustainability-related technical assistance resources for local governments. EGLE also held specialized engagement and resource-sharing sessions during the 2023 MI Healthy Climate Conference held on April 11-12 in Detroit.

The EGLE-backed [Michigan Green Communities](#) (MGC) Challenge is an annual benchmarking program that helps communities measure their progress toward sustainability, including climate mitigation and adaptation goals. The 2023 MGC Challenge Reporting Period was open January 1 to May 1, 2023. The 2022 Challenge recognized 48 Michigan communities for sustainability accomplishments. Local governments participating in the Challenge receive free technical assistance and peer learning opportunities through the MGC Accelerator Cohort and [Catalyst Leadership Circle](#) (CLC).

MI HEALTHY CLIMATE CORPS

On September 19, 2022, the State of Michigan announced the creation of the Michigan Healthy Climate Corps (MHC Corps) as part of Michigan’s strategy to address climate change, protect the environment for future generations, and build the next generation of climate leaders in Michigan.

The MHC Corps will support the state’s implementation of the Plan and will be a collaboration among multiple individual AmeriCorps programs (both new and expanded) working in coordination with state and local partners to harness the power of national service as part of a broader statewide effort to address climate change.

As of October 2023, EGLE selected the [Community Economic Development Association of Michigan \(CEDAM\)](#) as a subcontractor to manage day-to-day implementation of the MHC Corps. CEDAM is an experienced AmeriCorps program operator, with more than ten years of experience managing a successful statewide AmeriCorps program. In addition, CEDAM is a statewide nonprofit committed to building equitable economic development in Michigan.

In preparation for a March 2024 launch for the first of two cohorts, EGLE and CEDAM have continued to engage with community partners, state agencies, and others to identify needs and opportunities for the program and establish processes to request support. Host partner applications were open as of October 30, and two webinars took place on [November 9](#) and [November 15](#) to explain program details and answer questions from interested parties. Applications opened December 15 for the first cohort of MHC Corps members.

The White House recently announced the [American Climate Corps](#) (ACC) initiative. While separate from the MHC Corps, the ACC shares similar aims to equip young people with career skills for the clean energy economy, and is anticipated to be a key partner in the development and launch of the MHC Corps.

COORDINATED CLIMATE ACTION AT EGLE

Each of EGLE's 15 offices and divisions have identified at least one "Climate Liaison" from their team to help the OCE coordinate the implementation of the Plan. Facilitated by the OCE, the climate liaisons met eight times in 2023 to share information, align activities with the priorities articulated in the Plan, and identify areas for coordination across the Department.

Participants in the voluntary program exchange ideas and further integrate climate considerations into EGLE's work. A sampling of how EGLE divisions and offices advance climate actions include:

Air Quality Division

- Developing baseline emissions data to inform the [Port of Detroit's decarbonization efforts](#).
- Drafting sample compliance projects in support of the Plan that violators can use for guidance.

Materials Management Division

- Developing resources on how to properly cap landfills with future renewables siting in mind and how to site when capped.
- Continuing to work with Air Quality and Remediation and Redevelopment divisions to set a baseline of methane emissions and provide a road map or strategic framework to reduce emissions.

Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division

- Drafting quantifiable estimates of methane emissions from orphan wells and the emission reductions achieved by plugging them.
- Pursuing funding for additional monitors and equipment for Remote Sensing to validate emissions reductions and meet upcoming regulations for facilities.

Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division

- Collaborating with other EGLE divisions to create online educational materials on drinking water safety, sampling efforts, and efficiency measures such as regionalization.
- Working with other divisions to develop and integrate environmental justice-related metrics and requirements into funding mechanisms including the State Revolving Funds (SRF).

Finance Division

- Exploring how to use the Plan and Justice40 definitions in tandem with previously identified overburdened communities for more insight into where and how money is being invested.

Information Management Division

- Working with Esri and EGLE's environmental education coordinator to develop a mapping, data-based climate change education portal. A related-project is the [Harmful Algal Bloom story map](#), published in 2023.
- [Received Esri's Special Achievement in GIS](#) award for developing the [Green Schools Hub](#) site, making it easier for local Michigan schools, administrators, and county coordinators to participate in the MI Green Schools program and earn certification for their school's environmental and climate projects.

Office of the Clean Water Public Advocate

- Partnering with Materials Management to find municipal partners interested in water leak pilot projects, possibly leveraging [MIGreenCommunities](#) and MINextCities.
- Exploring how the [State Energy Program](#) could help enable development of a water decarbonization road map.

Office of the Environmental Justice Public Advocate

- Exploring how pass-through grants and other funding mechanisms can facilitate genuine community engagement through trusted community organizations.
- Establishing regular meetings among relevant parties to ensure consistent engagement and communication on Justice40 with equitable representation.

Office of the Great Lakes

- Using the Michigan Department of Transportation's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Port of Detroit decarbonization to create a framework to implement in other ports.
- Connecting with the Environmental Support Division to develop communications materials and leverage subject-matter expertise from existing workgroups.

Office of Legislative Affairs

- Establishing regular meetings with the OCE to discuss bills needing analysis and timelines for action.
- Evaluating statutory programs that could hinder or further progress toward Plan goals.

Remediation and Redevelopment Division

- Continuing to work with Materials Management, the EPA, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on siting of renewables on state-owned brownfields, landfills, and mines.
- Collaborating with Information Management on needed improvements to EGLE Mapper and/or other state tools used in brownfield renewables siting.
- Establishment of a subcommittee with representatives from a variety of programs to work on further implementation of the Plan through current programming.

To continue building on this work, the OCE will continue to connect each division and office with the resources necessary to encourage further development of strategic priorities toward enacting the Plan and overcome challenges and barriers towards its implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

In-Person Sessions

The OCE hosted six in-person meetings across the state to gather additional feedback from residents on the portions of the Plan they would like to see prioritized both as part of its broader implementation, and within the context of the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. Locations, dates, and registration numbers for each of the in-person meetings at the time of writing this report are as follows:

- November 29 in Detroit, in partnership with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (112 registrants)
- November 30 in Grand Rapids, in partnership with the Grand Valley Metro Council (98 registrants)
- December 5 in Flint (41 registrants)
- December 6 in Marquette (40 registrants)
- December 12 in Petoskey (49 registrants)
- December 13 in Acme for the Michigan Tribal Environmental Group (MTEG) meeting

Webinars and Virtual Engagement

The OCE hosted three webinars in 2023 through the MI Healthy Webinar Series on various methods of Plan implementation. The first webinar was held on July 25, and was an [overview of the MI Healthy Climate Plan and upcoming implementation opportunities](#). This first webinar yielded 849 registrants, with 440 people attending live. The second webinar was held on October 10, and covered [leveraging federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant \(CPRG\) funds for implementing the MI Healthy Climate Plan](#). The second webinar in the series yielded 500 registrants, with 213 people attending live. The third and most recent webinar was held on November 9, and focused on [building climate action capacity through the MI Healthy Climate Corps](#). This webinar yielded 550 registrants, with 234 people attending live.

In addition to the in-person sessions mentioned above, the OCE held two virtual engagement sessions on December 14 and 18 to receive feedback from residents on the portions of the Plan they would like to see prioritized both as part of its broader implementation, as well as within the context of the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. At the time of writing this report, each engagement session has 201 and 130 registrants, respectively.

Requests for Information and Project Ideas

To inform implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan and specific program, the OCE created numerous opportunities for formal input, including the following:

- **RFI on implementation of the Plan:** A Request for Information (RFI) was released to solicit public input on implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan, including federal opportunities such as the CPRG and GGRF Solar for All. The RFI was open between August 15 and September 15, and received 66 responses using the associated Microsoft Form, plus 12 PDF document responses received via email.
- **Call for Projects:** A call for Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) project ideas was announced on November 17 to further gather input to determine what to include in the PCAP and in broader climate plan implementation efforts. Specifically, this effort was to identify large implementation-ready projects or programs that further the goals of the MHCP. The call was open until December 20 and received over 100 project submissions at the time of writing this report. Additionally, this effort was supplemented by the integration of the results from the Southeast Michigan Council of Government's (SEMCOG) and Grand Valley Metro Council's (GVMC) separate Call for Project forms.
- **Technical Assistance RFI for Justice40:** The OCE released an RFI to gather public input on a program to support Michigan Justice40 communities to secure funding for climate and energy initiatives, including climate mitigation and pollution reduction projects in Michigan communities. This RFI is for input on the initial design of this program and the process of selecting an operator to administer the program. This RFI is scheduled to close January 12, 2024.
- **Input to leverage financing opportunity for climate goals:** The OCE initiated an RFI that aims to solicit initial feedback on a program that would help finance major clean energy and other emission-reducing projects in Michigan. This RFI is for input on the need for and potential design of such program. The RFI opened on December 15, 2023 and will close January 2024.

Informational Updates

The Michigan Climate Action News & Updates email listserv was created in March 2023 to more directly engage with Michigan residents interested in climate-related activities from the State of Michigan. Since its creation, the listserv has distributed ten monthly climate bulletins that provide a snapshot of the major activities related to climate and implementation of the Plan that have taken place during the month. Following is the current subscriber count of this listserv, in addition to other climate-related listservs.

Email List Name	Current Subscriber Count
Michigan Climate Action News and Updates	4,864
Buildings and Housing Climate and Energy Updates	1,052
Catalyst Communities	3,923
Commercial and Industrial Climate and Energy Updates	10,093
Energy Consumer Tips	5,190
Energy Funding Opportunities	4,013
Energy Policy Roadmap	2,929
Natural Working Lands and Forest Products Climate and Energy Updates	3,750
Transportation and Mobility Climate and Energy Updates	1,018
TOTAL SUBSCRIPTIONS	36,832

Note: The total subscriber count does not account for emails that are signed up for multiple lists. Therefore, the total subscriber count should not be interpreted to represent a total number of unique individuals that have subscribed to climate-related email lists.

The MI Healthy Climate Conference

On April 11, 2023, the OCE kicked-off the inaugural MI Healthy Climate Conference, a two-day event held at the Huntington Place in Detroit. Aligning with the goals of the Plan, the conference was held in a LEED certified building and hosted an aerobic digester to process uneaten food and food scraps. [Governor Whitmer gave the keynote address](#) at the sold-out conference, which featured 599 registered attendees representing the following categories:

- Academia (29 attendees)
- Consulting (73 attendees)
- Local Government (66 attendees)
- Manufacturing (18 attendees)
- Non-Profit (180 attendees)
- Service (39 attendees)
- State Government (104 attendees)
- Utility (22 attendees)
- Tribal Government (4 attendees)
- Speakers (64 attendees)



On the second day of the MI Healthy Climate Conference, Senate Majority Floor Leader Sam Singh announced the Senate Democrats’ Clean Energy Future Plan, a package of legislative bills to help implement key energy-related pieces of the MI Healthy Climate Plan. These bills were part of the larger energy package that was ultimately passed into law and signed by Governor Whitmer in the fall of this year.

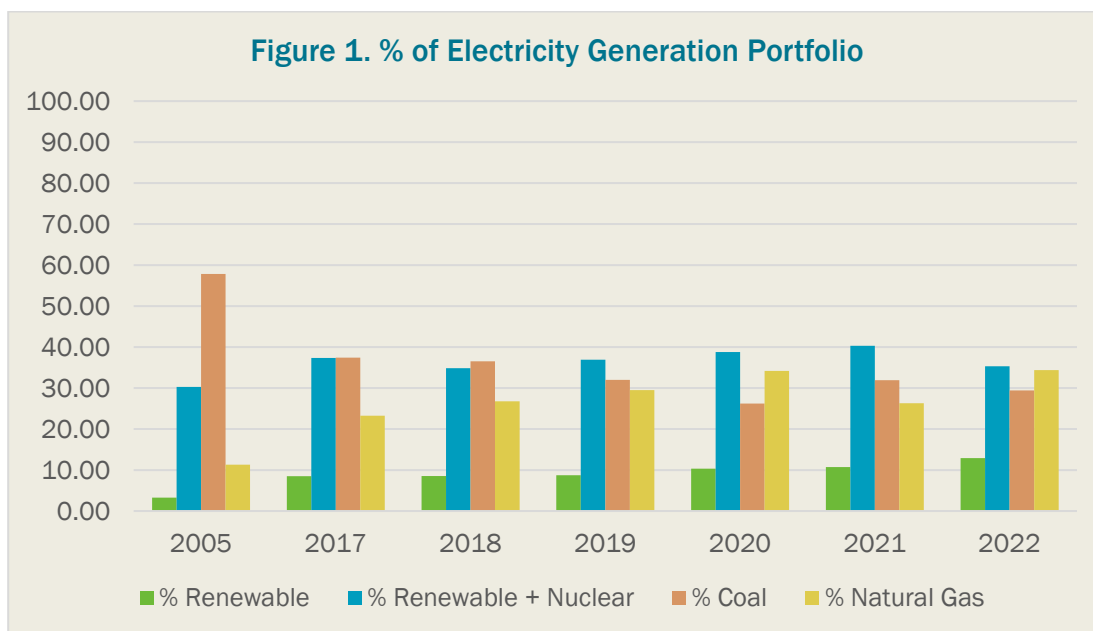
Sector-Specific Updates and Activities

The Plan includes recommended actions to support environmental justice and reach the Governor’s climate goals across five sources of emissions: electricity, transportation, built environment, industry, and natural and working lands. Below are brief snapshots of each sector and highlighted activities across Michigan helping to implement the Plan. This is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the many actions being taken across the state toward reaching the specific goals of the Plan.

ELECTRICITY: CLEAN THE ELECTRIC GRID

The MPSC’s latest [Status of Renewable Energy, Distributed Generation, and Legacy Net Metering in Michigan Report](#) found that in 2022, 16.2% of Michigan’s electricity generation came from renewable energy, renewable energy credits, and energy waste reduction, while electricity generation from utility-scale solar in Michigan more than doubled. In 2022, the MPSC approved 679 MW of solar, 2 MW of landfill, biomass, and hydroelectric, and 380 MW of renewable energy related to the utilities’ voluntary green pricing programs.

According to the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) (EIA), “Renewables provided about 12% of Michigan’s electricity net generation in 2022, and wind energy accounted for three-fifths of that power. Michigan ranks 16th among states in the amount of electricity generated by wind energy.” Based on that same data from the EIA, the share of fossil fuels in Michigan’s electricity portfolio has gradually decreased in recent years, down 13.4% from 2005, while the share of renewables has increased by 279.5% from 2005. Between 2021 and 2022, Michigan saw a 0.16% increase in fossil fuel use in electricity generation, and a 20.6% increase in renewable use in electricity generation.



Source: [EIA Electricity Data Browser](#)

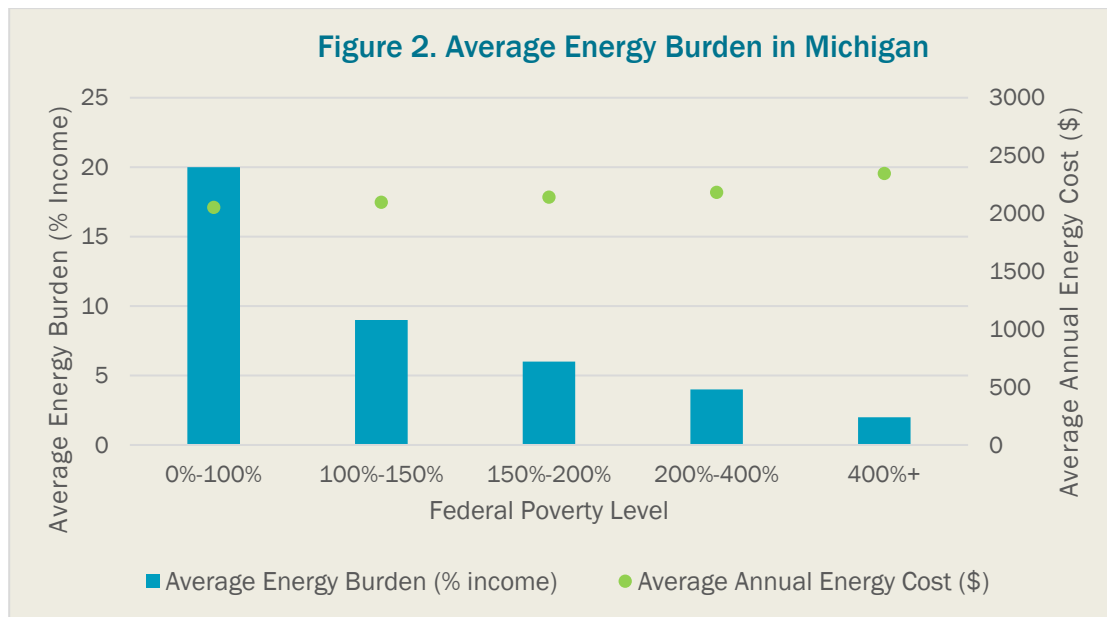
The average energy burden — or the percentage of a household’s annual income spent on heat and electricity — is 3% across the state of Michigan. However, for Michigan households making

100% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), the average energy burden is 20% despite average annual energy costs being similar across income levels.

Across income categories, the average energy burden between 2022 and 2023 decreased by 3% for households whose income is 0%-100% of the FPL; 1% for households whose income is 100%-150% of the FPL; 1% for households whose income is 150%-200% of the FPL; has no change for households whose income is 200%-400% of the FPL; and has no change for households whose income is greater than 400% of the FPL.

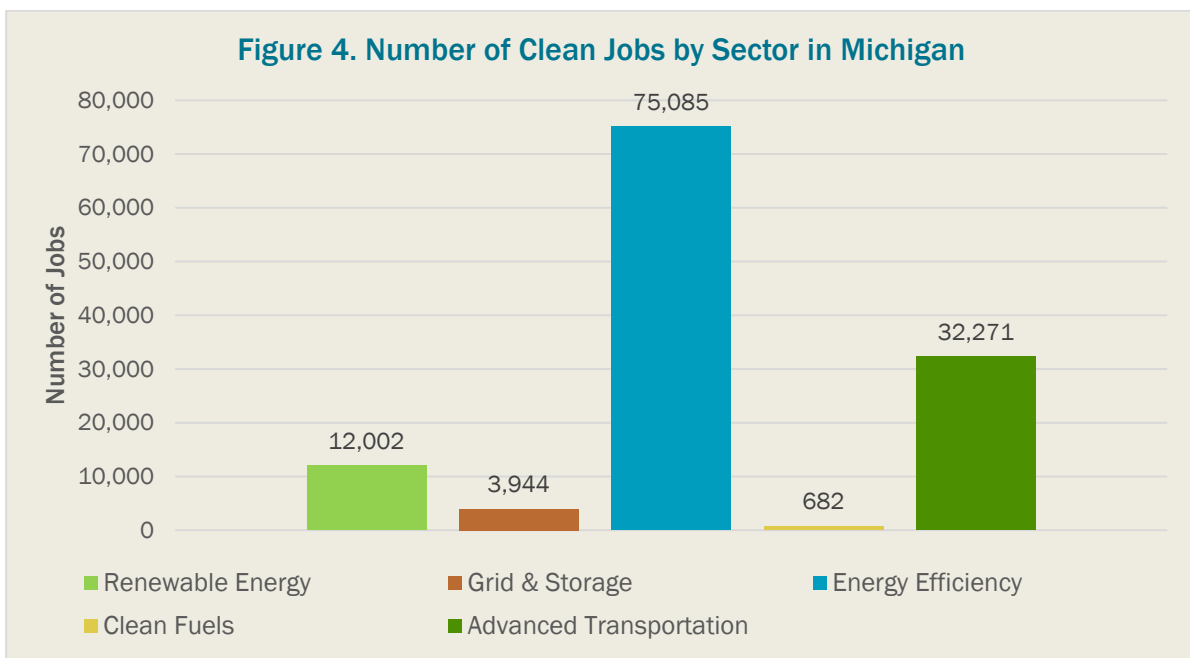
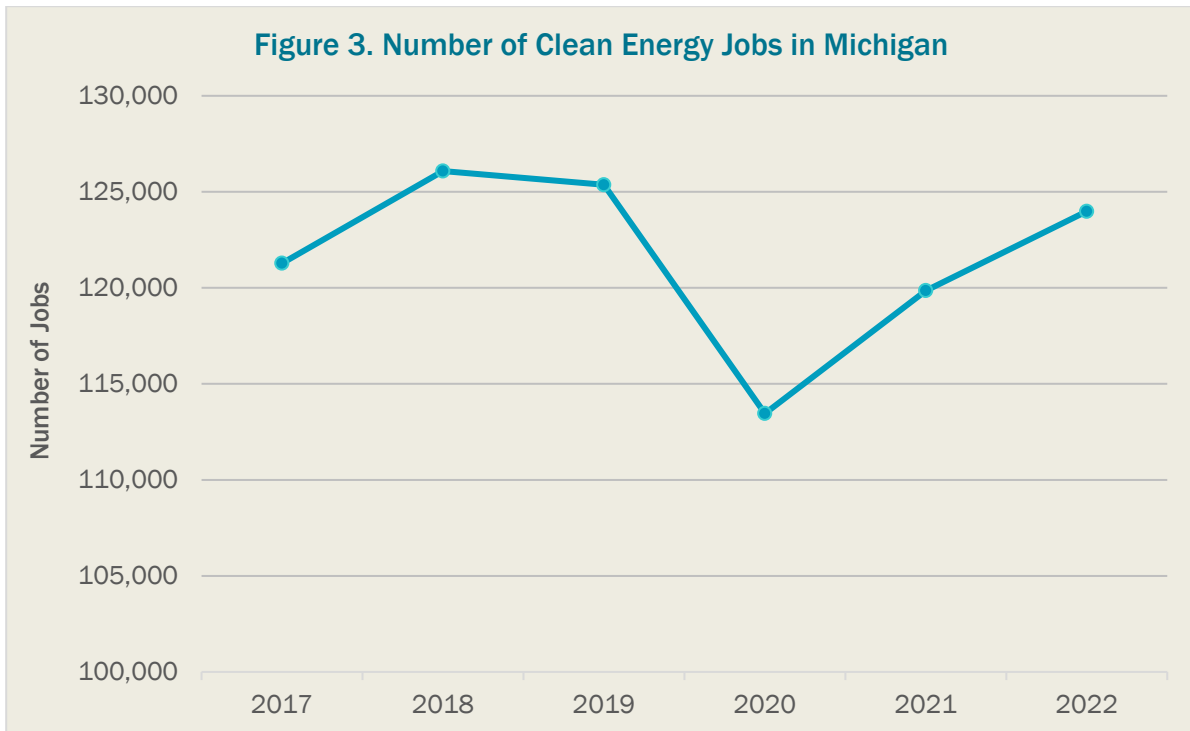
Despite the changes mentioned above, the distribution of average annual energy cost and average energy burden across income categories as defined by the FPL remain relatively consistent between 2022 and 2023, as shown in Figure 3.

The MPSC's [Low-Income Energy Policy Board](#) met twelve times in 2023, covering topics such as the Energy Equity Framework and intersectionality of energy equity, housing, and weatherization/energy waste reduction. Additionally, the [Michigan Energy Assistance Program](#) awarded \$54.5 million in grants, providing energy assistance payments and self-sufficiency services to approximately 54,028 low-income households.



Source: DoE's LEAD Tool

Despite economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, jobs in clean energy have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. The state saw a 4.6% increase in the number of clean energy jobs between 2021 and 2022, leading the Midwest and ranking first in the region with nearly 124,000 clean energy jobs. According to the [most recent Clean Jobs Midwest report](#), 60.6% of total clean energy jobs in 2022 were in the energy efficiency sector and the clean transportation sector was the fastest growing with a 14.4% increase in clean transportation jobs.



Source: Clean Jobs Midwest

BUILT ENVIRONMENT: REPAIR AND DECARBONIZE HOMES AND BUSINESSES

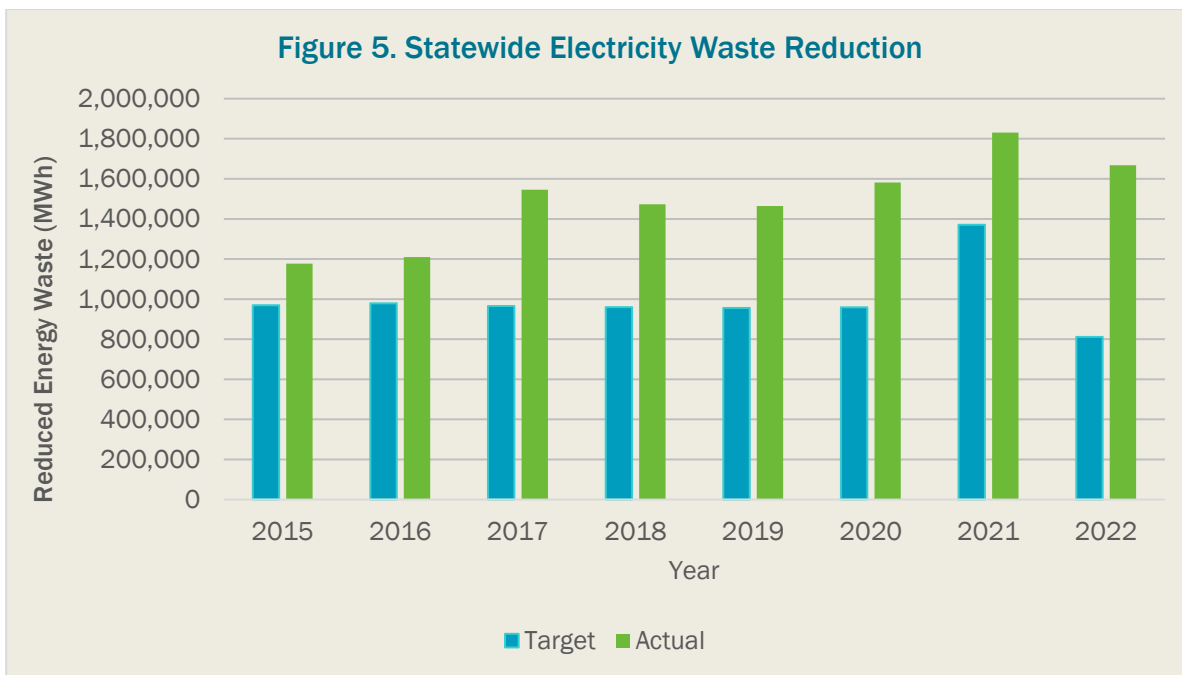
In February 2023, the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#) issued a [Request for Proposals](#) to expand the Weatherization Assistance Program to utilize federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding designated for multi-family dwellings. MDHHS sought local weatherization partner organizations to provide low-income households with energy saving services at no cost. In July, [MDHHS received approximately \\$183 million](#) of BIL funding to supplement the annual budget of \$21 million, and selected the International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology (ICAST) as the new provider.

EGLE [awarded eleven houses of worship](#) in low-income Michigan neighborhoods from Detroit to the Upper Peninsula \$100,000 each in Sacred Spaces Clean Energy Grants to become more energy efficient. This support from a \$1.24 million federal funding grant will allow these congregations to lower utility bills and dedicate more of their resources towards serving their communities.

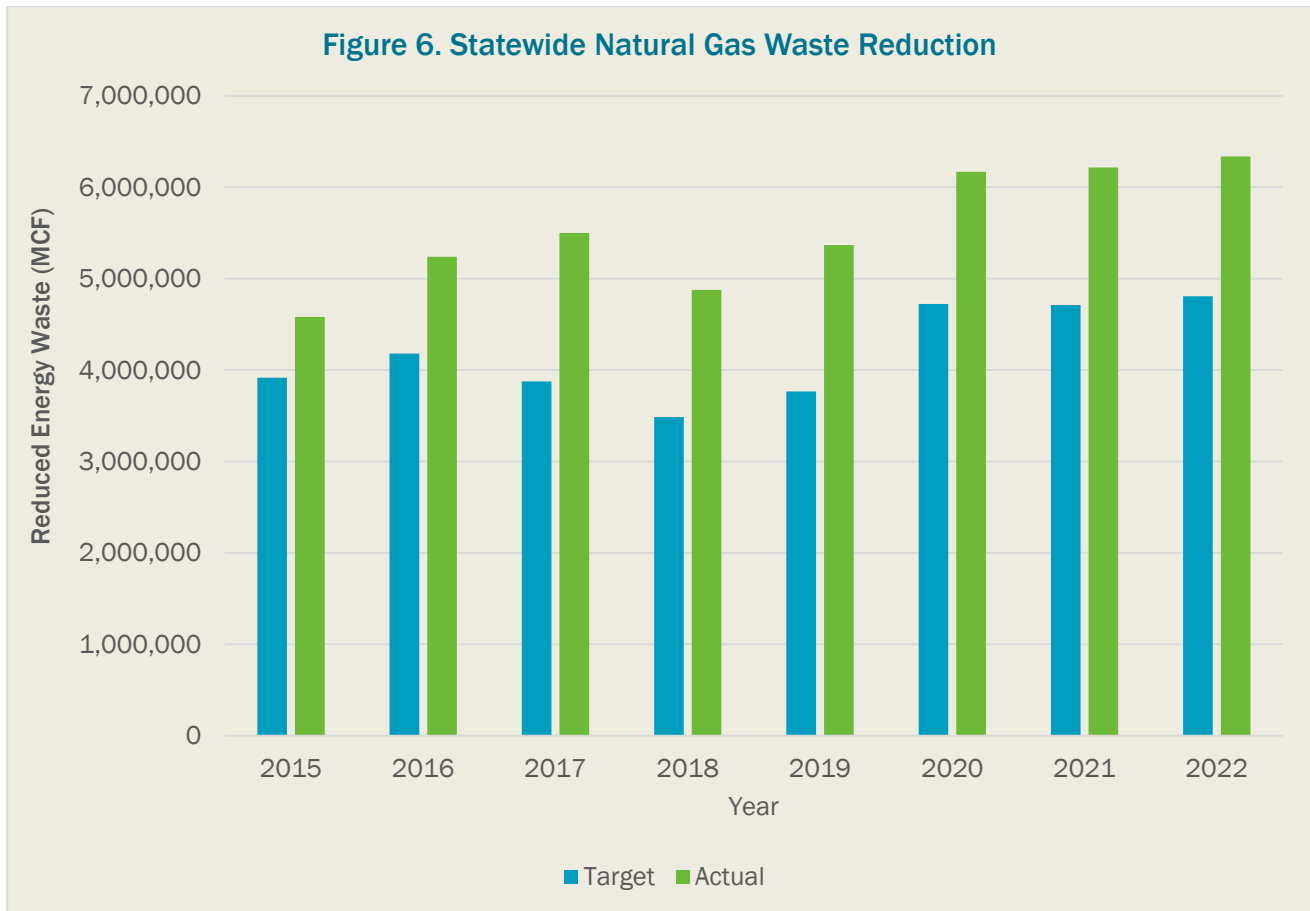
In November, the [Michigan Infrastructure Office \(MIO\) announced](#) that two Michigan companies, Armstrong International and Treau, will receive a combined \$22 million from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to scale up the manufacturing of electric heat pumps and heat pump components. This investment will help lower costs for families and businesses, grow the clean energy workforce, and create healthier indoor environments. On average, homeowners can save over \$500 per year depending on the current energy efficiency, size of their home, and the local climate.

The MPSC’s latest [Annual Report on the Implementation of PA 295 2021 & 2022 Utility Energy Waste Reduction Programs](#) found that Michigan’s 64 investor-owned, cooperative and municipal electric companies spent \$371 million and \$379 million on Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) programs in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Natural gas utilities spent more than \$127.1 million in 2021 and \$145.9 million in 2022. The combined total of over \$498 million in 2021 and \$517 million in 2022 spent on EWR programs by all the state’s electric and natural gas utilities should save customers more than \$1.39 billion over the 12-year lifecycle of EWR programs and measures implemented in 2022. For every \$1 spent on EWR programs in 2021 and 2022, customers realized savings of \$2.73 and 2.68, respectively.

Michigan utility companies have consistently outperformed on their annual electricity waste reduction and their annual natural gas waste reduction goals, outpacing their electricity goal by 106% in 2022.



Source: MPSC Annual Report on the Implementation of PA 295 2020 Utility Energy Waste Reduction Programs

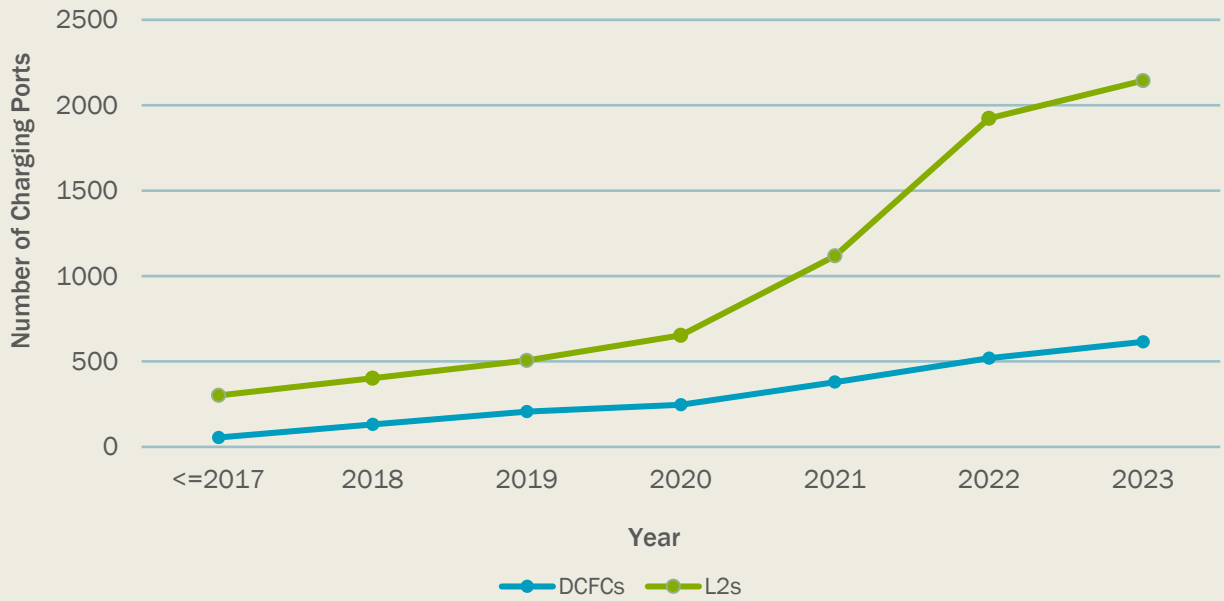


Source: MPSC Annual Report on the Implementation of PA 295
2020 Utility Energy Waste Reduction Programs

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY: ELECTRIFY VEHICLES AND INCREASE PUBLIC TRANSIT

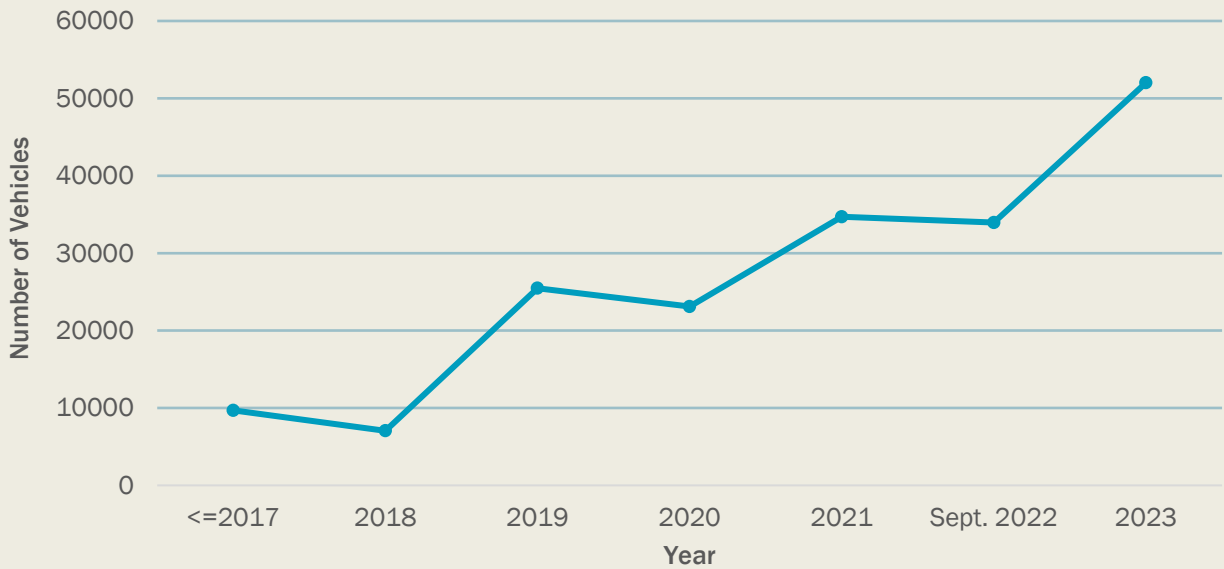
Currently, 38,516 electric vehicles (EV) and 13,500 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) are registered with the State of Michigan, totaling 52,016 vehicles as shown in Figure 9, as well as 1,340 EV Chargers with 3,041 ports split between DC Fast Chargers and Public Level 2 stations, as shown in Figure 10 and 8, respectively. The EV Charger installation within the state rose substantially in the past few years. However, according to the [MI Future Mobility Plan](#), an additional 100,000 EV chargers are needed to fully support two million EVs – a rate of 12,000 chargers per year.

Figure 7. Cumulative Number of Public Charging Ports in Michigan



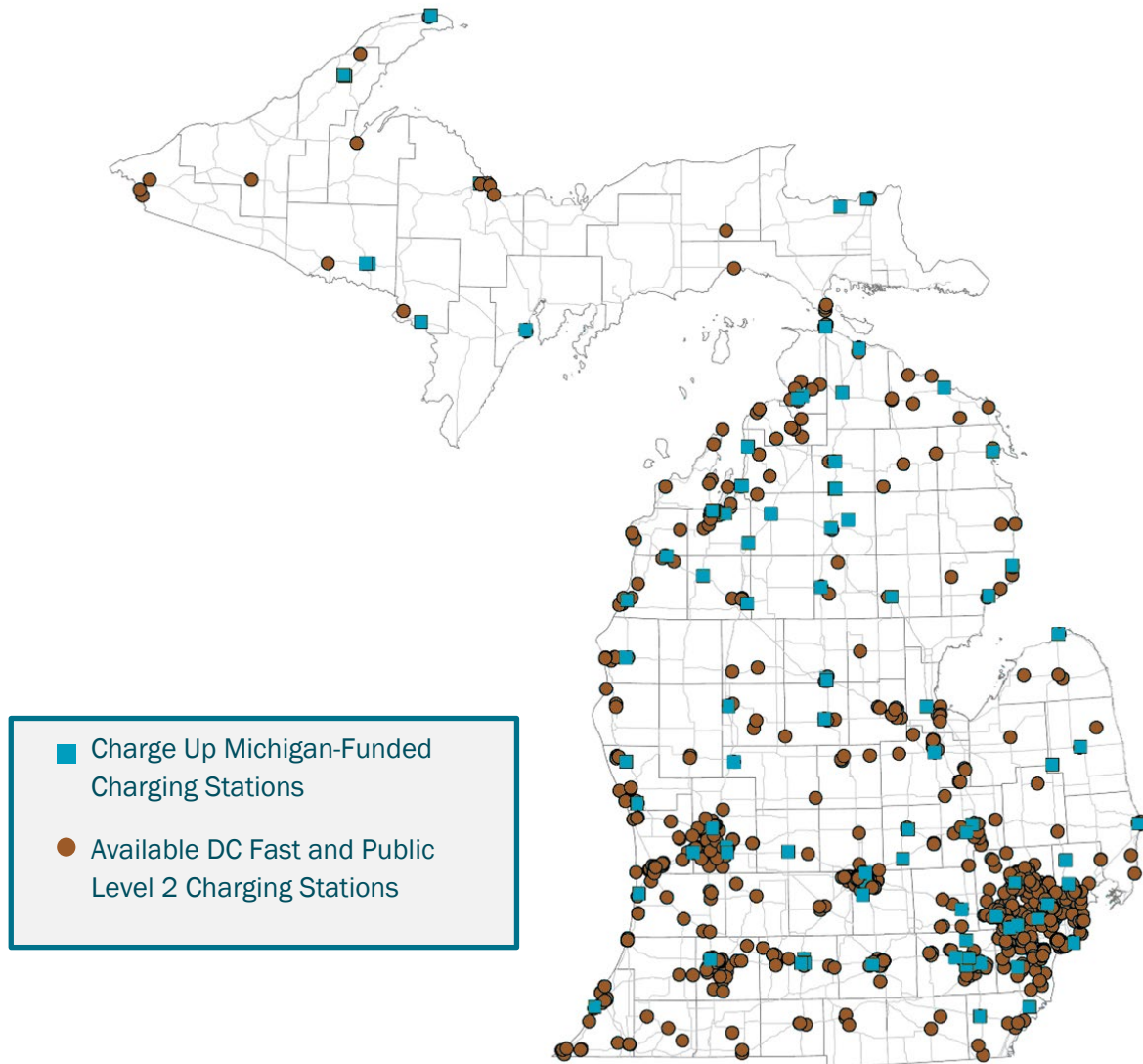
Source: Alternative Fuels Data Center (AFDC) and EGLE, Materials Management Division

Figure 8. Number of Electric and Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles on the Road in Michigan



Source: Atlas EV Hub for <=2017 to 2019; AFDC (modeled data) for 2020, 2021; MDOS for >=2022

Figure 9. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Michigan



According to a [new report from Business Facilities](#), Michigan continues to lead the race for jobs and investment as the top state for automotive industry and electric vehicle investments, holding its number one spot from 2022. Michigan also ranks as a top 10 state among key areas like [foreign direct investment](#), customized workforce training, [tech talent pipelines](#), and health care jobs. This ranking follows multiple reports showing Michigan as a leader in [business](#), [clean energy](#) and [battery investments](#) and a piece from Newsweek recognizes Michigan as a leading hub for [high-tech mobility development](#).

In March, the [Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity \(LEO\) announced the creation of the EV Jobs Academy](#), an online resource hub for Michigan residents seeking employment in the electric vehicle industry. The EV Jobs Academy will provide jobseekers with tuition assistance, apprenticeships, and other pathways into relevant careers.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law’s Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) allocates approximately \$168 million over five years in expected funding for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions

and develop state carbon reduction strategies. In cooperation with other state departments and agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is developing its Carbon Reduction Strategy and Resilience Improvement Plan, directed at reducing MDOT's transportation greenhouse gas emissions and Michigan's overall carbon footprint. The Resilience Improvement Plan will present a method to reduce natural hazard risk and increase resilience of transportation system assets. The Carbon Reduction Program funded over 30 local projects throughout Michigan so far.

In January 2023, [Ford announced an investment of more than \\$3.5 billion](#) to construct and equip a new 2.5 million square foot EV battery manufacturing facility in Marshall. The project is expected to create 2,500 good-paying jobs that will help further the company's EV future in the state.

In March, a \$3.06 million award from EGLE's Fuel Transformation Program (FTP) Part 2 will support the first-ever conversion of a [Mackinac Island passenger ferry to zero-emissions](#) electric power. This grant will help Star Line, now known as Mackinac Island Ferry Co., convert the 84-foot passenger ferry Chippewa from diesel to electric propulsion.

In October, [EGLE announced \\$1.2 million in funding available](#) for matching grants to advance strategic deployment of EV infrastructure along Lake Michigan. The Lake Michigan Circuit is a [multi-state initiative](#) with Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana to create a scenic route with reliable charging stations along Lake Michigan's 1,100 miles of drivable coastline, and is administered in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME).

In November, [LEO submitted an application to receive \\$75 million in federal funding](#) to create a "Small Facility Fund" that would support the needs of Michigan automotive suppliers currently making components for Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles that have faced or may face plant closures. Under this funding opportunity, automotive companies that manufacture ICE vehicles would receive assistance retooling their facilities and instead manufacture EVs or related components, providing small suppliers an opportunity to access federal funds to secure their future in the clean energy economy.

INDUSTRY: DRIVE CLEAN INNOVATION IN INDUSTRY

In August 2023, the [Centropolis Accelerator](#) at Lawrence Technological University, in partnership with EGLE, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Whirlpool Corporation, Gerdau, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and Breakthrough Energy, announced the [launch of the Industrial Decarbonization Innovation Challenge](#), which aims to support groundbreaking technologies and startups focused on decarbonizing the industrial sector. The Industrial Decarbonization Innovation Challenge offers participants the opportunity to demonstrate their technologies, products and services to industry leaders, and connect with potential commercial partners and climate tech ecosystem disruptors.

EGLE leaders announced that [recycling in the Great Lakes State is at an all-time high](#) during a virtual press conference that coincided with the start of Earth Week 2023, April 17-22. EGLE's 2023 data analysis reflects the state's improved recycling performance is helping Michigan advance toward the goals of the MI Healthy Climate Plan.

Similarly, in July [EGLE awarded a \\$100,000 grant to Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, Make Food Not Waste, Center for EcoTechnology](#), and an advisory council of industry stakeholders and national experts to develop a Michigan Food System Waste Reduction Road Map. This road map is meant to inform state and local decision makers of policies and programs that encourage decarbonization by reducing waste in production and distribution in various food sectors.

NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS: PROTECT MICHIGAN'S LAND AND WATER

In February, the [Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development \(MDARD\) awarded Michigan State University \\$400,000](#) for two projects to develop innovative solutions for farm, agriculture processing, and supply chain problems related to Climate Smart Practices, Supply Chain Resiliency, Food Processing and Farm Production Automation, and Rural Resiliency. Projects will improve climate resiliency and economic return of Michigan beef cattle by reducing feed use and improve irrigation efficiency in blueberry orchards using an IoT-based automatic smart irrigation system.

In April 2023, two new communities, St. Charles (Saginaw County) and Northport (Leelanau County), have [joined more than 100 Michigan towns, cities and schools earning Tree City USA status](#) for efforts to promote and care for public trees. A total of 116 communities, two healthcare facilities and nine college campuses have been recognized through their respective programs. The newest college campus, Wayne State University in Detroit, joins eight recertifying Tree Campus USA schools – a designation honoring educational institutions.

In June, [EGLE announced a Request for Proposals](#) to identify innovations and technological advancements in water conservation best practices that can benefit Michigan's water sectors and support long-term sustainability of Michigan's water resources. The project will inform Michigan's [Water Use and Water Conservation and Efficiency programs](#) and further the state's water conservation and efficiency goals and objectives established under the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers' [Great Lakes Agreement and Compact](#).

In October, MDARD released [approximately \\$1.8 million in competitive grants through the Rural Development Fund](#) to promote the sustainability of land-based industries and support improving infrastructure in rural communities across Michigan. The Rural Development Fund grants are available for projects addressing expansion and sustainability of land-based industries, including food and agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas production, and tourism; worker training related to land-based industries; and energy, transportation, housing, communications, water, and wastewater infrastructure to benefit rural communities and micropolitan statistical areas.

In November, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MDARD [provided funding for agricultural producers and landowners to implement conservation practices](#) in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). Funding is available through the Farm Bill as part of the Tri-State Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which is an ongoing effort led by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture with more than 30 local partners throughout Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. Participating farmers will receive funding to improve soil health, reduce phosphorus and sediment loading, and prevent harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the WLEB.

MDARD is also embarking on an internal realignment of its organizational structure to bring all climate-related programs, including regenerative agriculture, Western Lake Erie Basin efforts, and water quality and soil health programming, together under one Bureau and elevate climate resilience within the department. Beginning January 1, 2024, MDARD will have four new bureaus, including the new Bureau of Environment and Sustainability.

Conclusion

The State of Michigan remains committed to the implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan. The Office of Climate and Energy within EGLE continues to oversee its implementation in concert with state departments and agencies, tribal and local governments, and key stakeholders. The Council on Climate Solutions and Michigan Advisory Council on Environmental Justice will continue to provide advice, feedback, and guidance along the way. With bold leadership by example from state government and every Michigan resident and business playing their parts, we can build a more equitable, just, healthy, and prosperous future and ensure that the benefits of this transition are enjoyed by all Michiganders.

