



North Carolina businesses support state's energy, economy and environment by taking leadership in renewable energy program

In October 2003, North Carolina saw the launching of the first-ever statewide program to encourage the development of renewable energy sources for the state's power supply – NC GreenPower. Today, business and residential energy consumers alike are supporting this program, which also provides economic and environmental benefits for our state.

Renewable energy, also known as green power, is generated from sources that are available naturally and replenish themselves. Green energy comes from renewable sources that produce little or no pollution and have far less impact on the environment than energy from fossil fuels such as coal or oil. More and more electric utilities nationwide are offering green power to customers because it is a cleaner energy option.

NC GreenPower offers cleaner energy options for energy consumers in North Carolina. Working with independent renewable energy producers and the state's electric utilities, the program offers electricity generated from renewable sources such as the sun, wind and organic matter, all of which are indigenous to North Carolina. The program is "homegrown," meaning that energy is produced in North Carolina for the state's power supply.

NC GreenPower, an independent nonprofit organization, was approved by the N.C. Utilities Commission to provide North Carolinians with cleaner options for their energy sources. NC GreenPower is committed to environmental protection by increasing renewable energy sources in North Carolina. It is a subsidiary of Advanced Energy, a Raleigh-based nonprofit corporation that helps utility, industrial and residential customers improve the return on their energy investment.

Unlike other programs nationwide, NC GreenPower is the first in the nation that includes voluntary participation from electric utilities statewide and is governed by a 22-member board of directors. Currently, the program has agreements with 12 suppliers throughout the state and is seeking additional generation.

The program is made possible by financial contributions to help offset the production cost of this type of energy. A typical contribution of just \$4 per month adds one block of 100 kilowatt-hours of green energy to North Carolina's power supply. Large-volume users – usually from the corporate sector – may contribute towards 100 or more blocks at a rate of \$2.50 per block with a different energy mix. All contributions are voluntary and tax-deductible.

To date, the program has about 6,400 participants. Among these participants are corporate leaders, including Advanced Energy, Dominion North Carolina Power, Duke Power, Eisai, GlaxoSmithKline, IBM, Lowe's, N.C. Department of Justice, N.C. Department of Administration, N.C. Electric Membership Corporation, N.C. Farm Bureau, N.C. Pork Council, Progress Energy, Public Power, Research Triangle Institute, Smithfield Foods and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"Lowe's is pleased to be a founding sponsor of NC GreenPower," said Robin Nickles, vice president of Lowe's Retail Facilities Management. "We believe that investing in programs that reduce the impact that we have on the environment is the right thing to do. It's good for the environment. It's good for our business. Most importantly, it is good for the next generation and beyond. At Lowe's we accept this responsibility, and we have committed to do our part to help lead this effort."

"For EPA, aggressive energy

conservation and green power work hand in hand. EPA is committed to green power," said Bill Laxton, director of EPA's Office of Administration and Resource Management in Research Triangle Park. "EPA is purchasing at least eight percent of its electricity through NC GreenPower. By supporting NC GreenPower, EPA is helping to build a renewable energy future right here in North Carolina."

Why businesses support green power

Almost all businesses are able to benefit from supporting NC GreenPower. One key benefit is that they are able to enhance their images by purchasing renewable energy and publicizing it to their audiences – customers, employees and shareholders alike. Whether to reinforce their existing images or to gain a more competitive edge in their marketplace, businesses can receive significant public relations benefits by choosing green power.

Businesses also are motivated by important environmental benefits that are offered by this cleaner energy option. [To calculate the environmental benefits your contribution can make, visit www.ncgreenpower.org; click on the benefits calculator.]

For many, it is part of their ongoing leadership in corporate policies that encourage actions that reduce the impact of corporate activity on the environment.

In some cases, manufacturing processes or other activities inevitably produce some environmental impact that cannot be avoided. To mitigate the harm that these activities may be causing, a company may seek to find ways in which it can make a positive contribution to the environment in order to offset whatever negative impact its manufacturing processes might cause.

Finally, a number of supporting companies have found that such programs boost employee morale. Just as consumers feel better about purchasing products from companies that show sensitivity to the environment, workers also feel better about working for such companies.

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NC GreenPower also offers free educational presentations about renewable energy through its Speakers Bureau: speaker@ncgreenpower.org

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