

About Georgia's 2024 Clean Energy Plan

Science Facts and Analysis from Science for Georgia

Summary of plan:

The state of Georgia is investing approximately \$273M in energy efficient improvements for its state and local governments, as well as clean energy improvements for small businesses. Atlanta and Athens (as well as Savannah, Clarkston, and Augusta who have not finalized their plans yet) have committed to obtaining 100% of their energy from clean and renewable sources, such as solar and wind power, for their government properties by the year 2035. The State is offering commercial building owners a “\$5 per square foot tax credit if they implement energy efficient improvements, and a small business tax credit which will cover 30% of the costs of installing low-cost solar power and of purchasing clean trucks and vans for commercial fleets.” There are currently 1,859 electric vehicle charging stations in the state. Georgia has allocated funding to increase the electric vehicle industry within the state and offers an income tax credit to businesses to purchase, lease, and install electric vehicle chargers up to 10% of the cost or \$2,500. The Georgia Department of Economic Development says they are committed to “helping manufacturers and tech companies build a strong ecosystem of renewable solar and clean energy solutions.”

State programs:

The Governor's Annual Budget Report [for FY 2024 and FY 2025](#) details the proposed budget for the state of Georgia and how funding will be allocated for each fiscal year (Georgia's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30). The following are proposals for Georgia's environmental initiatives and Clean Energy Plan as detailed in the budget reports.

1. \$3,315,000 for equipment and vehicles to implement the Georgia Electric Vehicle Charging program in FY 2024 from the Department of Agriculture.
2. \$19,500,000 to establish three new workforce accelerator sites to support growing workforce needs in the electric mobility industry. \$643,706 for customized recruitment for workforce to support the electric vehicle industry.
3. \$250,000,000 for the Georgia Fund to support water and wastewater infrastructure development across the state through low interest loans to local communities from the Department of Community Affairs.
4. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will allocate \$1,118,000 for flood and fire hazard mitigation on Sapelo Island and environmental hazard mitigation on Ossabaw Island.
5. Recommendation of change to provide funds to support deployment of hydrogen energy applications from the Department of Economic Development.

Federal programs:

The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority has [a State Energy Program \(SEP\)](#) that is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and supports energy programs related to agriculture, government and public facilities, and renewable energy and alternative fuels.

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As of January 2024, the SEP is funding two different activities. In one, they provide funding for Georgia education building maintenance operators to receive training and obtain their Building Operator Certification (BOC) which gives them the knowledge and skills to make their buildings more efficient and environmentally friendly. The other is the Technical Assistance Program for Schools (TAPS). This program provides 7 toolkits and self-guided modules with information and resources about their energy management process to Georgia school districts. The goal of this program is for each school district in the state to develop and implement energy management systems in their schools.

The Inflation Reduction Act was signed by President Biden in 2022. This act provides funding to lower energy costs and “tackles the climate crisis through investments in agriculture, forest restoration, and [rural communities.](#)” The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it is investing millions of dollars to combat the climate crisis and many of the [USDA programs](#) are being funded by the Inflation Reduction Act. For example, the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) provides grants and loans to rural small business owners to incorporate renewable energy into their businesses and make energy efficient improvements which are funded by the Inflation Reduction Act. [REAP has awarded nine grants](#) to Georgia businesses to purchase and install solar panels and to switch diesel irrigation motors to electric ones. The total grants awarded to the nine small businesses is \$764,627.

The Georgia Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) is part of the Inflation Reduction Act which provides grants to state and local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. The state of Georgia and the Atlanta Regional Commission received this grant in June of 2023 [and must deliver the following three](#);

1. Priority Climate Action Plan, **Peach State Voluntary Emission Reduction Plan**, released Mar 8, 2024
2. Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, due June 30, 2025
3. Status Report, due at close of the 4-year grant period

Summary of the [Peach State Voluntary Emission Reduction Plan](#)

On March 8, 2024, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Air Protection Branch, in coordination with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), released the **Peach State Voluntary Emission Reduction Plan**, Georgia's contribution to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. A comprehensive plan is due June 2025.

The priority plan outlines 7 strategies and 21 measures for emission reduction:



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Strategy 1 is to “Electrify transportation sector and adapt to consumer mode shift” focuses on enabling alternative transportation and vehicle electrification since transportation accounts for 38% of overall emissions. The encouragement of these transportation changes is projected in the report to reduce the greatest amount of emissions of these strategies from 2025 to 2050. Specific measures:

- Replace public and private buses powered by diesel with electric buses
- Expand electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across Georgia (“increased emissions in the long-term from the manufacturing and use of EV chargers”)
- Promote e-Bikes and bike infrastructure such as bike lanes
- Transition public light-duty vehicles or trucks to zero-emission vehicles (“Increased emissions in the short-term due to increased electricity generation required for EV charging and production of EVs and associated materials”)
- Manufacturing batteries and motors for EV (“Increased emissions in the short-term due to increased electricity generation required for EV charging and production of EVs and associated materials”)

Strategy 2 is to improve energy efficiency and promote electrification of residential areas, responsible for 6% of Georgia emissions in 2021. Specific measures:

- Weatherization for residential buildings, improving gaps and cracks, heating and cooling, insulation, etc.
- Providing households with funds to purchase energy efficient and electric products
- Incentivizing commercial buildings to improve energy efficiency
- Incentivizing the commercial and industrial purchase of certified energy-efficient lighting, as well as streetlights

Strategy 3 plans to address emissions from the electric power industry responsible for 32% of Georgia's 2021 emissions by improving electric grid and supporting industry adoption of renewable energy. Specific measures:

- Upgrade transmission and distribution of electric power infrastructure to accommodate renewable energy generation and reduce losses
- Increasing renewable energy, particularly solar

Strategy 4 is to Improve waste diversion and landfill management

- Landfill gas management and utilization
- Organic waste diversion from landfills
- Recycling



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Strategy 5 is to Promote use of alternative fuels

- Hydrogen refueling stations
- Sustainable aviation fuel production
- Renewable natural gas production from biodigesters

Strategy 6 is Refrigerant management

- Management of F-gas leakage and replacement of equipment

Strategy 7 is to Advance conservation and sustainable land use

- Afforestation and reforestation
- Cropland and soil management improvements and conservation
- Coastal and waterway conservation and restoration

Special projects in GA:

The Ray is an organization that helps states reduce energy costs by developing “[solar highways](#).” Georgia is the third state in the nation to utilize roadsides for renewable energy development. Eighteen miles of highway in Georgia have been allocated to The Ray by the Georgia Department of Transportation to install 2,600 solar panels on five acres of land.

Georgia Power’s Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription ([CARES](#)) is another special program that “allows commercial and industrial customers to support their sustainability initiatives,” these customers are able to subscribe to a purchase plan that provides energy generated from renewable sources to their power grids.

About Science for Georgia

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Please reach out with any questions or comments info@sci4ga.org

