



## Sustainability

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# UNH Signs Call for US to Achieve Net-Zero by 2050

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

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President James Dean, and the Executive Committee of the University of New Hampshire (UNH) recently decided to join one of a number of higher education institutions in signing [a letter supporting a strong 2030 U.S. climate target](#) (known as a "Nationally Determined Contribution" - NDC) pursuant to the Paris Agreement. The letter calls on the United States to adopt a target of at least 50% emissions reduction by 2030 in order to place the country on a credible pathway to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

UNH is proud to join leadership at universities and colleges around the country in signing this letter. It represents a unified, collective voice from higher education showing the U.S. government, and others, that American universities and colleges are in favor of our country setting

these important and ambitious goals.

We believe UNH has a tremendous opportunity and obligation as a public university to contribute to a sustainable future. This is all the more meaningful as we continue to live through a global health pandemic, alongside what was already being recognized as a pivotal decade in human history as we tackle not only the climate crisis, and associated ecological, economic and health impacts, but also continue to grapple with issues of racial injustice, equity and human wellbeing.

We know that the world must address the climate crisis at the pace and scale it demands, and extensive climate modeling now confirms the viability of a 50% emissions reduction by 2030 target (with a 2005 baseline). Most recently, a report from the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) sets forth multiple, achievable pathways to reach this vital interim goal on the road to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. Ambitious U.S. federal policy will enable many sectors the opportunity to be able to invest in and deliver on their own emissions reductions while encouraging other nations to step up.

UNH is proud to play our part. UNH reduced its carbon footprint by more than half since 2001. We have done this through many different actions including the EcoLine landfill gas-to-energy project that supplies the majority of campus energy, which reduces the amount of climate pollution generated at the Turnkey Landfill in Rochester, and reduces the quantity of traditional fossil fuels, like oil and natural gas, that UNH has to burn. Several small NH-based hydro-electric dams add to UNH's low-carbon energy portfolio. These renewable initiatives are great for the environment; equally important, they generate savings that UNH can reinvest in energy projects every year, support small local businesses, and protect human health making them great examples of sustainability. We also have a campus energy efficiency investment revolving fund, established in 2009, and a unique partnership with our local utility, Eversource, that promotes campus energy efficiency.

UNH's new climate action plan, WildCAP, has been developed by

UNH's Energy Task Force, and will be released in 2021. It calls for continued rapid progress in reducing UNH's carbon footprint over the next decade. The draft plan will be shared with faculty, staff and students in late April and we will invite and welcome input to ensure our climate action goals and plans reflect the values of our community.

Thanks to President Dean and UNH Executive Committee members for your leadership, and for our colleagues representing leadership across higher education in the US for signing this important and timely letter.

*We thank our colleagues at Second Nature for their efforts to organize this letter. You can find out more information about the letter and contact the Second Nature team [here](#). Sign the letter [here](#).*

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