

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's State Energy Office partners with NC GreenPower to support energy efficiency upgrades for schools in economically distressed areas

**RALEIGH, NC** – NC GreenPower was awarded \$798,436 in funding from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) State Energy Office to reduce the energy burden for North Carolina's K-8 public schools. The funding opportunity was part of the American Rescue Plan Act.

The nonprofit, along with its contractor partners, supported the purchase and installation of high-efficiency light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures in gymnasiums at no cost to 60 qualifying schools in North Carolina Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties — Anson, Avery, Bertie, Chowan, Columbus, Franklin, Madison, Pitt, Robeson, Scotland and Vance — with high eligibility rates for free/reduced lunch. Funding was prioritized for school systems in qualifying areas with disproportionate energy consumption and costs based on data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's "Statistical Profile" tool.

A heavy emphasis was placed on upgrading qualifying elementary and middle school gymnasiums in electric cooperative and electric municipality service territories since they have limited access to utility-sponsored commercial lighting rebates; however, schools within an investor-owned utility's territory were eligible to participate if the general eligibility requirements were met.

In addition, DEQ provided emergency energy assistance for Reaching All Minds STEM Academy to replace malfunctioning heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment, improve indoor air quality and reduce the energy burden for a school that educates underserved families.

Both efforts align with recommendations from the North Carolina Clean Energy Plan to foster long-term energy affordability and equity for disadvantaged communities. Projects were completed by September 30, 2022 and have received positive feedback from gym teachers and other staff members, who were happy to have improved lighting for their students along with energy savings for their school.

### **About NC GreenPower**

Formed by Advanced Energy in 2003, NC GreenPower is a nonprofit whose mission is to expand public knowledge and acceptance of cleaner energy technologies to all North Carolinians through local, community-based initiatives. Since NC GreenPower's inception, donors have supported more than 1,125 local renewable energy and carbon offset projects, producing 1.06 billion kilowatt-hours of green energy and mitigating nearly 107,000 tons of greenhouse gases.

In 2015, NC GreenPower launched Solar+ Schools to support educational solar photovoltaic installations at K-12 schools. By 2023, the program will have reached a total of 76 North Carolina schools in 46 counties, bringing solar energy and STEM education to nearly 57,000 students. To date, the schools have collectively produced an estimated 720,000 kilowatt-hours of green energy, a savings of about \$68,500. Contributions to NC GreenPower are tax deductible. Visit [www.ncgreenpower.org](http://www.ncgreenpower.org).

### **About DEQ**

DEQ is the lead stewardship agency for the protection of North Carolina's environmental resources. The organization, which has offices from the mountains to the coast, administers regulatory programs designed to protect air quality, water quality, and the public's health, and also works to advance an all-of-the-above energy strategy that fits North Carolina's needs. DEQ also offers technical assistance to businesses, farmers, local governments, and the public and encourages responsible behavior with respect to the environment through education programs provided at DEQ facilities and through the state's school system.

DEQ provides science-based environmental stewardship for the health and prosperity of all North Carolinians. For more information, visit <https://deq.nc.gov/>.

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