



# DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

## 2024 Climate Strategy Report

North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

*Submitted October 1, 2024; Covers July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024*

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# Introduction

## About North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

The North Carolina Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA) supports the military community in North Carolina, including the personnel, installations, and their adjacent communities; and supports our state's veterans and their families. The Department provides access to a full spectrum of resources that further enhance North Carolina's military and veteran friendly environment. The Department will facilitate collaborative opportunities for business development, leveraging of technology, transportation and healthcare services, educational opportunities, and economic development, by engaging with Federal, State, and Local Government. The Department will continue collaborative and supporting efforts with non-profit and civic organizations that support an engaged military and veteran populace that is a fully vested participant in all facets of our state's life.

## North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Vulnerabilities to Climate Change

North Carolina is a geographically and climatically diverse state with a climate already defined by extreme and changeable weather. As natural and climate disasters increase in frequency, magnitude, and duration, the NCDMVA has identified the following vulnerabilities and risks to its services:

- a. Hurricanes and other severe weather events may impact personnel transportation to and from the place of business for the primary workforce. NCDMVA structures are primarily leased, and our workforce, other than cemetery staff, is office-based with little outdoor or off-site requirements.
- b. Extreme heat and extreme cold damages the State Veterans Cemeteries, both facilities and the burial sites. Primarily these conditions generate additional personnel requirements to manage additional watering of lawns and repair and replace grave markers.
- c. Extreme weather may damage existing Department facilities, such as State Veterans Homes, more frequently. Power outages may become more frequent, affecting communications systems and facility operations. Some events may generate major repair and renovation requirements at the Homes. Flooding may be a concern at some locations.

## North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Approach to Fulfilling the Strategies in the Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan

The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has not generated any change as to how we intend to fulfill the strategies, actions, and recommendations in the Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan.

## Reducing Energy Use

The position responsible for utility and energy management for the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is currently vacant. As a result, the department partners with the State Construction Office to identify opportunities to incorporate energy reduction features into existing facilities, or to design energy reduction features into any new construction.

## Addressing Environmental Injustices and Inequities

The environmental justice lead for the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has participated in every Governor's Environmental Justice Council meeting as a member since its inception on December 14, 2023. He has participated as a member of both the Community Engagement and Training subcommittees. The lead has advocated for inclusion of veteran and military community data within the scope of the EJ Mapping Tool. Unfortunately, the veteran data available through the census American Community Survey was not deemed viable for the tool, nor was some military community data our agency obtained through the Defense Manpower Data Center. Three agency environmental justice draft goals were submitted in early 2024 and will be published later this year by the council. Much of that goal work is dependent on understanding where the environmental justice communities (as defined in [Executive Order 292](#)) are in the state and what the overlap with military installation communities will be. The mapping tool will be a key component on release for implementing two of the agency goals.

## Public Participation Plan

The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs does not have a Public Participation Plan.

## 1.0. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

### 1.1 Reduce energy consumption per square foot in state-owned buildings by at least 40% from fiscal year 2002-2003 levels

#### 1.1.1 Install new energy efficient Vertical Terminal Air Conditioning (VTAC) systems in the State Veterans Homes in Kinston and Black Mountain.

Status: Ongoing

Expected Completion Date: June 2025

The department has completed all VTAC installation in the Kinston State Veterans Home (SVH) resident rooms, with room-specific controls. We are in the process of installing an updated energy efficient solution for the common areas of the Kinston SVH with an expected completion date of May/June 2025.

The department is in the design process for the Black Mountain SVH and will incorporate a similar solution from Kinston SVH into the common areas of the Black Mountain SVH.

### 1.2 Support the use and expansion of energy efficient and clean energy resources

Not applicable to the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

### 1.3 Increase the number of registered Zero Emission Vehicles to at least 1,250,000 by 2030 so that 50% of in-state sales of new vehicles are zero-emission by 2030

Not applicable to North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

### 1.4 Prioritize Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) in the purchase or lease of new vehicles and for agency business travel

#### 1.4.1 Transition the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs motor fleet to zero emission vehicles

Status: Proposed

Expected Completion Date: June 30, 2030

Once the appropriate infrastructure is in place across North Carolina to fully support this transition, the department will accept zero emission vehicles in place of current fleet as required during life cycle replacement operations monitored and directed by Motor Fleet Management.

**1.4.2 Purchase Zero Emission Vehicles for the operation of the State Veterans Homes**

Status: Proposed

Expected Completion Date: June 30, 2030

Once the appropriate infrastructure is in place across North Carolina to fully support this transition, the department will purchase zero emission vehicles in place of current fleet as required during life cycle replacement operations monitored by Motor Fleet Management. This includes any vehicles donated to the department by outside agencies for use at the State Veterans Homes.

## 2.0. Increase statewide resilience to the impacts of climate change

### 2.1 Evaluate the impacts of climate change on North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' programs and operations

**2.1.1 Understand and address the effect of climate change on State Veterans Cemeteries**

Status: Ongoing

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

The maintenance and landscaping of the State Veterans Cemeteries has become increasingly more complex with the temperature and rainfall changes during the seasons. Maintaining a lush, attractive plot of land requires innovation and skill to coordinate fertilization, installation, mowing, and mulching to peak growing seasons. This will minimize the wasted efforts during non-optimal growing seasons.

**2.1.2 Coordinate with facility owners of leased property supporting Veteran Service Centers to ensure the facilities are prepared for natural disasters**

Status: Planned

Expected Completion Date: TBD

The department continues to review contracts for all leased facilities to ensure they include the owner's responsibility section references care for the facility in the case of a natural disaster.

### 2.1.3 Protect the State Veterans Homes from Flooding

Status: Proposed

Expected Completion Date: TBD

Evaluate any additional protective measures that should be taken if a flooding incident takes place near the facility.

## 2.2 Integrate climate change adaptation practices and resiliency planning into North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' policies and operations

### 2.2.1 Adopt adaptation best practices for the State Veterans Cemeteries

Status: Proposed

Expected Completion Date: June 30, 2030

The department will integrate any appropriate climate change adaptation practices and resiliency planning into the policies and operations of the State Veterans Cemeteries as required and as identified by NC DEQ.

### 2.2.2 Develop and distribute a contacts list to keep necessary services up and running before, during, and after a disaster

Status: Planned

Expected Completion Date: TBD

The department plans to develop and internally distribute a local, state, and federal contacts list to facilitate disaster preparedness and response.

## 2.3 Assist the communities served by North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to implement climate change adaptation practices and resiliency planning

Not applicable to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

## 2.4 Help complete initiatives in the Natural and Working Lands Action Plan and Executive Order 305, An Order to Protect and Restore North Carolina's Critical Natural and Working Lands

Not applicable to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

### 3.0. Address the public health impacts of climate change

Not applicable to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

### 4.0. Invest in historically underserved communities

Not applicable to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

## Additional Information

In recent years, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has completed the following resilience strategies:

- Install back-up power for State Veterans Homes - All Homes have back-up generators installed. All back-up generators are tested monthly to ensure continued operation.
- Partner with local power utilities to fortify services to and from NCDMVA facilities - Develop agreements with local power companies to prioritize repair of utility services at NCDMVA facilities in the event of a natural disaster.
- Install backup mechanisms for the NCDMVA communications systems - Appropriate backup mechanisms have been provided by the NC Department of Information Technology.