

Cleveland Commits to 100% Clean, Renewable Electricity!

Jocelyn Travis, Cleveland Ready for 100 Coordinator

After two years of running Ready for 100 in Cleveland, Ohio we accomplished our 2018 campaign goal: at the 10th annual Sustainable Cleveland Summit, Mayor Frank Jackson and his Chief Sustainability Officer, Matt Gray, unveiled the city's new [Climate Action Plan](#) which establishes a goal for powering our city with electricity produced by 100% clean, renewable energy by 2050.

With this commitment, [Cleveland becomes the first city in the state of Ohio to commit to 100% clean energy](#). We are also the 83rd city to commit nationally.

It's hard to emphasize how huge a milestone this is, both for this community and for our campaign. For years, the mayor has refused to meet with the Cleveland Ready for 100 team, or engage on any level about renewable energy. That's partly because Cleveland's legacy is fixed in fossil fuels. Even today, one of the city's two utilities, FirstEnergy, is among the staunchest forces opposing renewable development. Cleveland is at the heart of the Rust Belt and has an industrial history -- this is where Standard Oil was founded, and where just a few decades ago the Cuyahoga River burned (13 times) because of pollution. To date, we're consistently ranked among [the worst cities for particle air pollution](#). Not only is the outdated reliance on fossil fuels harming our health, but it's hurting our communities and economy, low-income Cleveland households face some of the [highest energy burdens](#) across the US.

The passage of a new Climate Action Plan (CAP) with a 100% clean, renewable electricity goal means our campaign has successfully drummed up community support and reached the City. Here's how we did it:

Advocating for community input and equity to anchor of the CAP as a member of the city's Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee. These concerns were echoed in an [op-ed](#) earlier this summer calling for 100% clean energy in the CAP in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Soon after, the 100% goal was included in a draft of the Climate Action Plan, prepared by the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, and posted [online](#) in July to solicit public comments.

We knew we needed to make the CAP as strong as it could be and also show the groundswell of support to motivate the Mayor and Office of Sustainability. So, a Sierra Club policy team led by Drew O'Bryan and Kassie Rohrbach developed comments on the CAP draft to make it stronger -- and we encouraged the city to officially make an 100% goal. We also held a [press conference](#) with a panel of speakers that represented different groups that care about clean energy in Cleveland (including a public health professional, a clergyman, and a board member of the local NAACP) in August (photos [here](#)). We offered the petitions we'd collected over the course of the Cleveland RF100 campaign (numbering over 2,000) to the Mayor's Office. Here's the [livestream](#), courtesy of Chad Stephens.

Partners submitted [letters to the editor](#), and we spoke out in support for another major [story](#) in Cleveland: an offshore wind project on Lake Erie. With the help of Stephanie Steinbrecher and Ashlinn Gallagher,

we launched a [print ad](#) in The Plain Dealer on Sunday and ads [online](#) calling on Mayor Jackson to stand with the community by moving to clean energy for all. [The ads can be viewed here.](#)

By the time the Sustainable Cleveland Summit rolled around, the policy, organizing, digital, and communications teams was spent. But, with an eleventh hour call by Kassie to the Chief Sustainability Officer, we realized the goal was finalized in the CAP (published online [here](#)), and it was announced at the summit.

We are proud to see this milestone through and see Cleveland become the first city in Ohio to commit to being powered by 100% clean, renewable electricity -- on the same day the Browns won their first game since 2016, no less. Now, we look forward to working with the city and the partners we built relationships with to see Cleveland implement a just and equitable transition to clean energy. Special thanks to our awesome Cleveland Ready For 100 Coalition and National Ready For 100 Team for their continued support and hard work!

Here are some of the top media stories from the commitment:

InsideClimate News - [100% Renewable Energy: Cleveland Sets a Big Goal as It Sheds Its Fossil Fuel Past](#)

PV Magazine - [Local solar at the heart of Cleveland's 100% renewable energy goal](#)

Ideastream (affiliated with the local NPR station) - [Cleveland Commits To 100 Percent Renewable Energy By 2050](#)

We need volunteers to continue this important movement in our community! Please contact Cleveland Ready For 100 Coordinator, Jocelyn Travis to help us reach our goal. Jocelyn can be reached via email, jocelyn.travis@sierraclub.org or cell, (216) 926.6535.