



CIRCA Report Cover

DeCARbonize the Oceans

January 2026
Chris Schweitzer



Connecticut Institute for Resilience
and Climate Adaptation

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Sponsored by a Climate & Equity grant from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). CIRCA is a partnership between the University of Connecticut and the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. More information can be found at: www.circa.uconn.edu

New Haven Leon SCP Final Report 2025

Summary (1 paragraph): Please provide a brief summary of the completed grant project, including activities, outcomes, and lessons learned.

Summary: This campaign - DeCARbonize the Oceans - educated the public and City leadership about how our current car-centric transportation system has a huge impact on ocean health, and how increased levels of greenhouse gasses are warming the oceans, creating stronger storms, accelerating sea level rise, and collapsing ecosystems. The NHCM campaign adopted the goNewHavengo campaign (which we created with a coalition in 2014) website and social media and support individual and institutional change in transportation choices and resources, with students working both in their schools and in public. We worked with high school interns in the summer of 2024 to research transportation and ocean impacts and set up web pages and social media to begin this campaign. In 2025 we had ten youth interns working in local high schools to integrate DeCARbonize the Oceans learning in six high schools, supported public engagement in the City budget process (for 2025-26), and explored increasing for transportation staffing for planning and support creating of a clear City plan/timeline to reach climate goals related to transportation.

Grant Project Activities:

- What activities did your organization complete using Climate & Equity funds?

In early 2025, the Climate & Equity funds covered work which included:

NHCM/NHLSCP started 2025 working to grow our new DeCARbonize the Oceans campaign that links transportation policies and choices with negative ocean impacts (acidification, pollution, warming, sea level rise), and encourages transitions to healthier transportation options. As an ocean front community, we considered this a way to narrow down climate change threats and make the impacts more concrete and local.

This effort included winter/spring efforts, including:

- Meeting weekly with ten interns in six schools (ESUMS, West Haven, Co-op, Career, Hopkins, Metro, and High School in the Community) to coordinate the DeCARbonize the Oceans campaign.
- Organizing the Transportation Transformation Resolution campaign including getting petitions signed, doing public education, and attending and testifying at Board of Alders hearings.
- Creating DeCAR [Did You Know Posters](#) to educate about transportation pollution impacts on the oceans; organized public reception to display posters at the Institute Library.
- Posted graphics and videos on social media on DECARbonize themes.

- Organized World Oceans Day public event at City Hall, and other public outreach events.

Since June, we have continued the DeCARbonize the Oceans Campaign, including this summer:

- Hiring five high school and college age interns (paid stipend) to work this summer on DeCARbonize banners and organizing public outreach downtown, on Longwharf (with a beach clean up for World Oceans Day), and at Cityseed Markets.
- Continuing to build support for passage of the Transportation Transformation Resolution including having people sign petitions and wave cards to give to the Alders.
- Creating and distributing a [new brochure](#) for people new to riding a bus to help them feel more comfortable.
- Organized social media outreach including creating a series of five videos on IG and FB with Finley the talking sea turtle refuting negative myths about buses.
- Began having the [goNewHaven](#) alternative transportation newsletter sent out by a youth intern.

In the fall of 2025, we began working with six paid (stipend) high school interns and one Yale volunteer to continue the DeCAR campaign with more outreach in five high schools (Career, West Haven, Hopkins, Cheshire, and High School in the Community). They have been giving out DeCAR materials and getting students to sign more wave cards supporting climate action both in school and through public NHCM events (like [this](#) and [this](#)). Interns have also been working on creating five ocean/climate educational banners to be hung in schools (see [here](#)) which will be accompanied by an Oceans Trivia Contest and daily school announcements with ocean facts. This is part of the school year campaign to educate students and teachers about oceans (especially Long Island Sound) and the impact of our car-centric transportation system on them.

This November the Board of Alders [passed the Transportation Transformation Resolution](#) and NHCM/DeCAR youth have begun research on possible transportation changes in preparation for meeting with the City transportation director and a supportive Alder in January to create the required plan.

- Please indicate any important project milestones (such as hiring a staff member, holding a workshop series, completing a draft plan, etc.).

Key milestones included:

1. Testifying at Board of Alders hearings and regularly giving Alders climate change primers and petitions from students and others.

2. Hiring five summer high school interns in May; recruiting summer two college students to support work; hiring six fall in-school interns in August and recruiting one college student volunteer.
3. This November the Board of Alders [passed the Transportation Transformation Resolution](#).

- Where did your organization complete activities? Please indicate any project sites (specific locations if possible, or general neighborhoods). Feel free to add any maps or photos.

Most of the activities were downtown as that's where many people are, where City Hall and Yale New Haven Hospital are located, and it's easy for youth to get to. Most of our planning meetings are on Zoom, with some in person strategy meetings downtown.

- Events (with linked media):

Organized a [Try the Bus Trip](#) in February

Testified at [Board of Alders CSEP](#) hearing on the Resolution in March.

Did You Know Posters [Reception at the Institute Library](#) in March (education, community building)

Organized ongoing [CARbon Free Fridays](#) Public Education Campaign

Testified at Board of Alders budget [hearing in April](#)

[World Oceans Day](#) Beach [Clean Up](#) in June at Long Wharf (advocacy, public education)

[Public DeCARbonize Outreach/Art Making](#) in July.

Outreach Event at Yale New Haven Hospital in July

[Boba Tea Fundraiser](#) in August (outreach, community building, public education, art making)

[Ocean's Birthday Party](#) in September (outreach, community building, public education).

Attack of the Climate Clowns [Halloween Event](#) (outreach, community building, public education).

[Ocean/Beach Clean Up](#) with Save the Sound at Long Wharf Boat House (public education, service, art making)

[Global Day of Climate Action](#) in [November at City Hall](#) (advocacy, public education)

Grant Project Outcomes:

- What outcomes resulted from the grant project activities?

Resolution

Involved 27 youth leadership development activities and tapped into their skills to make concrete change.

Coordinated over 20 public education activities led by youth to engage students and the public on DeCARbonize themes.

Interns organized DECARbonize education in 10 local high schools reaching thousands of students through posters, banners, school announcements, and tabling.

Educated the Alders on gaps in City transportation planning and successfully advocated for them to pass the Resolution.

NHCM youth supported state level consideration of free bus passes and the state did include funds for New Haven and Hartford students to each get \$150,000 in free bus passes.

- Was your organization able to achieve your project goal? If yes, please explain how the outcomes of your project achieved the goal described in your organization's project application; if not, please explain the challenges that prevented the goal from being achieved.

Our main goal is to support policy change led by youth that reduces climate impacts, which we met. This effort built youth skills and awareness, and modeled youth leadership for other students. We did struggle to grow the numbers of students engaged and involvement of the general public, but we're aware that there has been a broader decrease in youth involvement in advocacy the last three years. For example, there are no Yale student groups now working on climate change advocacy, which often supplied some key volunteers and helped turn out people for events. Of course, the broader Federal government attack on so many social justice efforts is draining energy and making some youth more cautious.

- Was your organization able to engage the community described in your organization's project application? If yes, please describe the community engagement involved in your project.

We did organize quite a number of public and in-school outreach activities throughout the region, including socials, teach-ins, advocacy events, art making, fundraisers and tabling where we got to share information and have discussions with individuals.,

Yes, mostly through small public events and social media (see Events above).

- Please use specific metrics wherever you can (for example, number of outreach meetings held, number of trees planted, number of community residents reached, number and names of partner organizations, etc.)

Number of outreach events: 14

Number of advocacy events: 10

Number of petition signers: 750

In school educational activities: 70

Number of youth leaders involved: 45

Number of meetings with City leaders: 7

Number of resolutions passed: 1

Number of educational banners and posters created by youth: 29

Number of articles in the media: 11

Number of social media graphics and videos created and posted by youth: 45

Capacity-Building Progress:

- Community capacity-building: How did your project help to increase the capacity of vulnerable communities in Connecticut to mitigate, plan for, and respond to climate change impacts?

By working with youth we built the capacity of future leaders to fully understand the significant climate change challenges, and ways to reduce those risks in ways that also have significant co-benefits for New Haven neighborhoods. The youth are regularly exploring specific climate impacts on ecosystems and human communities, and how present systems (especially transportation) create often unseen damage. They then are involved in exploring climate solution options and how to create those changes at individual, organizational, and government levels. Of course, youth are very vulnerable to future climate impacts, and as a recent University of Cal/Berkely study showed children born in 2024 will face \$500,000 in additional climate change costs.

DeCAR also worked on public education on transportation impacts and options, which is important in changing behaviours, but also in building support for broader policy change. For example, to implement the Transportation Resolution we'll need to both advocate for changes (like free bus fares for youth) and build public support for those policies.

We also engaged the City government in understanding that there is a lack of clear plan to reduce climate change pollution in transportation, which needs to be addressed to make significant progress on climate change. Most New Haven Alders are volunteers and many lack a background in climate change and transportation, so helping them understand transportation impacts, options and opportunities is important.

- Organization capacity-building: Did you learn any lessons / make any connections / develop any resources through this project that will help your organization do its work more effectively in the future?

We developed educational resources, including:

- a series of youth designed and painted long DeCARbonize fence banners we'll install around town in coming months.
- two sets of Did You Know banners on climate, transportation and ocean impacts we'll install in public and in schools.
- four Ocean education banners for in school use, which we'll hang in seven schools this year.

These visual resources will continue to educate and invite students and others to get involved with NHCM.

The Transportation Transformation Resolution we passed will set the stage for future City policies to reduce climate change pollution, and we'll work to hold the City accountable to enact the Resolution's commitments.

We continue to try to understand the changing realities with respect to addressing climate change, and the flood of Federal policy changes have created obstacles and distractions for our allies including local governments...so this has made engaging in climate solutions harder. We also try to listen to the youth and what their priorities are and what motivates them to be involved in NHCM and climate change work in general. We continue to expand our connections with teachers and educators which are quite helpful in our work with youth.

- Knowledge-sharing: Do you have any advice for other organizations doing similar projects?
We would encourage others to both work with youth (as a way to create strong future leadership) and advocate for policy change as it is the most impactful way to create broad change.

Climate and Equity Photos 2025 NHLSCP



Youth working on Free Bus Fares banners as part of a Grinch themed NHCM social in December.



NHCM youth at recent transportation fair organized by NCAT at Gateway in November.



Youth organized day of climate action at New Haven City Hall calling for increased climate action in November.



Halloween themed ("Attack of Climate Clowns") outreach and education event in downtown New Haven.



Outreach event with ocean solidarity chalkboard and NHCM interns Natalie Clorio and Emiliana Torres..



Youth creating “Make Waves” yard signs as part of a Long Wharf beach clean up in October that brought out about 50 volunteers (in conjunction with Save the Sound).



One of the four DeCAR fence banners created this summer during outreach events in New Haven



An Ocean's Birthday (3.7 billion years old!) outreach and community-building event in September.



Interns and volunteers at a Long Wharf beach clean up in June (World Oceans Day) and educational event as part of our summer CARbon Free Fridays



Outreach on the New Haven Green this summer.



Youth leaders at the Board of Alders hearing on the transportation resolution in March.



Youth organized rally before the Board of Alders transportation hearing in March.



Getting a video after NHCM's "TRY IT DAY" to take the bus to Westville for snacks/coffee in February.



NHCM volunteer/intern social in January over school break.