



SUMMER 2025

Sustainability and Climate Change Snapshot

HIGHLIGHTS

Divested from fossil fuels in 2018	Sustainability courses across the curriculum are now tagged in catalog	Eight rooftop solar arrays	Goal of carbon neutrality by 2050
113 new trees planted via Greening the Gateway City Program	2 Bluebike hubs on campus	100 new geothermal wells will join Library system in North Campus clean energy loop	27 parking spaces with EV charging
Sustainability Council Internship Program	Reduced GHG Emissions 49% from 2004-2024	Five LEED certified buildings	34 water refill stations across campus
850 attendees at Earth Days events 2025	Freecycle tables in residence halls encourage reuse	Pollinator garden and low mow zone support habitat	80,000 pounds of textiles recycled

Introduction

“As a civically engaged community, Salem State understands a commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability is a powerful and enduring form of civic action. Our support for solar energy, decarbonization, biking infrastructure, tree planting, and student and faculty scholarship are environmental strategies, as well as expressions of leadership and commitment. These efforts breathe life into our mission to educate, inspire, and engage our students and our community, and I could not be prouder of how we have all come together to advance this work.”

– President John Keenan



Environmental Stewardship Is Critical to Salem State

Sustainability is an integral part of Salem State’s commitment to academic and operational excellence and to the school’s position as a leading north shore institution.

In 2010, Salem State produced a **Climate Action Plan** in response to signing the American College and University Climate Commitment. The 2010 plan noted that, “Salem State recognizes the threat of global climate change and is committed to institutional changes and business practices that will reduce the production of greenhouse gases. It is further committed to moving the campus toward **climate neutrality by the year 2050.**” In 2018, spurred by student and faculty demands, the university divested from fossil fuels, reiterating its commitment to addressing the climate crisis.

SSU Strategic Plan Defines Further Direction

Sustainability initiatives are embedded in Goal 4 of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action. These add specific energy project goals and extend beyond energy into campus culture, climate justice leadership, academics and sustainable landscape.

Goal 4: Reflect Salem State’s core commitment to protecting the natural environment in campus facilities, operations, academics and decision making, and equip faculty, staff and students to understand and engage in addressing the climate emergency.

State Goals Provide Framework

Massachusetts Executive Order 594 sets goals and requirements for state agencies to accelerate the decarbonization of fuels used to heat and cool state facilities, quicken the shift to electric heating and vehicles and lead the Commonwealth to a cleaner future. As a state agency, Salem State is guided by these goals and reports our progress against them. Salem State has met the 2025 goals for onsite fossil fuel emissions energy use intensity (EUI) reductions.

Massachusetts Executive Order 594 Progress

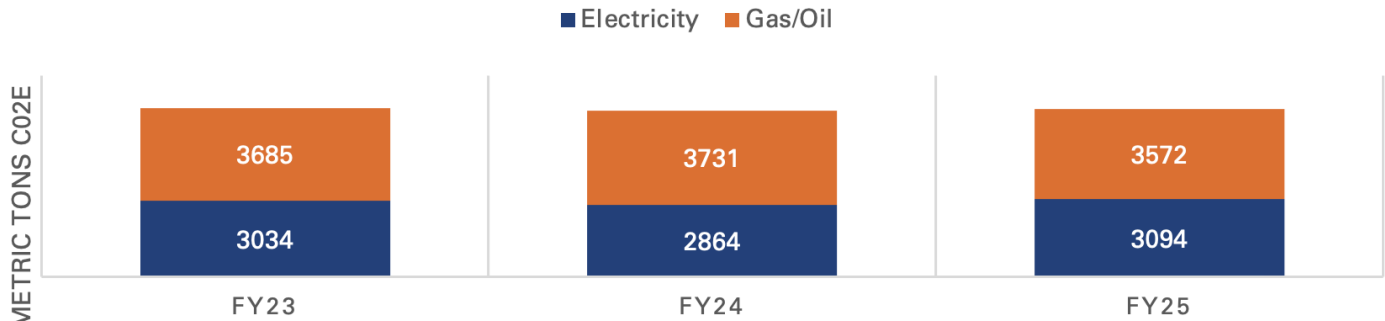
Objective	2024 SSU Progress	2025	2026	2027	2028
Onsite fossil fuel emissions (building heating and cooling and fleet vehicles)	-32% Goal Met	-20%	-35%	-60%	-95%
Zero emission vehicles (ZEV) in overall fleet	Purchased ZEV in FY2025	5% of fleet	20% of fleet	75% of fleet	100% of fleet
Building fuel oil use (currently emergency generators only)	-85%	-90%	-95%	*	*
Energy use intensity (EUI) per square foot	-39% Goal Met	-20%	-25%	*	*
Vehicle charging stations across all state facilities	23 parking spots	350 stations	500 stations	*	*

*Targets have not yet been established by the state

Salem State Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions (metric tons CO2e)	FY04	FY24	% change from FY04
Grid Electricity Emissions	7,802	3,023	-61%
Onsite Fossil Fuel Emissions	5,653	3,834	-32%
Total GHG Emissions	13,455	6,857	-49%

← Focus of current state goal in first row above and the orange row in the chart below

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM BUILDING ENERGY USE



NOTE THAT THERE ARE NO EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH USING SOLAR WHICH PROVIDED 7.4% OF ELECTRICAL DEMAND IN FY25

Decarbonization Project Underway

To meet our goals of breaking free of fossil fuels by 2050, Salem State has initiated a North Campus decarbonization project to drill 100 geothermal wells under the faculty parking lot behind Meier Hall. Heat pumps will then deliver fossil fuel-free heating and cooling to Horace Mann which is undergoing a total renovation and to the Meier Hall Lab Addition under construction as part of Project BOLD. Future phases will extend this clean energy loop to additional North Campus buildings.

The state chose to fully fund Salem State's Phase I decarbonization initiative as a state agency demonstration project focusing on strategies such as geothermal energy, a shared heating and cooling energy loop, and technologies such as air source heat exchange.

Upon completion of the decarbonization project, the new Meier Hall addition and the renovated Horace Mann building will be the first buildings to utilize this clean technology when they open in Fall 2027. A subsequent project will install a solar canopy over the parking lot.



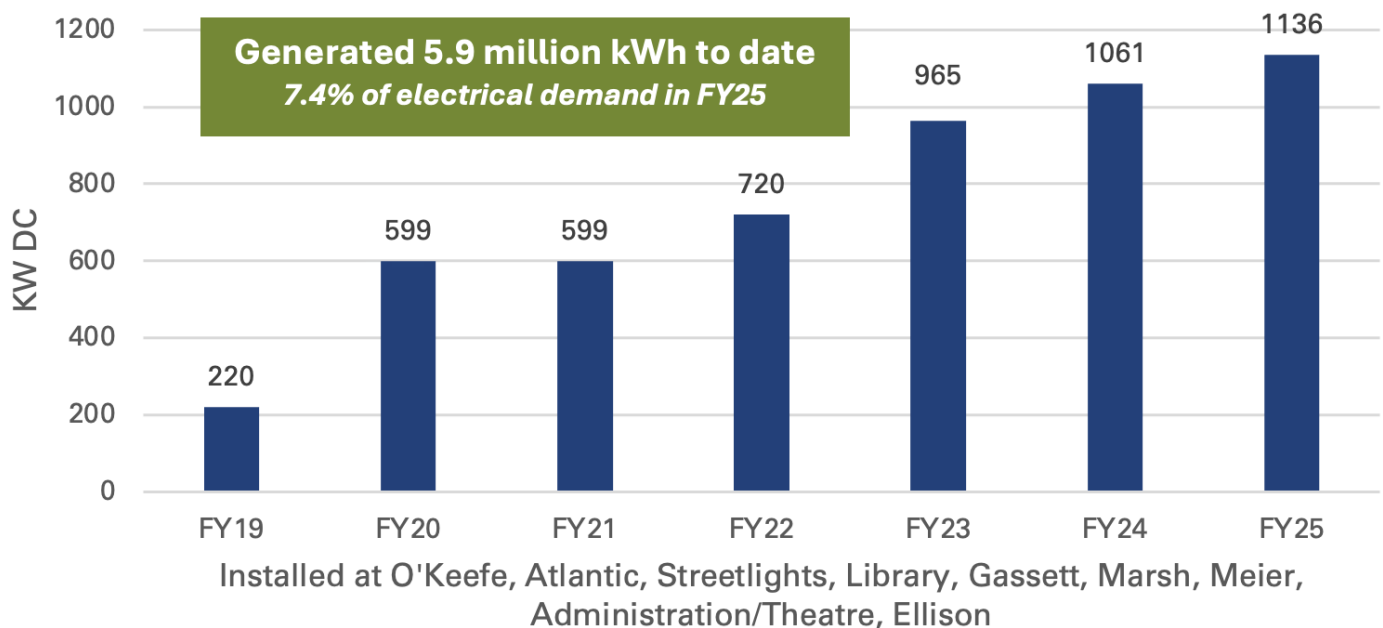
Renewable Energy Use Expands Across Campus

Salem State evaluates all new rooftops for their solar potential as part of our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). All projects after 2019, have utilized a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) approach which is free, and even makes money for Salem State. This is a third-party ownership scenario under which a solar company owns, installs and maintains the solar panels for Salem State for the 20-year life of the contract. Salem State agrees to purchase back the electricity generated at a fixed rate which will not increase for 20 years. All of Salem State's PPA projects have brought attractive savings to the university. Several of the projects have also received DOER funding which further reduces the agreed-upon purchase rate for the electricity. The projects are a tangible symbol of Salem State's leadership and commitment to addressing climate change. Student classes frequently view the North Campus solar panels from the roof of Meier and the panels are integrated into classes studying energy as well as drone technology.



- Eight Buildings with solar installed
- Contracts signed for rooftop solar to be installed on the Harrington Campus Classroom Building and solar canopy on the Faculty Parking Lot behind Meier Hall
- Contract under review for solar on the Forten Hall rooftop

Installed Solar Capacity KW

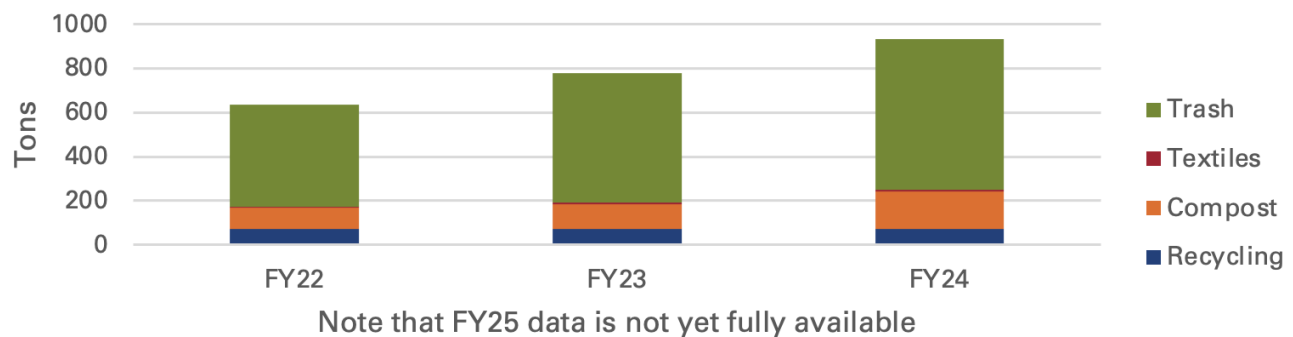


Waste Minimization Programs Encourage Behavior Change

Salem State prioritizes waste minimization and changing community behaviors to encourage reusing materials and reducing waste.

- Five Freecycle tables in the residence halls and a vibrant “Career Closet” encourage donations and reuse
- OZZI reusable to-go boxes reduce waste in the dining halls provide a sustainable alternative to single-use to-go containers
- 34 water refill stations encourage students and employees to bring their own water bottles instead of choosing single-use plastic bottles. Starbucks in Forten Hall offers ten cents off for customers bringing their own mugs or bottles.
- The bookstore has not used plastic bags since the City of Salem banned their use in 2018

Waste Disposal by Category in Tons FY24: 27% Waste Diversion Rate *Aspiration is 100% diversion*



SSU Offers a Suite of Green Commuting Options

As an institution where 58 percent of undergraduates are commuters, 27 percent of overall campus greenhouse gas emissions are associated with commuting. Salem State partners with the City of Salem on several green commuting programs and promotes public transit and other options. Highlights include:

- 27 parking spots with EV charging on campus
- Bike path from Harrington Campus to downtown Salem
- 2 Bluebike Hubs on Campus; 16 more across Salem
 - 20 E-bikes added to Salem system in 2025
- Salem Skipper is an inexpensive, shared alternative to Uber. The vehicles go anywhere in Salem as well as pre-set stops in Beverly and Danvers. Four of the fleet vehicles are accessible. Fares are \$2 during the day and \$3 at night.
- City of Salem received a \$2.77 M grant to design South Salem commuter rail stop, a priority project for Salem State as it would provide much closer campus access to the commuter rail



Aggressive Tree Planting Anchors Sustainable Landscape Focus

As an urban campus in a dense area (albeit with a gorgeous nine-acre salt marsh on campus), Salem State has embraced the opportunity to partner with the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) transformative Greening the Gateway City Program from 2022-2025. This is a fully subsidized state effort to plant trees in urban areas lacking tree cover as a social justice initiative. This effort has excited students, many of whom are studying the trees in biology, geography, GIS and drone classes.

- 113 trees of 30 diverse species planted in collaboration with the DCR Greening the Gateway City Program and the City of Salem
- Received Tree Campus Higher Education certification in March 2025 from the Arbor Day Foundation. SSU plans to apply for Level 1 Arboretum recognition in FY26.
- Low Mow zone established behind Atlantic Hall in response to student demands.



Community Engages via Academics and Earth Days

Infusing sustainability into both operations and academics is foundational to Salem State's approach to sustainability. Students across the curriculum have a strong interest in courses on climate change, climate justice and sustainability.

In addition to offering such courses across campus departments, related majors and minors, student clubs, internships and scholarships, Earth Days every April provides a chance to expand our offerings to the broader community.

- Course Tagging Launched
 - Students started seeing sustainability course tags as they registered for Fall 2025 courses
 - Initiative was in response to student demand for tagging to aid in finding sustainability courses across the curriculum
- Students can apply to be Sustainability Council members, undertaking initiatives to enhance campus sustainability for academic credit
- Earth Days April 2025 engaged 850 students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members in 20 lectures and activities
- Nine students won climate change writing, research poster and art awards totaling \$1,050



2025 SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT

↓ 49%

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

2004-2024 from buildings and operations



8

Rooftop Solar Arrays

>1 MW solar capacity

5.8 MWH generated



100

Geothermal Wells

being drilled behind Meier for North Campus decarbonization project



112 New Trees on Campus

Planted with the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

2025: Received Tree Campus certification



2025: Sustainability Course Tagging Launched

Responding to student interest for sustainability courses across departments



850 Participants in Earth Days 2025

9 students won climate change writing, research poster and art awards

