



- [Introduction](#)
- [Sustainability Plan & Approach](#)
- [Innovative Products & Services](#)
- [Environmental Footprint](#)
- [Quality Workforce](#)
- [Strong Communities](#)
- [Governance & Transparency](#)

# 2 Environmental Footprint

- ▶ Committed to carbon reduction
- ▶ Positioning our coal fleet for more stringent environmental regulations
- ▶ [Reducing our reliance on mountaintop coal](#)
- ▶ New generation nearing the finish line
- ▶ Outlook on new nuclear
- ▶ Water: A critical resource
- ▶ Environmental Performance Metrics
- ▶ I'm Accountable: Russ Wilkenloh

## Reducing our reliance on mountaintop coal

Mountaintop-removal coal mining — surface mining that's accomplished by removing the tops of mountains where the seams of coal are too thin to mine any other way — remains controversial.

In the Carolinas, we buy the majority of our plants' coal from Central Appalachia, where an estimated 25 percent of the coal comes from mountaintop mines. Our plants in the Carolinas were designed to burn Central Appalachian coal, so switching to fuel from a different coal basin is difficult and requires extensive tolerance-level testing.

During 2011, Duke Energy tested non-Central Appalachian coal in various quantities and blends at several of our plants in the Carolinas. Test results are still being reviewed, but current plans are to burn blends of non-Central Appalachian coals starting in 2012.

In addition, we continue our practice of purchasing Central Appalachian coal that does not come from mountaintop mines, when we can do so without paying a premium.

Duke Energy expects to reduce its dependency on Central Appalachian coal going forward, as economics and plant reliability warrant. State utility regulations require us to keep overall costs as low as possible for our customers.

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- ▶ Generating carbon credits in Peru

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[Sustainability Plan & Approach](#)

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