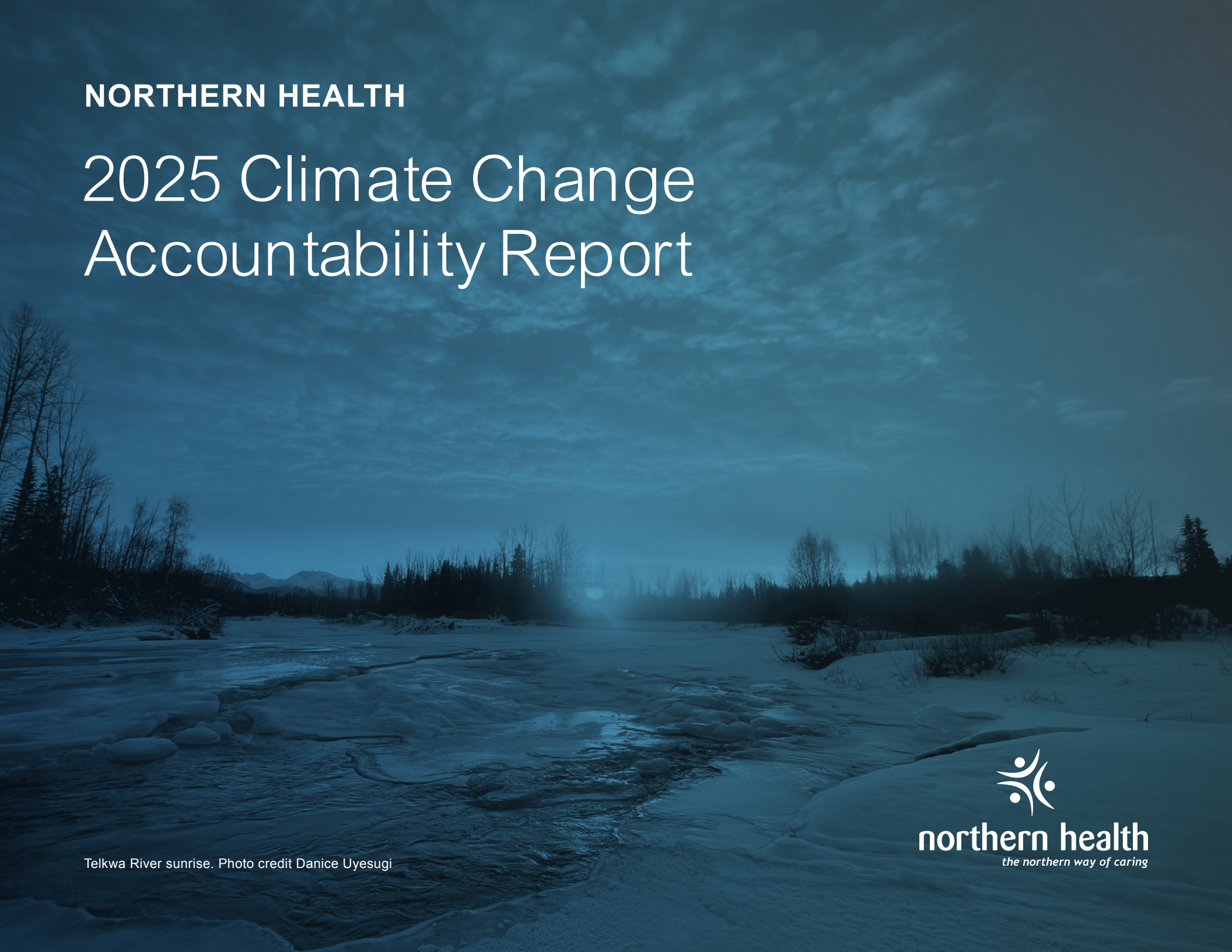
NORTHERN HEALTH

2025 Climate Change Accountability Report



Telkwa River sunrise. Photo credit Danice Uyesugi

northern health
the northern way of caring

Declaration Statement

This Public Sector Organization (PSO) Climate Change Accountability Report for the period January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, summarizes our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile, the total offsets to reach net-zero emissions, the actions we have taken in 2025 to minimize our GHG emissions, and our plans to continue reducing emissions in 2026 and beyond.

Sharing the land with First Nations and incorporating traditional Indigenous ways of knowing

Northern Health acknowledges with gratitude that our work takes place on the territories of the Tlingit, Tahltan, Nisga'a, Gitxsan, Tsimshian, Haisla, Haida, Wet'suwet'en, Carrier (Dakehl), Sekani (Tse'khene), Dane-zaa, Cree, Saulteau, and Dene Peoples.

This region is of profound cultural, spiritual, and ecological importance to First Nations Peoples, who have cared for its lands and waters for thousands of years and hold extensive knowledge about the interconnected relationships among people, place, and all living beings.

As we work toward advancing climate resilience and health, we are reminded that the health of our communities is deeply linked to the health of these territories and ecosystems. Together, may we walk this path with humility and care, building a future that reflects our shared commitment to justice, sustainability, and well-being for all who call these lands home; including all urban and away-from-home First Nations Peoples, Inuit and Métis people, and the 11 Métis Chartered Communities who have chosen homes in Northern BC.

Kitselas Canyon – Skeena River. Photo credit Nicole Lisson

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CIRO PANESSA
President and CEO, Northern Health

1.0 Executive Message

In 2025, there was a key focus on fiscal responsibility given global economic uncertainties and tariff threats. Northern Health (NH) was mandated by the province to ensure programs remain relevant, efficient, and sustainable while adhering to the principles of cost consciousness, accountability, service, and integrity.

As a result of this fiscal mandate, the province launched the Health System Transformation Project with the goal of aligning shared services amongst BC's health authorities and consolidating select non-clinical services. It was around this time that NH also launched its Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap (2025–2030). Balancing these two commitments has led to approaching our Climate Change and Sustainability workplan with a lens of efficiency and leveraging existing work both within NH and amongst our other provincial health partners.

Despite these challenges, NH wrapped up eight capital carbon reduction projects and made progress on another five emission reduction capital projects. These projects are expected to reduce GHG emissions by over 1,000 tCO_2e annually. In 2025, NH emitted 25,477 tCO_2e of GHG emissions. A portion of these emissions are bioCO_2 emissions which do not require offsets. After prior year adjustments are applied, this leaves 24,850 tCO_2e of emissions that will require offsets valued at $621,250 to meet our carbon neutral obligations.

Looking toward 2026 and beyond, NH will be aligning GHG emission reduction actions and climate leadership actions with the Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap.

2.0 Our Approach

NH's work to advance climate resilience is grounded in provincial direction, which identifies the development and implementation of plans to build a climate-resilient health system as a provincial priority. This expectation is reflected in the Ministry of Health and the NH Strategic Plan, as well as in ministerial mandate letters. Climate Change and Health is also formally recognized as a priority within BC's Population and Public Health Framework.

NH's Strategic Plan, *Looking to 2025*, aligns with the provincial direction by identifying the creation of a climate resilient health system as a strategic priority. In response to both government mandates and the rapidly growing and extensive climate impacts affecting the health system and Northern BC communities, NH has embedded climate action within Priority 1: Supporting healthy people in healthy communities. Under this priority, NH commits to partnering with staff, medical staff, communities, organizations, and researchers to strengthen resilience across the health system.

The resources that NH has dedicated towards advancing climate action work include the Energy and Environmental Sustainability team that works with facilities and capital planning, and the Climate Change and Health team that works with Population and Public Health. These resources, along with the structure set out in the Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap, enable departments across the organization to ensure a collaborative, whole system approach.

Key infrastructure GHG emission reduction actions carried out by the Energy and Environmental Sustainability team include:

- Making our heating and cooling systems more efficient and less carbon intensive
- Reprogramming building controls so that our buildings can use existing mechanical systems in the most efficient ways possible
- Recovering waste heat and recycling it for heating water and air for our buildings

Key Climate Change and Health actions include:

- NH's Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap (2025-2030)
- NH's first Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment

As an early organization-wide step, NH developed a Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap to coordinate initiatives, align efforts across departments, and support and collaborate with partners across Northern BC in shaping key steps toward climate action and climate change resilience. The Roadmap provides a clear, organization-wide framework for advancing climate leadership and supporting a more sustainable future. Designed as a high-level strategic guide, the Roadmap outlines NH's direction, commitments, and a shared approach for reducing emissions, strengthening sustainability practices, and enhancing community resilience. It brings together both existing initiatives and new actions across multiple teams, creating a coordinated pathway to respond to climate risks and opportunities.

This work is reinforced by NH's first Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment (CCHVAA), which examines three key climate hazards: wildfires/wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and cold weather/extreme cold. Together, the Roadmap and CCHVAA establish a strong foundation of baseline knowledge and organizational readiness. They position NH to implement climate resilient strategies effectively and to build on a cohesive, evidence informed understanding of climate impacts across – and in partnership with – Northern communities.

NH dietitians learn about the Indigenous local food system on Lheidli T'enneh territory, guided by Indigenous Health Educator, Regina Carlson

3.0 Energy and Carbon

For the 2025 reporting period, NH's GHG emissions profile is summarized in Figure 1.

Stationary sources include purchased energy (electricity) and energy consumed (natural gas, propane, diesel) on site by buildings that NH owns or operates out of. Mobile energy is fuel consumed by fleet vehicles, and fugitive emissions include refrigerant losses from HVAC equipment and other appliances.

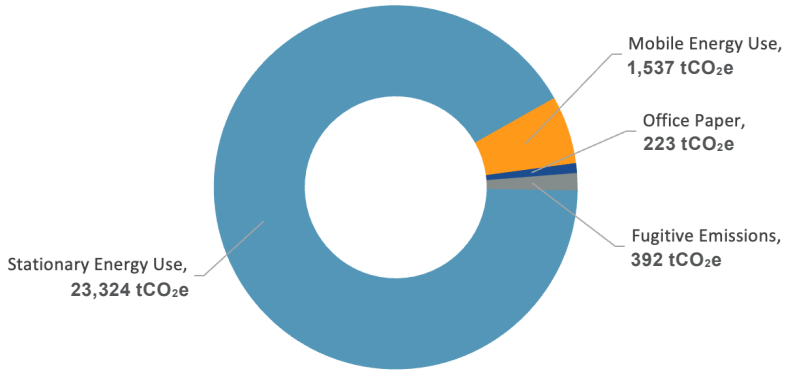

Figure 1. **NH GHG emissions profile by source type**

Figure 2 shows NH's GHG emissions trend over time. The baseline year established by the *Climate Change Accountability Act* is 2007.

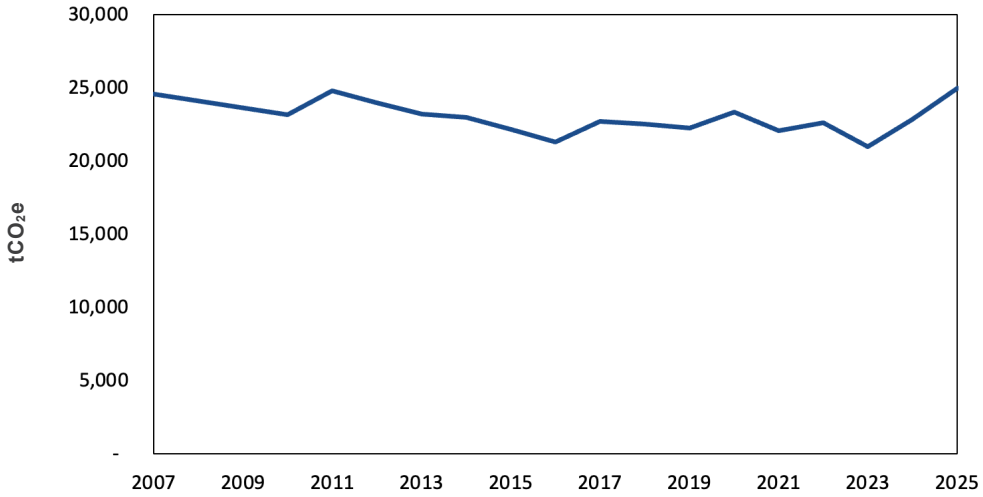

Figure 2. **Change in NH GHG emissions over time**

A 7% decrease in emissions was observed in 2024 compared to the baseline year. Notable changes in 2025 emissions reporting included an updated BC Hydro emission factor that was nearly 200% higher than the 2024 emission factor and the inclusion of NH managed housing emissions. These changes contributed to an 9% increase between 2024 and 2025. Compared to 2007, NH has experienced a 20% increase in floor area and a 1.6% increase in emissions over the 18 years.

3.1 NORTHERN HEALTH 2025 GHG EMISSIONS AND OFFSETS SUMMARY

NORTHERN HEALTH 2025 GHG EMISSIONS AND OFFSETS SUMMARY	
GHG emissions for the period January 1 – December 31, 2025	
Total BioCO_2	526
Total Emissions (tCO_2e)	25,477
Total Offsets (tCO_2e)	24,951
Adjustments to Offset Required GHG Emissions Reported in Prior Years	
Total Offsets Adjustment (tCO_2e)	-101
Grand Total Offsets for the 2025 Reporting Year	
Grand Total Offsets to be Retired for 2025 Reporting Year (tCO_2e)	24,850
Offset Investment ($)	621,250

3.2 RETIREMENT OF OFFSETS STATEMENT

In accordance with the requirements of the *Climate Change Accountability Act* and the Carbon Neutral Government Regulation, NH (the Organization) is responsible for arranging for the retirement of the offsets obligation reported above for the 2025 calendar year, together with any adjustments reported for past calendar years (if applicable). The Organization hereby agrees that, in exchange for the Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions (the Ministry) ensuring that these offsets are retired on the Organization's behalf, the Organization will pay within 30 days, the associated invoice to be issued by the Ministry in an amount equal to $25 per tonne of offsets retired on its behalf plus GST.

Kitson Island – Port Edward (NW Coast). Photo credit Laura Toms

4.0 Our Actions – Emissions Reduction

4.2 STATIONARY SOURCES

Existing Buildings

In 2025, NH completed energy efficiency renovations in 17 buildings. A summary of energy conservation actions include:

- 8 lighting upgrades
- 6 building control optimizations
- 8 major capital mechanical equipment upgrades
- 9 smaller energy upgrades
- 7 energy studies

These projects are expected to reduce GHG emissions by over 1,200 tCO_2e annually.

New Construction

Patients moved into the new Ksyen Regional Hospital in Terrace late 2024, however 2025 was the first fully operational year for the new facility. The project team along with NH facilities staff made great efforts to ensure that the energy model that targeted a 70% per square foot reduction in carbon emissions, compared to the old Mills Memorial Hospital, was realized under actual conditions.

Kysen Regional Hospital, Terrace

Nats'oojeh Hospital and Health Centre in Fort St. James welcomed its first patients on January 14, 2025. Similarly to the Ksyen Hospital, NH facilities have been monitoring and will continue to track its energy performance to ensure that the energy efficiency systems that are in place are operating as intended.

The Dawson Creek Hospital Redevelopment project is expected to reach substantial completion at the end of September 2026. The new hospital is being designed to be 10% more energy efficient per square meter of floor area compared to the existing hospital and emit 43% less carbon emissions per square meter of floor.

Efficient heat recovery chillers at Nats'oojeh Hospital and Health Centre, Fort St. James

The new Dawson Creek Hospital, in development

At the end of 2025, NH completed the construction of the new parkade that will support the UHNBC expansion in Prince George. NH also signed the Alliance Development Agreement at the end of 2025 for the new Acute Care Tower (also in Prince George), marking another exciting milestone. Construction of the new Acute Care Tower is to begin in 2027, with plans to open for patients in winter 2031.

4.2 MOBILE SOURCES

NH operates a fleet of 347 vehicles, which includes one electric vehicle and 29 hybrid vehicles.

Within NH's fleet, NH operates a full logistics, transportation, and distribution (LTD) operation which accounts for approximately 12% of the fleet vehicles, and approximately 36% of NH's fleet emissions.

In 2025, the LTD fleet volume decreased by 10%, however vehicle use remained the same with approximately 2.2 million kilometers driven. NH eliminated one external transportation service contract and took over those functions internally, resulting in an additional route and full-time equivalent staff position being added to the LTD department.

4.3 PAPER CONSUMPTION

Sugar Sheets paper is a low carbon emission paper made from agricultural waste, called bagasse. It is derived from recycled sugar cane fibre. It looks, performs, and can be recycled the same as virgin bond paper. In 2025, NH ordered 1,571 cartons of Sugar Sheets, compared to only one carton in 2024. The purchases of Sugar Sheets in 2025 represent 39% of all 8.5x11 paper purchased. The amount of virgin paper purchased in 2025 accounted for 58%, while the balance of 8.5x11 sheet purchases were for mixed recycled content. A snapshot of NH's 2025 paper purchases is summarized in Figure 3.

Compared to virgin bond paper made from trees, Sugar Sheets have 80% less life cycle emissions. The uptake of Sugar Sheets results in a 15% or 37 tCO_2e reduction of paper GHG emissions.

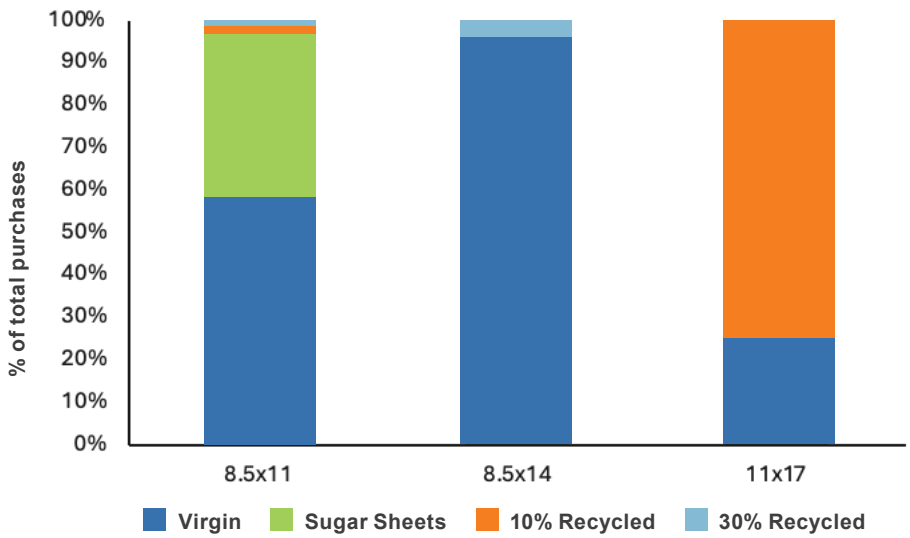

Figure 3. **Proportion of 2025 paper purchases by paper size and paper types**

4.4 FUGITIVE SOURCES

Fugitive sources accounted for 1.6% of the overall emissions for NH. In 2024, NH created an inventory for air handler units, chillers, heat pumps, and condensing units that account for majority of refrigerant emissions. Building on the inventory of 2024, NH plans to add smaller refrigeration units and legacy equipment not yet captured. NH has started to invest in low refrigerant equipment that uses new refrigerants like R-454B and R-513A, compared to R-22 and R-410A for new construction and end-of-life equipment replacement.

Policies for low refrigerant equipment procurement are still in early stages, with plans to expand them into a comprehensive framework.

5.0 Climate Leadership

5.1 NORTHERN HEALTH'S CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

In 2025, NH introduced its Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap (2025– 2030) - a five-year strategy designed to guide the organization toward a more sustainable future through strong, responsible climate leadership. The roadmap strengthens climate governance across NH, reduces the organization's environmental footprint and emissions, enhances climate resilience and emergency preparedness, and supports community-driven climate action.

Over the past year, the Climate Change and Health (CCH) team advanced several key projects and achieved major milestones that contribute to NH's climate and health resilience. Alongside the launch of the roadmap, NH also unveiled its official Climate Change and Health website, which highlights climate change and health information and resilience-focused initiatives, including:

- DIY air cleaners: Building community resilience against wildfire smoke
- Hot weather alerts and preparedness communications (Article link: Hot weather, heat warning, or extreme heat emergency?)

With another sustainability and resiliency initiative being:

- Rural, Remote and Indigenous Food Action grants

These examples highlight both the practical actions individuals can take and the types of initiatives NH teams are supporting to build climate resilience in Northern BC communities – from preparing for extreme heat to promoting sustainable Indigenous food systems.

One of many DIY air cleaners made by Prince George residents during last summer's BREATHE project event

NH is also collaborating with several Northern partners to advance Action 17 of the Climate Change and Sustainability Roadmap: *Work with Northern communities to strengthen community-led climate action*. For example, in summer 2025, the CCH team helped facilitate an in-person collaborative session at the NorthCAN Forum in Prince George, focusing on promoting health and wellness in Northern communities. NH is also actively engaged with the Fraser Basin Council and the Northeast Climate Resilience Network as they update regional climate projections for Northeast BC.

In 2025, the CCH team completed the first iteration of its Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment (CCHVAA), focused on three key hazards: wildfires/wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and cold weather/ extreme cold. Key findings are being summarized and will be published throughout 2026 on the Climate Change and Health website. In the coming year, the team will focus on incorporating lessons learned from the initial assessment, including developing a Two-Eyed Seeing informed approach for future iterations of the CCHVAA.

In April 2026, one CCH Lead position will shift into a new Sustainability Lead role to support NH's growing sustainability priorities. Working with the CCH and Energy and Environmental Sustainability teams, this role will lead key actions in communication, staff education, clinical sustainability, sustainable and equitable procurement, and organizational waste management. This cross-team structure enables a coordinated, system wide approach to embedding sustainability throughout NH.

Kitselas Traditional Abundance: Growing Resiliency-Gitselasu Forest Garden Revitalization" project, Kitselas First Nation

In 2025, NH joined all B.C. health authorities in a collaborative effort to develop a GHG emissions database that captures sources beyond current regulatory requirements (paper, fleet, fugitive emissions, and buildings). Understanding, monitoring and managing these emissions is essential to reducing environmental impacts and strengthening sustainability across the health-care sector. Funded through the Ministry of Health's Climate Innovation Stream, this project is creating a standardized GHG calculation methodology and sector-specific emissions calculator tailored to the emission sources of health-care operations. The results of this project will help guide future sustainability actions by providing consistant and reliable data on the highest environmental impact areas of healthcare.

5.1 CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE ADAPTATION

The CCH Team at NH aims to strengthen climate resilience across Northern BC by offering a health lens on local planning, policy development, and emergency preparedness where opportunities exist. A key focus is supporting community-led climate action. At times, the team participates directly in municipal planning processes, such as the development of Official Community Plans or climate change strategies, to provide insight into climate health impacts, including wildfire risks, and to facilitate early consideration of these in planning and development.

As an example of facilitating and supporting innovative approaches, NH supported the implementation of BREATHE workshops, focused on DIY air cleaner construction that equips residents with practical, low-cost tools to protect indoor air quality during wildfire smoke events. The CCH team also advises local governments on heat and cold weather response planning, helping communities better safeguard residents during extreme temperatures. Regional collaboration is central to this work; by engaging with networks such as Northern BC Climate Action Network (NorthCAN), Northeast Climate Resilience Network (NECRN), and the Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR), the team shares knowledge, co-hosts climate health events, and helps advance coordinated, cross-sectoral climate adaptation across the North.

The forests of Mackenzie. Photo credit Vishaldeep Arora

The Vineyards mountain range near Penny, BC. Photo credit Cheryl Cousins

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