



KATHERINE NEEBE

Chief Sustainability Officer
Vice President, National Engagement
and Strategy
President, Duke Energy Foundation

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A Message From Our CSO

Looking back at 2020, it was a year no one will forget. From the global pandemic to a focus on racial inequity to the economic crisis, it was a year that brought challenges for so many. At the same time, I saw how powerfully businesses – particularly an essential service like ours – pivoted to transform their workforce, supply chains, and customer and community programs to meet these challenges head on. By leveraging technology, innovation and new ways of working, we held fast to our mission to provide reliable, affordable and increasingly cleaner energy. This year sharpened our focus on how we create value for our stakeholders and help solve for societal issues.

With safety at our core, in March 2020, the company took comprehensive steps to help employees, customers and communities respond to the impacts of COVID-19. Among our efforts, to help address the economic hardships our customers may be facing, we waived late payment fees and discontinued service disconnections for unpaid bills. Our company and Foundation also provided more than \$8 million to support public utility assistance and basic needs such as hunger relief and micro-loans for small businesses while also strengthening the systems our communities depend upon in times of crisis.

For our employees, we implemented workplace disinfection and social distancing practices and provided workers with personal protective equipment, following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Employees leveraged technology to minimize personal contact and do our part to help mitigate the spread of the virus, including enabling nearly all customer care representatives to work from home. Beyond implementing extensive workplace safety measures, we provided resources and enhanced benefits to support our workers' mental and physical health.

We have listened, learned and adjusted to our customer, community and employee needs over the past year and while the crisis isn't over, we are better positioned to support those we serve.

The events of 2020 also illuminated the issue of systemic racism and inequity many Americans face. We continued our journey to be a more equitable, inclusive and transparent company. Across the enterprise, we held more than 500 formal conversations to hear the questions and concerns of our employees. We are focused on our diversity goals and being transparent about our progress, including releasing data contained in our consolidated 2020 EEO-1 report (filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), along with this report. Through the Duke Energy Foundation, we also committed more than \$2 million to social justice and racial equity organizations. However, more work is needed, and we continue to engage with local organizations and other stakeholders to understand how to be a part of the long-term solution.

This fall we held our inaugural ESG Investor Day, where we shared important updates on our environmental, social responsibility and governance work. You will notice this year's Sustainability Report follows an ESG framework. I'm also excited to share that this year marks the 15th year we've publicly reported on our progress to address important societal issues, such as climate change.

As we look forward, there are real issues to tackle as we look at the clean energy transition and how we achieve our ambitious climate goals – net-zero methane emissions from our gas business by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions from electricity generation by 2050. And, we have the opportunity to create meaningful change through our energy transformation as well as our participation in the global climate discussion through events like the Glasgow COP. We will also focus on how to build resiliency and equity in a post-pandemic world.

We have listened, learned and adjusted to our customer, community and employee needs over the past year and while the crisis isn't over, we are better positioned to support those we serve. I am excited to be part of the team that delivers a cleaner energy future for all.



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