



William J. Barber III is a renewable energy professional, with a history of environmental and climate justice scholarship and advocacy. Possessing over a decade of social justice organizing experience and deep academic training in the history, science, and law behind environmental and climate issues, William is committed to connecting policymakers, grassroots leaders, faith leaders, and corporations to ensure we are collaborating on climate solutions that are equitable for all. He continues to inspire through his tireless work in protecting our environment and empowering our Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities on the frontlines of this climate crisis.

His background includes a degree in environmental physics from North Carolina Central University and a degree in environmental law and policy from UNC School of Law—both of which he has utilized in driving results-based change for impacted communities over nearly a decade’s long career focused on developing environmental and climate solutions.

In Barber’s prior roles, he advised the Cooper gubernatorial administration on how to promote equity and justice within North Carolina’s Clean Energy Plan, facilitated campaign efforts to oppose the now-defeated Atlantic Coast Pipeline, as well as coordinated participation of the NC Poor People’s Campaign as a filing party of a Title VI Complaint—recently accepted by the Environmental Protection Agency—that calls on a more stringent review of the environmental justice impacts of expanded permitting of biogas facilities in North Carolina.

In 2019, he founded The Rural Beacon Initiative, —a social enterprise that provides consultation on operationalizing equity frameworks within sustainable solutions, and works to increase BIPOC ownership in the growing supply chains of regenerative agriculture and renewable energy. Rural Beacon has evolved, exploring the role of green finance as a vehicle to address social disparities.

William currently serves as the Director of Equitable Investments and Energy Justice at the Coalition for Green Capital, a non-profit that works to halt climate change by accelerating investment in clean energy technologies.

As a self-described son of the south, he is especially interested in increasing opportunities for self-determination and rural revitalization within the clean economy. William's work on community solutions has been featured in numerous outlets, including NextGen’s 30 under 30 Young Black Changemakers and Paypal’s Rising Leaders Series. Rural Beacon Initiative was also named by Governor Cooper as one of the state's leading Black STEM organizations in February 2022.