

**Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee
of the Vermont Climate Council
January 9, 2025 Meeting – Agenda**

Location:	The meeting was recorded and posted online here .
Subcommittee Members Present:	Billy Coster, Jaiel Pulskamp, Judy Dow, Ryan Patch, Andrew Milliken, Stephen Leslie, Jake Claro, Earl Hatley, Abbey Willard
State Agency Staff Present:	David Plumb (CBI), Marli Rupe, Judson Peck, Evan Horne
Minutes by:	Evan Horne

Agenda:

- 12:00 PM Welcome, Approve Minutes, and Agenda Overview - where we are in the process
- David Plumb welcomed the subcommittee and provided an overview of the agenda.

12:05 PM Review Materials

- David Plumb shared the combined Excel with the list of pathways, strategies, and actions.
 - Evan noted that priority actions are highlighted in yellow.
- Andrew Milliken asked for the Council’s expectation regarding the broader (non-priority) list of actions.
 - David Plumb clarified that the Council expects the subcommittee to have reviewed all items, flagged any needing updates, and identified major gaps or inappropriate items.
 - Jaiel added that the goal is to spot outdated or missing items.
- Judy raised a concern about items marked “advancing” and not knowing their status.
 - Evan showed where the status notes for all items are located in the Excel spreadsheet and shared that he could research specific actions.
 - Ryan Patch shared that there are resource limitations to what we can do because we don’t have the human power to do everything.
 - Earl Hatley shared concerns about the terms “working lands” and “payments for ecosystem services.”
- Ryan gave a brief overview of the “Reduce and Sequester” tab.
- Jaiel Pulskamp shared concerns over several actions, such as the accessibility of applying for assistance, pesticides, and PFAS.
- Judy Dow asked for somebody to define “farmer.”
 - Ryan Patch explained that there are several different programs that define what a farmer is.
 - David Plumb suggested that “farmer” be added to the punch list.
- Jake Claro gave a brief overview of the “Support Adaptation” tab.
- Andrew Milliken gave a brief overview of the “Climate-Resilient Land Use” tab.
- David Plumb clarified that the entire Excel document, not just the priorities, will be forwarded to the Council.
- Judy Dow reiterated concerns about “advancing” actions with no status update.
- Early Hatley reiterated concerns about “working lands” and “PES.”

12:15 PM Reading Time

- David Plumb gave the subcommittee five minutes for silent reading to gather final thoughts for the punch list

12:25 PM Make a Punch-List of Key Issues

- David Plumb shared the list of items the subcommittee plans to work through before the end of the meeting.
- Andrew Milliken noted climate-adapted forestry, regional and local planning, and research and monitoring might be missing.
- Judy Dow shared concerns around the usage of “farmers and foresters” rather than looking a little broader at “complete ecosystems.”
- Stephen Leslie mentioned that there could be language missing around access for land for new farmers.
- Billy Coster had examples of actions that were revised in ways isn’t appropriate for the program.
- Jaiel Pulskamp shared that the in-state purchase of carbon credits should be removed.

12:35 PM Discuss Key Issues

- Earl Hatley shared why the name “Payment for Ecosystem Services” should be changed.
 - Ryan Patch responded to this concern and others, mentioning that changing names and terms that are well-established in state law would not be meaningful for farmers.
 - David Plumb asked if there is a modifier that could be used to address PES appropriately, and that it is not connected to carbon trading. Earl was receptive to these suggestions
- David Plumb asked for input about the term “working lands.”
 - Earl suggested dropping “working.”

1:15 PM Public Comment

- Cheryl Joy Lipton supported the terminology changes and highlighted issues around compact settlement.

1:30 PM Discuss Key Issues - Continued

- Judy Dow mentioned that much of the terminology stems from the eugenics movement.
- Jake Claro suggested that the subcommittee not use shorthand and try to use specific language as much as possible.
- Ryan Patch shared that the subcommittee should focus more on the actions that will make Vermont a more climate-resilient future.
- The subcommittee discussed an action under strategy 23d regarding pesticides.
 - The subcommittee suggested that the Agricultural Innovation Board be consulted.
- The subcommittee discussed the term “farmer,” and elected to keep the definition broad.
 - The use of “land and water caretakers” was put forward as a suggested addition.
- The subcommittee briefly discussed potential missing actions, but recognized that all actions, regardless of priority, will be forwarded to the Council.
- Billy Coster noted a few actions where revisions didn’t quite make sense, and the subcommittee supported them.
- The subcommittee removed the action related to the purchase of in-state carbon credits.
- The subcommittee discussed the action regarding methane capture and energy generation on farms.
 - The subcommittee decided to leave this action as is.

1:55 PM Wrap up and next steps

- David Plumb and Billy Coster shared next steps for the subcommittee.

2:00 PM Adjourn