

Vermont Climate Council
June 2nd, Meeting Minutes
9:30am-4:30pm

Join Teams Meeting:

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Meeting ID: 256 890 342 266 0

Passcode: hR2XX2kC

This is an in-person meeting at the Agency of Transportation Dill Building, 2178 Airport Road, Berlin, Vermont in Conference Room 135.

Councilors present:

- Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux (virtual)
- Eric Forand (virtual)
- Ryan Patch (virtual)
- Peter Sterling (virtual)
- Dahlia Cohn (virtual)
- Kerrick Johnson
- Shayla Livingston
- Secretary Moore
- Chris Campany
- Liz Miller
- Will Eberle
- Johanna Miller
- Rich Cowart
- Secretary Sarah Clark
- Kelly Klein
- Lindsay Kurrle
- Jaiel Pulskamp
- Jared Duval
- David Mears
- Matt Cota
- Andrea Wright
- Stephanie Moffett-Hynds

Agenda:

9:30 AM Climate Council Members Gather

- 9:35 AM Preparing for the Day
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Councilors reflected on the goals of the day and the opportunity created if they were able to agreed on priority climate actions
- 9:45 AM Convene/Overview/Approval of Minutes
Secretary Sarah Clark and David Plumb, CBI
- The Council approved the minutes from May 19th.
- 9:55 AM Review Written Public Input Since the Past Meeting
Sophi Veltrop, Climate Action Office
- One general comment was received regarding weather and climate science, and implications for decision-making.
- 10:05 AM Presentation of Scenario Models
Consultants
- Silvia Ulloa and Jason Veysey presented on Vermont’s LEAP Model and Baseline scenario updates and results. See the presentation and Q&A [here](#).
- 11:05 AM Break
- 11:20 AM Finalizing Priority Actions - Getting the “Top 50” Right
David Plumb, CBI
- Councilors reviewed the suggested preamble language and offered the following feedback:
- What Councilors liked:
 - The context feels right and captures the moment
 - The overarching criteria
 - Acknowledges the importance of government positions
 - Clear acknowledgment that there is a climate crisis and that action is necessary
 - Mentions both resilience and mitigation efforts
 - Directs the legislature to identify funding sources
 - Highlights the costs of inaction
 - What needs revisions:
 - The language should more explicitly state that the climate crisis is ongoing and needs action.
 - In terms of funding, the draft fails to highlight the importance of the ‘polluter pays’ principle - it’s essential to avoid placing additional costs on electricity rates and that income sensitivity is a high priority.

- Emphasize the critical role of states in addressing the crisis, including the importance of state partnerships and Vermont's ongoing participation in the U.S. Climate Alliance.
- Where we talk about legislative action, acknowledge the role of administrative action in partnership.
- Ensure that programs are designed thoughtfully to meet established criteria.
- Headwinds are more challenging than this captures – state appetite is actually reducing right now.
 - Don't suggest that the headwinds are permanent, though.
- It doesn't clearly say what Vermont's responsibility is. Can we name that specifically and say it in a way that speaks to all Vermonters?
 - What creates a pull (we should leverage where Vermont is a leader and has a rich history - GMT, etc.) Our small size makes us nimble and there are things we can do that can leverage philanthropic capacity.
 - Workforce
 - Support our rural economies
 - Food security
 - Housing etc.
- Flesh out the criteria about making sure there are rough trade workers. Add workforce training into other bullet and change i.e. to e.g.
- Can we call out flooding?
- First bullet add: "and disaster recovery"
- Fourth bullet: add "capacity of Vermonters and their municipalities"
- Third bullet on criteria: mention municipal budgets
- Guard against political analysis!
- Jared, Julie, Shayla, Chris will help draft this language.

Councilors suggested the following revisions to the following priority actions:

- Cross-Cutting #4:
 - Add "weatherization" to list and make it "resilience and adaptation careers"
 - Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux to consider a better term for "systems"
 - Add some of the items mentioned in the third bullet to the fourth.
 - Add "retain recent graduates"
- Cross-Cutting #7:
 - First sentence: Change language to focus on criteria rather than name examples – and make one criteria around compensating the loss of federal funding
 - Take out sentence that starts with "use the model" and add the attributes into the other sentences

- Add “a bridge to having adequate revenue from other programs such as...”
 - Change parentheses - should not create disincentives to the climate programs. Don’t need the examples
- Cross-Cutting #8:
 - Change “implement” to “support the implementation of”
- Cross-Cutting #9
 - Delete sub-bullet
 - Question of removing or leaving in on-bill utility financing
- Cross-Sector Mitigation #1:
 - Change “Join” to “Take the following steps to join a cap-and-invest program” and delete the rest of that sentence and add to the third bullet: “and choose and join the best available program, such as the WCI or the New York xx, based on the above analysis.”
 - In first bullet:
 - Acknowledge that costs of living doesn’t increase for low-income Vermonters as a result of the program
 - Strengthen to “every effort..”
 - In final paragraph:
 - Don’t call it “final note”
 - Change word “recommends” to something less strong
 - Change “to target reductions” to “to achieve targeted reductions”
 - Change “primary” to “keystone” or something similar
 - In sentence that starts with “Options,” add “so long as this does not result in an increase to cost of living for low-income Vermonters.”
 - Mention as “we understand it today” and add in “affordable.” And add more practicable of the options
 - Let’s be clearer about when we’re talking about the recommendations below, and when it’s something else. Keep working on this.
- Cross-Sector Mitigation #2:
 - Add the specific Agency of Transportation’s January 2025 report.

12:50 PM Lunch

1:05 PM Public Comment

Annette Smith and [inaudible] offered public comment:

- “And this affects me how?” is a valuable lens through which to view these recommendations. The appliance standard recommendation affects me directly. The Cap-and-Invest recommendation is not clear to average Vermonters and I’m also surprised to see this being referred to as keynote recommendation at this time.
- The earlier presentation seemed to suggest that biomass was included in

greenhouse gas calculations. However, there was a statement implying that 100% clean electricity is possible with biomass, which is misleading. Biomass does emit greenhouse gases and should be fully accounted for in modeling tools like the LEAP model. From the presentation, it wasn't clear whether or how those emissions are being included.

1:25 PM Finalizing Priority Actions Cont.
David Plumb, CBI

- Rich and David Plumb to continue working on Cap-and-Invest recommendation using input received today.
- Cross-Sector Mitigation #7:
 - Change “secure” to “sustain and expand”
 - Add: “that the current scope of weatherization being conducted is sustained, while aggressively working to ensure that”
 - Move some detail to chapter
- Cross-Sector Mitigation #9:
 - Add: “as modeled to be necessary” and delete third bullet
- Add a recommendation about exploring geothermal networks based on public input and using the drafted chapter language.
- Add context to specific Acts mentioned (i.e. Act 181 and others in Ag & Eco)
- Make #7 in Rural Resilience and Adaptation adjacent to #12.
- Rural Resilience #15:
 - Shayla and Jared to clarify. Intent is trying to get resilience supplies and activities to qualifying households
- Rural Resilience #12:
 - Add the Resilience Implementation Strategy
- Ag & Eco #1:
 - Mention manure management
- Ag & Eco #2:
 - Change “to account for” to “quantify”
- Ag & Eco #9:
 - Delete the last two sentences and add “to avoid conversion of ecologically sensitive areas” to the end of the first sentence.
 - Work with Councilors to get more detail here, including the nuance, on farms and forests.
- Ag & Eco #10:
 - Change “incentivize” to “promote”
 - Double check that there aren't specific details from the May 9 letter

2:35 PM Break

2:45 PM Prioritization Exercise and Discussion - Getting to a “Top 10”
David Plumb, CBI

Councilors participated in an exercise to identify a top 10 list of priority actions. Each Councilor submitted their individual top 10 through a SurveyMonkey, and the results were compiled and compared. After some discussion, they agreed on the final outcome was the following top 10 list, in no particular order:

- CSM #7: Weatherization for low-income households
- CC #4: Implement the Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative and related actions
- CC #7: Identify revenue sources that can immediately start to fund recommendations
- CSM #1: Cap-and-invest
- RRA #3: Expand and maintain a permanent Flood Resilient Communities Fund
- Ag & Eco #13: Promote equitable landscape connectivity and conservation for 30x30 and 50x50 goals
- CSM #6: Utility programs for equitable electrification
- Ag & Eco #1: Increase funding and adapt existing Vermont programs that achieve climate goals on farms and in forests
- CSM #2: Vehicle electrification
- RRA #10: Invest in municipal infrastructure to support compact development

4:00 PM Next Steps (Including Finalizing Chapters and All Plan Content)
David Plumb, CBI and Jane Lazorchak, Climate Action Office

The Council will meet weekly for the remainder of June on Zoom. Each meeting will cover the following:

- June 9th:
 - Get the scenario models
 - Review suggested chapter edits from Steering Committee
 - Final review of top 10
- June 16th:
 - Review new chapters
- June 23rd:
 - Hear legislative updates
 - Adopt plan
 - Activate decision-making protocol and provide Councilors the opportunity to write something to be included in the annex
 - Review the governance document before the meeting

4:30 PM Adjourn
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