

**Vermont Climate Council Steering Committee Meeting**  
**July 11, 2022 – Minutes**

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Zoom Virtual Meeting – Meeting was recorded and [posted online](#)

Steering Committee Members Present: Kristin Clouser, Jared Duval, Chris Campany, Julie Moore, Lauren Oates

Staff members present: David Plumb, Jane Lazorchak, Marian Wolz

Minutes by: Marian Wolz

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11:30 AM Welcome/Overview of Agenda/Approval of [June 6 Minutes](#)

- Review of agenda; minutes and agenda approved as drafted.

11:35 AM Joint Fiscal Office Presentation on [CAP Report](#) and Next Steps

- Joyce Manchester, Senior Economist/Associate Fiscal Officer with the Joint Fiscal Office reviewed [JFO's Brief Report on the Climate Action Plan](#) with members of the Steering Committee and took questions and feedback on the report.
- A concern was raised that the terminology used in the report may be confusing for legislators as they assess policy items and next steps. The concern is that legislators may be thinking policy actions are illustrative of the full suite needed to meet GHG reduction requirements, whereas the actions listed in the JFO report are not illustrative of all the steps needed to meet GHG reduction requirements.
- It was raised that the investment amount needed is economy wide, not just from the public sector, but rather public and private sector investment. It was noted that this should be clear in messaging on the report.
- A concern was raised that the cost in not investing in adaptation and resilience actions is not appropriately captured and conveyed in the report. Steering Committee members noted that investments are needed to protecting compact settlement, permanently conserve access to floodplains above and below settlements, and to fund the infrastructure (water and wastewater) needed to make compact settlement possible.
- Joyce Manchester reviewed next steps with the report. This summer, JFO will be reviewing incentive and subsidy programs from around the country that could encourage Vermonters to invest in EVs, heat pumps, weatherization, etc. It was noted that the JFO does not have the capacity to estimate costs for resilience and adaptation actions and to do so would require more data and detail on the actions proposed in those areas. JFO may be doing follow-ups on this report but that will depend on the needs of the legislature.

12:05 PM Potential [Council Letter](#) Regarding the Clean Heat Standard (CHS)

- Staff provided an overview of the development of the draft letter and introduced a path forward in discussing the content of the letter. The content of the letter focuses on requesting that the Joint Fiscal Committee allocate funds to the study of a Clean Heat Standard. The CSM Subcommittee decided to draft a letter at their last meeting and requested that it be reviewed by the Steering Committee and potentially approved by the

Council at a special meeting proposed for July 18<sup>th</sup>. The meeting of the Joint Fiscal Committee is on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

- Steering Committee member Secretary Clouser clarified that there is no appropriated funding in the budget for this money. Without an appropriation, the Administration has no ability to direct this money without legislative action. Secretary Clouser noted the letter also references positions, but the administration does not have the authority to create a new position without legislative (or Joint Fiscal Committee) action. Because there is no appropriation, the content of the letter would need to be updated to note that it would either need to have funds appropriated through legislative action.
- Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee co-chair and Councilor Rich Cowart reviewed the intent of the letter. Noted that the intent of letter is to ask the Administration and the Joint Fiscal Committee to take what steps it can with respect to budgeting flexibility to advance the analysis that the Governor's veto message requested regarding the CHS. The letter is asking for two things:
  - 1) Commission an appropriate study either through ANR, DPS, PUC (or a combination of those) through an action that makes funds available to meet the CHS information needs the Governor requested.
  - 2) Begin the public outreach process around the challenges of the thermal sector and how to meet the mandates of the GWSA in terms of thermal sector emissions reduction, and the needs of the public.
- A question was raised around whether the PUC is the appropriate place to conduct such a study and form of outreach. A broader question was raised about whether the letter needed to suggest who would take on the study, but rather leave that question open in the letter.
- The legislatively appointed members of the Steering Committee agreed on three changes needed in the letter and approved the scheduling of a special meeting of the Climate Council to review the letter on July 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am.

Letter edits:

  - The budget process discussed in the letter should be adjusted to reflect the correction Secretary Clouser made earlier in the meeting.
  - Change to whom the letter is addressed; address letter to the JFC.
  - Revise paragraph #2 of the letter to reflect [the edits](#) made by Rich prior to the meeting, and adjust the intent to be on what should happen, less on who should conduct the study.
- Secretary Clouser noted that due to this being a budget request outside of the Governor's budget request process, all administration officials on the Climate Council will need to abstain from signing the letter.
- Steering Committee member requested that the Steering Committee agree to a backup plan if the Council is not able to make quorum on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Request that the Legislative members of the Steering Committee approve sending the letter on their behalf, with an explanation of procedural reasons of why it is not being sent by the entire body. Request that staff confer with ANR General Council to ensure members of the Steering Committee can send a letter regarding a policy decision.

12:30 PM      [Planning for August Steering Committee](#) meeting and beyond

- Staff reviewed feedback from last Steering Committee meeting to include what success looks like in 2022, and the methodology and key inputs needed to prepare for the Climate Council fall meeting schedule.
- Suggestion to have placeholder on Council meeting agendas for transportation and potentially biomass recommendations.
- Staff noted they are working with ANR General Council on a legal memo and/or discussion. Staff noted a question remains about how to proceed with prioritization ahead of the budget planning process, hoping that the budget discussion leads to questions about prioritization process for the fall.

12:45 PM      Public Comment

- Cheryl Joy Lipton provided public comment.

1:00 PM      Adjourn

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