

Special Meeting of the Vermont Climate Council July 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes

8:30 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview of Agenda/Approval of [May 16 Minutes](#)
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

The Council approved the minutes.

8:35 AM Potential [Council Letter](#) Regarding the Clean Heat Standard and Funding Considerations
Richard Cowart, Councilor and Co-Chair Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee
Kristin Clouser, Secretary, Agency of Administration
Julie Moore, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources

The Co-Chair of the Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee gave a brief presentation on the Potential Council Letter which detailed the reasoning behind the letter that the subcommittee drafted. The Secretary of the Agency of Administration (AOA) and the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) signaled that any new budget would require legislative action, however ANR had located \$200,000 within existing budgets to advance the work on the Clean Heat Standard as requested in the letter. Key points of the discussion included:

- The Council supported the efforts described by ANR to use approximately \$200,000 for the studies and efforts requested in the letter.
- ANR and AOA suggested the letter was no longer necessary to send. Other councilors thought the letter still was important to flag items of concern such as the need for further funding to put a potential process and program together.
- Some Councilors asked for more time to consider the letter. The council agreed to table discussion of the letter, which could be part of a bigger conversation around budgeting and the underlying issues of concern.
- One councilor expressed frustration that the Council was setting up decisions in which administration members would need to recuse themselves. Also, the letter touches issues that require more time to discuss than the 30-minute agenda of this meeting.
- The Secretary of ANR mentioned an RFP for this work would be available in the next month or two.

9:00 AM Public comment

The following members of the public participated in the public comment period:

- Cheryl Joy Lipton
- Judy Dow
- Annette Smith

Key comments offered during public comment included:

- The Council does not appear to be having a dialogue with the public. The public comment periods feel like one-way communication, without a sense that the Council is listening. This feels unequitable.
- The Council's composition is not representative of Vermont's geography.
- Does the climate council have a Conflict-of-Interest Policy? A member of the council appears to have received a \$200,000 contract with the State of Mass. to promote a Clean Heat Standard. Is it a conflict of interest for a member of the Vermont Climate Council to be also benefitting financially from the work done in Vermont?
- Concerns were raised that the letter regarding the Clean Heat Standard didn't specifically mention deep concerns about biofuels, reiterating similar comments during the last Steering Committee meeting.
- There is public interest in these topics. The 350 Vermont hearing in the legislature received about 10,000 viewers.

9:15 AM Adjourn

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