

Science and Data Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council
1:30:00 PM October 27, 2021
Meeting Notes

Location: Physical location at ANR office in Montpelier; meeting was recorded and [posted online](#).

S&D Subcommittee Members Present: TJ Poor, Jared Duval, Richard Hopkins, Julie Moore, Lou Cercere, Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux

State Agency Staff Present: Jane Lazorchak, ANR; Karen Blakelock, AoT; Megan O'Toole, VT DEC; Colin Smythe, VT DEC; Bennett Leon, VT DEC; Claire McIlvennie, VT PSD

Others Attending: George Gross, Stephen Crowley, Mark Whitworth, Gabrielle Stebbins

1:35 Welcome, review of agenda, approval of minutes (TJ Poor)

TJ Poor opened the meeting and the Subcommittee approved the Minutes for 10/13/21

1:39 Social Cost of Carbon (TJ Poor)

The Council approved the substance of the Subcommittee's recommendations and asked the Subcommittee to spell out how the social cost of carbon will be used, add more plain language, and define technical terms for clarification. TJ will send a revised draft to subcommittee and Council. TJ also clarified that sensitivities at 1 and 3 percent discount rates will be performed as planned.

1:43 GHG Inventory recommendations (Jared Duval)

Jared explained that he added an introductory paragraph that was approved by the Council, along with the remainder of the recommendations.

1:45 Proportionality Reference Year (Jared Duval)

The Council approved the subgroup's recommendations that 2018 be used as reference year for sector proportionality and that proportionality should be considered among other criteria. Proportionality should not be binding when there are conflicts and other sectors can provide more cost-effective reductions.

TJ emphasized, given concerns that continue to be raised, that the Subcommittee needs to be clear that this recommendation does not prohibit a later accounting of upstream emissions from the electricity sector for the GHG inventory.

There was also discussion of the role of baseload generation such as Hydro Quebec in helping balance the intermittency of renewable generation and the role of natural gas in meeting marginal load when base load power is not available.

2:00 Monitoring and Assessment Task Group (Jane Lazorchak)

Cadmus and EFG do not yet have a final recommendation on the framework for measurement of progress but did agree on the goals of the tool. One aspiration is to have more real-time updates on progress than can be achieved with the GHG inventory. Goals are:

1. Provide more real-time data on key implementation metrics than is currently feasible through the Vermont Greenhouse Gas Inventory, while remaining aligned with said inventory over time, where applicable.
2. Create an infrastructure for sustained coordination on data sources across Vermont agencies and partners.

3. Provide access to key data sources to organizations and members of the public engaged in climate action that wish to utilize Vermont's data to support their work.
4. Inform the general public about progress on achieving GWSA commitments, including emissions reductions, sequestration, adaptation, resilience, and equity targets.

Members agreed that the tool is intended to primarily cover mitigation but should be flexible to also track progress on adaptation and resilience (although there is not currently the data to do so) and enabling measures and intermediate steps. The tool will be developed after Dec. when there is agreement on the framework.

Impacts on VT natural resources and wildlife as required by the GWSA should be tracked by the climate impacts assessment.

2:22 RFI timing on supplemental analysis on upstream emissions (TJ Poor)

TJ explained that the staff has not had the capacity to complete the RFI drafting and will turn to this after completion of the CAP drafting.

A Member suggested that the RFI include definitions and different interpretations of life cycle accounting vs upstream analysis for each sector.

TJ Poor added that sensitivities will be conducted on discount rate, emissions from biofuels and biomass combustion, and emissions from HQ and a sensitivity around population changes due to climate migration.

2:33 Carbon Budget (Jane Lazorchak)

Ag & Ecosystems recommendations for the RFP for further development of the carbon budget and GHG inventory were adopted by the Council. Ag & Ecosystems recommended that the RFP consider more fully the land use sector and clean up some of the data in the carbon budget, and that the State replicate the forecasting process every year. Ag & Ecosystems also recommended inclusion of carbon storage strategies in future carbon budgets.

2:40 Update on the drafting of the Climate Assessment (Dr. Leslie Ann Dupigny-Giroux)

Dr. Dupigny-Giroux reported that the figures will drive the text and team will meet next week's deadline for the first draft.

2:46 Public Comments

George Gross requested a copy of the LEAP model configuration files and outputs to better understand the assumptions around the sensitivity runs. TJ Poor confirmed that the files will be made available when the final version of the model is ready.

Steve Crowley commented that the electric sector proportion of emissions are going to grow over time with increased electrification, and the residual emissions from the electric sector will be more significant if not dealt with now.

He raised a concern about whether RECs are additional and are promoting new renewables. He added that RECs from HQ will likely incent more hydro that Mr. Crowley described as a significant emitter of GHGs. He noted that natural gas-powered generation from the New England grid is not displaced by the purchase of HQ RECs, which he described as a major impediment to achieving GHG goals.

3:06 Adjourn