

**Vermont Climate Council
November 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time: November 14, 2022 11:00 AM
Location: Zoom Meeting; meeting recorded and [posted online](#)
Vermont Climate Council present: Anson Tebbetts, Abbie Corse, Bram Kleppner, Chris Company, Erica Bornemann, Jared Duval, Johanna Miller, Sec. Julie Moore, June Tierney, Kelly Klein, Kristin Clouser, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Lily Terry, Liz Miller, Lauren Oates, Michele Boomhower (in place of Sec. Flynn), Richard Cowart, Harry Chen, Sue Minter
Staff present: Jane Lazorchak, David Plumb, Marian Wolz
Minutes Prepared by: Cameron Hager and David Plumb

11:00 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

Two questions were raised by Council members on the Agenda before it was approved:

- Can we shift public comment to before the Council decides on the Transportation recommendations? Council approved shifting public comment to before decision making.
- Can the Council review how the initial Climate Action Plan can be amended or have an addendum added to? David Plumb said this will be reviewed during the Transportation Recommendation discussions.

11:05 AM Review and Approval of [Oct. 17 minutes](#)
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

The minutes were approved by the Council.

11:10 AM Just Transition Reflection- Transportation Equity Framework
Dave Pelletier, Systems Planning Manager, Agency of Transportation

Dave Pelletier delivered a presentation on the Transportation Equity Framework. He gave a brief overview of Act No. 55 of the 2021 Legislative Assembly as well as the federal actions associated with the framework (e.g. Justice40 Initiative and US DOT Equity Action Plan). He explained that equity is a strong foundation for much of the work the Agency is doing. He detailed that the Transportation Equity Framework is a plan that describes the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the implementing partners such as AOT and focused on working with marginalized groups in the planning processes. Mr. Pelletier detailed the tasks underneath this framework specifically the stakeholder and public involvement which includes (Direct Engagement, Stakeholder Engagement, and Regional Planning Commissions). Council members were given the opportunity to provide comment and ask questions as detailed below:

- A question was asked about how the Inflation Reduction Act might assist in the efforts of VTTrans in rural areas. Mr. Pelletier said that they are looking into those opportunities at this time.

11:25 AM [Transportation Recommendations](#)
Transportation Task Group Leads and David Plumb, CBI

Johanna Miller led the [presentation](#) of [Transportation Recommendations](#). Members of the Administration described the [concerns](#) they had, in particular with one phrase in the document. Key points of discussion are recorded below:

- The phrase that caused concern was the following:
 - “The only currently known policy options for which there is strong evidence from other states, provinces and countries of the ability to confidently deliver the scale and pace of emissions reductions that are required of the transportation sector by the GWSA are one or a combination of:
 - a) a cap and invest/cap and reduce policy covering transportation fuels and/or
 - b) a performance standard/performance-based regulatory approach covering transportation fuels.
 - Importantly, based on research associated with their potential implementation, these approaches can also be designed in a cost-effective and equitable manner.”
- Several councilors said the phrase was a simple statement of fact and should be included in the document, to signal to the legislature and others what is currently known.
- Other councilors, in particular members of administration, expressed concern that the phrase was premature for this document, given that the Vermont Department of Transportation still needs to undertake its Climate Reduction Strategy (CRS). These councilors would like the CRS to be completed before signaling specific policies.
- The Council took Public Comment in the middle of this conversation. Two members of the public spoke:
 - Could the Council explain “Cap and Invest/Reduce” or a “Performance-Based Approach”?
 - A councilor and Agency of Nature Resources staffer answered the question
 - Does adopting this language mean that certain strategies would be immediately implemented?
 - A councilor explained that this is probably not the case, as there would have to be further discussion with the legislature.
- After Public Comment, the Council took several straw votes to see if amended language might provide a path forward for board support of the transportation document. The votes did not signal a clear path forward for amended language.
- A final vote was held for adopting the document as written
 - 11 votes for yes

- 5 votes for no
- 1 vote for abstaining.
- Councilors agreed to speak at a subsequent meeting about the process of adding an addendum to the Initial Climate Action Plan (CAP). The Council did not agree on the specific mechanism for including this transportation recommendations document or future recommendations in the Initial CAP.

1:40 Request for Prioritization by [Joint Fiscal Office](#)

Jane Lazorchak led a brief presentation on JFO request. The Council was asked to weigh in on the budget prioritization process. Key points of the discussion are below:

- Council members voiced concerns that they did not have the capacity to weigh in on budget prioritization and had hesitancy to bring it back to sub-committees, which also could have the likely consequence of pitting subcommittees against each other.
- Several Council members suggested to respectfully respond to JFO that the Council does not have the capacity to do this budget prioritization and will instead focus on its January legislative report.
- The Council agreed to review and approve such a letter at its December meeting. The Steering Committee should vet the letter prior to the Council meeting.
- The letter should signal to the legislature that it doesn't have the resources to do this kind of detailed work.

1:50 PM [Update](#) from Biomass Task Group
Task Group Members

Liz Miller offered a quick overview about the progress of wrapping up the Biomass Task Group Draft Conclusions. Key points of the discussion are recorded below:

- The Task is working through a set of recommendations. The group has confirmed a consensus on specific portions. The group aims present recommendations to the Council at the next meeting which may include options for consideration if consensus is not achieved.

1:55 PM Initial Planning for January Report to the Legislature
David Plumb, CBI

- The following agenda item was pushed to the December meeting as agreed by the Council.

2:00 Public Comment

One member of the public offered comment which included:

- The Biomass Task Group should focus on the harms of burning fuels -- the group think about equity and just transition through its recommendations.

David Plumb invited Council members to reach out to him if they would like to discuss how the Council will handle voting and making decisions in future meetings.

The next Council meeting will be on December 12th.

2:04 PM Adjourn

##

DRAFT