

Science and Data Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council
10:00 AM December 13, 2022
Meeting Notes

Location: Virtual meeting was recorded and [posted online](#).

S&D Subcommittee Members Present: Jared Duval, Secretary Julie Moore, Ken Jones, Lily Terry, Richard Hopkins, Jared Ulmer, Elizabeth Palchak, Claire McIlvennie, Catherine Lowther,

State Agency Staff Present: Jane Lazorchak, ANR; Marian Wolz, ANR; Brian Woods, ANR; Megan O'Toole, ANR; Collin Smythe, ANR;

Others: Steve Crowley, John Van Hoesen

10:00 Welcome/ Review of Agenda/ Approval of Minutes (S&D Co-Chairs)

Review and approval of 10/6 meeting minutes

- Apparently minutes were not taken at the previous meeting, Collin will watch the video from last meeting and take minutes from them, to be approved at future meeting.

Discussion of next meeting date/time

- Collin will send scheduling poll to find regular monthly meeting time. Next meeting will likely be in late January. Will consider cancelling meetings if there's nothing urgent to discuss that month.

Misc

- Collin accepted position in new Climate Action Office, Climate Change Data and Progress Analyst, should be starting soon.
- New Climate Action Office webpage: <https://anr.vermont.gov/about-us/secretary-office/climate-action-office>

10:05 Contractual work Updates (standing updates)

Life-cycle analysis (Megan/Jane)

- Substantial administrative delays but expected to be under contract this month. Expect project to move quickly with contract complete by end of summer 2023.
- Results from the life-cycle analysis won't

Municipal Vulnerability Index (Jane)

- Substantial administrative delays but expected to be under contract this month.

Agricultural Emissions (Collin)

- Two proposals, selected a contractor, decided to narrow the scope to a deeper evaluation of Vermont-relevant data/tools. Contractor submitted a revised proposal which will be reviewed by Task Group next week.

Thermal Sector (Brian/Jane)

- Two proposals, selected a contractor, should be under contract this month. First task due two weeks after execution to help inform upcoming legislative session.

10:20 Updates from Subcommittee liaisons

Biomass Task Group (Richard)

- Have been meeting all year, focused on recommendations about biomass combustion for electric generation. Presentations provided from a wide variety of experts related to the topic (forestry, air quality, economy, etc.).
- Scope:
https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/Biomass_Proposed_Scope_5_2_22.pdf
- Recommendations:
https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/BiomassRecommendations12_1_22Draft.pdf
- Task Force in agreement that there should be no new biomass plants, no expansion of existing two plants. Split about how quickly to phase out production at existing plants.
- Recommend an additional Task Group focused on biomass for heating. Life cycle analysis should consider biomass for electricity and heating. Consider health impact study for biomass electric plants. Consider further studying if/when to phase out electric plants.
- (Elizabeth) – this was discussed at a recent Burlington City Council meeting with similar concerns and recommendations. Would be good to support each other.
- (Jane) – equity concern re: McNeil, UVM might benefit from proposed district heat project, but air quality and health impacts would affect other residential neighborhoods.

Rural Resilience and Adaptation (Marian)

- Met recently, presentations from:
 - UVM SeaGrant on new climate resilience project that is ramping up, focused on flood resilience
 - Municipal Climate Task Group, seeking input on “where to get started” prompts

Just Transitions (Claire)

- No quorum at recent meeting, so only held informal conversation. Next meeting in early January.
- Trying to formalize this subcommittee’s mission following adoption of the Climate Action Plan and how it will plug into ongoing Council activities. Trying to ensure that guiding principles are systematically integrated on an ongoing basis. Will draft and share the plans for this subcommittee with the Council.
- Will also review biomass recommendations.

Cross-sector Mitigation (Megan)

- Transportation recommendations memo adopted as addendum to Climate Action Plan
 - <https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/1-2-22%20CSM%20Memo-Draft-Transpo%20Recs-Clean.pdf>
- ANR completed rulemaking and adopted rules for Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Trucks, Low NOx Heavy-Duty Omnibus, and Phase 2 Greenhouse Gas Rule.

- <https://dec.vermont.gov/air-quality/laws/recent-regs>

10:45 Discussion related to Social Cost of Carbon and updates/potential updates (Jared)

Climate Action Plan recommendations: Vermont should estimate values for social cost of carbon, plan for regular updates to integrate new research and apply discount rate.

- <https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/Initial%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%20-%20Final%20-%202012-1-21.pdf> (pages 52-55)

New research:

- Energy Futures Group Cost of Carbon report:
[https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/\(11\)%20Social%20Cost%20of%20Carbon%20and%20Cost%20of%20Carbon%20Report.pdf](https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/(11)%20Social%20Cost%20of%20Carbon%20and%20Cost%20of%20Carbon%20Report.pdf)
- Resources for the Future updated their estimate (was \$121/ton, now \$185/ton):
<https://www.resources.org/archives/the-social-cost-of-carbon-reaching-a-new-estimate/>
- EPA released a new estimate, about \$190/ton: <https://www.eenews.net/articles/how-epa-beat-the-white-house-on-estimating-climate-damage/>

(Richard) Criticism of cost effectiveness related to social cost of carbon:

<https://vtdigger.org/2022/11/29/david-flemming-a-third-of-climate-proposals-deemed-unscientific-on-arrival/>

This probably warrants further discussion in 2023, possibly a Task Group. Let Jared know if you're interested in discussing further.

(Elizabeth) Burlington considering a rate of \$150/ton, have used social cost of carbon to set a carbon fee, incentivize renewable heating installations.

(Julie) What is the practical implication? Is it directly related to the mission of this subcommittee, as we already have a lot to do?

- (Jared) Others reference these values and use them in their economic analyses, including Public Utilities Commission, Public Service Department, etc. Also to communicate the concept.
- (Megan) Social Cost of Carbon used in economic analysis for Advanced Clean Cars and Advanced Clean Trucks. Some other states are required to demonstrate cost effectiveness of climate strategies using social cost of carbon.
- (Claire) PSD does refer to the values in the CAP and encourages use of them, but they could point to other resources instead.
- (Richard) Need more clarification on methodology used to develop the cost estimates.
 - (Brian) - <https://policyintegrity.org/publications/detail/the-social-cost-of-greenhouse-gases-a-guide-for-state-officials>

11:30 Public Comments

(Steve) Comment/questions about Clean Heat Standard, would appreciate better understanding of long-term implications for dealers and customers. Am concerned about how it could play out for individuals.

- Would also appreciate inventory of how social cost of carbon is used in state government. Is it used not just for planning but for specific decision-making, particularly for regulatory programs? It would be great if it did have an impact on regulatory programs.
- Energy planning at regional level is important, agree that better county/region-specific data is really needed.

12:00 Adjourn

DRAFT