

Science and Data Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council Meeting 10:00 AM September 17, 2021 Meeting – Minutes

Date/Time: September 17, 2021 / 10:00 AM

Location: Meeting recording was not posted due to technical difficulties

Members Present: TJ Poor, Jared Duval, Richard Hopkins, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux (partial), Lou Cecere (partial), Kashka Orlov

State Staff Present: Jane Lazorchak, Brian Woods, Karen Blakelock, Megan O'Toole, Collin Smythe

Consultants Present: David Hill, Liz Hanson,

Others: George Gross, Steve Crowley, Mark Whitworth

- 10:00 Welcome/ Agenda Overview (S&D Co-Chair(s))

* No quorum at the start of the meeting. Expect the meeting to technically start at 10:30 when additional members are supposed to arrive, and a quorum is expected.

- 10:05 Carbon Budget Update (Jared Duval)

A draft carbon budget report was prepared by Dr. Gillian Galford and team as outlined in Task 2. The draft was presented yesterday to members of several state agencies and members of the Carbon Budget Task Group for review and comments and the draft and accompanying data is expected by September 30th.

- Timeline update (Jane Lazorchak)

A revisiting of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory recommendations document is upcoming. The Ag and Ecosystems subcommittee is meeting today to attempt to finalize their recommendations and meetings will be scheduled for next week between Ag and Ecosystems and GHG task groups for discussion on a path forward. Jared reiterated that GHG emissions inventory recommendation didn't preclude Ag and Ecosystem task group from coming up with recommendations. The issue appears to be with how agricultural sector emissions are currently counted in the GHG emissions inventory and whether or not a net accounting framework should be adopted to incorporate the sequestration component of the agricultural sector. Jared observed that changing the accounting methodology from gross to net is a much larger discussion than modifying the existing agricultural sector methodology to include additional management practices. Thought is that each task group will put forward a separate recommendation. Richard also raised his concern about

accounting for wood burning for heating buildings. The group wants to better understand how this information relates to the carbon budget and if it can be extracted from the report.

- Group still did not have a quorum

- Update on public engagement and surveying tools (Jane Lazorchak)

Four in person outdoor engagement sessions starting next Tuesday. Sessions will be facilitated by Climate Access and Rise. Idea is for informal conversations with people coupled with notetaking. A survey will also be sent out framing some questions around action items and to inform public engagement and feedback. The survey tool is fairly simplistic and is not intended to get at attitudes and polling, but more around specific questions and process and CAP development. Additional polling will also be conducted to gather input around reactions to different decisions and policy levers. There was discussion specifically around different levels of engagement including statewide action regarding policies and regulations, actions at the community level, actions at the individual level, and actions at the Climate Council level. Jane is reaching out to ask for first survey to share with the group and to inquire about Climate Rise giving a presentation to S&D on the tool to provide the opportunity for input.

- 10:46 – Have a quorum now, and officially starting the meeting. Reset the agenda and go forward.

TJ provided a brief overview about what had been discussed to this point. Carbon budget, GHG Emissions Inventory recommendations process, and public engagement. For public engagement - How should council members and the public participate next week? It would be great for everyone to attend, but they are asking that people who have been deep in the details of the Climate Council to observe and not participated directly to ensure input from members of the public who haven't been in the weeds as much.

- Subcommittee approved previous [minutes from September 1st meeting](#) with no modifications.

- 10:50 Full Council Request: Definitional Clarity (TJ Poor, Jane Lazorchak)

At Tuesday's meeting, the Council requested that S&D review definitions for Technical Feasibility and Cost-Effectiveness to assist in prioritizing mitigation actions. The S&D Subcommittee needs to come up with definitions for both of those terms to recommend to the Council. The group had brief discussions on the different prioritization criteria and specific focus on the need to keep the technical feasibility definition narrowly focused. Agreement that cost effectiveness definition will be complex, but agreement that it must encompass both direct and indirect costs and benefits that include both societal as well as consumer costs. Volunteers were requested to form a task group to discuss these definitions including and included TJ, Jared, Lou, and Collin.

- 11:00 Discussion of Monitoring and Assessment Task (Cadmus, EFG)

Liz Hanson (Cadmus) provided an overview of the scope of work and the process of coming up with a monitoring and tracking tool and framework. There is still a lot to be determined including finalizing specific metrics, data sources, and level of detail, as well as designing the interface and training staff. There will be discussion on whether this will be a public facing tool or internal.

David Hill (EFG) provided a more detailed overview of the [GHG tracking and reporting framework](#) and possible metrics. Idea is to build on SEI work for the CEP and all of the LEAP inputs and to figure out the best way to refine those into meaningful metrics. Important to track metrics that can help to inform program decisions and that are critical to the success of the CAP. Description was mostly framed in the context of the LEAP model, but tracking and monitoring tool would not be limited to LEAP framework. Jared noted that we have a good start on understanding data sources and gaps from the VT Energy Dashboard. There was discussion on the need for coordination with other subcommittees (especially Cross-Sector, but others as well) to help inform this task and a call for volunteers to form a task group. Collin volunteered to be a part of this group. Idea from David to ask other subcommittees if they have members that would like to be on this task group, and Jane noted that it should likely be considered by the cross-cutting group being formed.

- 11:30 Update on Climate Impact drafting (Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux)

Lesley-Ann and Jay have been meeting to discuss what might look like. They had questions on exactly how much detail and what the length of the write up should be. Jane had envisioned a couple of pages but was open to ideas and suggestions. There was discussion on whether S&D would review a draft and make recommendations on this or if it would be done in parallel with the subcommittee work, and it seemed to hinge on timing. Once the length and scope are clarified Lesley-Ann and Jay will determine how quickly the draft can be completed.

- 11:45 Public Comment

Public comments were made.

- 11:55 Next Steps/Adjourn

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