**Agricultural and Ecosystems Subcommittee**

**PATHWAY G – Education: Create accessible, equitable research, partnerships, and education; promote shared understanding; and invest in sustainable workforce development for the natural and working lands sector**

Education, especially around our ecosystems and land in this state is a vital part of solving the climate crisis. We must teach everyone in this state about the risks and changes that will come with the climate crisis so that we are not leaving people behind in our transition to a better future. Education of people around the state about the ways that they can help prevent the worst of the climate crisis is a needed enabling set of actions that will allow the climate council to create capacity for the future and weave in pieces of the intergenerational equity that is necessary.

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

1. **Invest in and expand climate-related education at all levels, outreach, research, and technical assistance programs**: Investment in climate related education through various programs will create the capacity our state needs to preform climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation actions. Education to land owners, practitioners, students, and teachers about climate change, it’s impacts and steps that can be taken now, are necessary to influence personal and systemic action and build workforce capacity and general knowledge with regard to the impacts of climate change and the strategies necessary to prevent it.
2. Enhance education, outreach, and technical assistance programming to support farmer learning and adoption of climate smart agricultural practices and ensure equitable access through the creation of two full time UVM Extension staff and part time staff for each conservation district
3. Establish and fund an educational program that explains the role that Vermont farms and their high-quality, local food products play in maintaining a low climate impact
4. Create a climate curriculum teachers fellowship program to engage teachers in leading and sharing their climate curriculum ideas with other teachers
5. Amend the Vermont State Board of Education's Education Quality Standards to incorporate environmental and climate change education at all grade levels (consider folding under "Science" and "Social Studies" curricula)
6. Redesign the state education funding model so that Career and Technical Education centers have independent funding streams and budgets, and create and fund legislation to support other educational programs that strengthen the workforce pipeline, including a range of accessible postsecondary educational models (e.g. apprenticeships, concurrent enrollment, and stackable credentials)
7. Support increased investment in healthy soils education through educational mini-grants for teachers to all audiences (including agriculture, homeowner, forestry, publications grade schools and colleges) and implementation of practices through funding of BMP challenges, technical assistance programs, and cost shares.
8. Develop and make available accessible outreach and educational materials that communicate climate change science and local impacts to the general public, which include and highlight the role that Vermont's natural and working lands play in providing solutions to climate change.

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| *Preliminary Assessment of Strategy against Criteria* |
| *Impact: While there is little greenhouse gas reduction or mitigation in these strategies, they are the necessary enabling actions to create sustainable workforces that are adaptive to our changing future. Additionally, the impact of the given strategies, while it will not be seen as a immediate effect of the given actions, will play out over the next 5-10-20 years in a way that is vitally important to the sustainability of other actions.* |
| *Equity: This strategy will advance equity by providing opportunities for education for all. There are considerations about accessibility and funding that will need to happen in implementation, but if executed correctly, this strategy and these actions have the potential to be great progress towards environmental justice and equity.* |
| *Cost-effectiveness*: This strategy is very cost effective given the many co-benefits and huge opportunity cost of inaction. Though there is not an ability to have cost per outcome at this time, investment in education, especially climate education is a no regrets policy that we need more of.  |
| *Co-Benefits: Educational strategies by nature have many co-benefits. That said, looking at the co-benefits that would result from the increased capacity created through these actions are numerous and important. Increased knowledge about the issues facing our communities and the ways to solve them.*  |
| *Technical Feasibility*: Yes |

1. **Develop and promote climate-related educational materials for private landowners to empower them to make climate-informed decisions about their land:** that the majority of Vermont land is privately owned, it is important that we are creating educational programs for for more climate friendly practices and educate around the impacts of climate change so that everyone in the state can work towards common goals.
2. Create and deploy a river corridor and floodplain buffers extension-type program that provides educational material and technical assistance for private landowners
3. Identify and explain practices that create and enhance pollinator habit, wildlife habitat and biodiversity
4. Promote the values of planting of future climate adapted tree species and crops in an effort to expand tree planting efforts on private land, thereby promote restoration efforts to reforest riparian areas, wetland buffers, and degraded lands
5. Build out infrastructure and education about composting and recycling
6. Minimize lawn mowing frequency and amount of mowed lawns to promote biodiversity, limit the spread of invasive species, and reduce emissions

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| *Preliminary Assessment of Strategy against Criteria* |
| *Impact: Although some of these actions are somewhat low impact, the overall strategy and the actions within it are important enabling actions to create capacity for future plans and build awareness and collateral to harness the power of the majority of the state land.* |
| *Equity: Even though there are extreme equity issues with regards to land ownership in the state and the state should create strategies and programs that decrease the barriers of disinvested communities to access land, this recommendation still promotes equity, through education, and attempting to engage everyone in the necessary transition so not to leave people behind. That said, this strategy should have implementation heavily consider equity because of the high propensity for unjust action.* |
| *Cost-effectiveness*: These actions are very cost effective as the small investments that go into creating these materials and programs will have ide reaching impacts, and increase mitigation and resilience around the state in ways that other strategies can not. |
| *Co-Benefits: This strategy will have an extremely high number of co-benefits. Education in all capacities is important, but these actions will lead to increased climate resilience, better environments, better cultural capital and many other co-benefits.*  |
| *Technical Feasibility*: Yes |