

Ag and Ecosystems Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council October 24, 2024 Meeting – Minutes

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| Location: | The meeting was recorded and posted online here . |
| Subcommittee Members Present: | Billy Coster, Jaiel Pulskamp, Alissa White, Judy Dow, Stephen Leslie, Abbey Willard, Jake Claro, Ryan Patch, Earl Hatley, Senja Erickson, Andrew Milliken |
| State Agency Staff Present: | Marli Rupe, Sophi Veltrop, Liz Amler, Evan Horne |
| Minutes by: | Evan Horne |

10:00 a.m. Welcome, Approve Agenda, and Approve Minutes

Billy Coster and Jaiel Pulskamp

- Billy Coster shared the agenda for the October 24 meeting with no requested revisions.

10:05 a.m. Overview of Municipal Input Sessions

Sophi Veltrop

- Sophi Veltrop shared two opportunities on November 19 for municipalities to learn how pathways, strategies, and actions would impact their work.
- Liz Amler shared further background information on municipal input sessions.
- Billy Coster noted it might be difficult for subcommittee members to attend future input sessions, highlighting aggressive timelines and limited capacity.
- Jaiel Pulskamp shared that she can gather actions and information from the subcommittee that would affect municipalities.
- Judy Dow asked if the municipality input sessions had been advertised, noting that task groups likely won't have a consensus by October 28.
- Billy Coster agreed that it's unlikely there will be information to share with municipalities by the requested deadline since the subcommittee will not have final direction at that point.
- Abbey Willard shared that this could be a learning opportunity for the subcommittee to hear agriculture-related issues rather than sharing the final direction from the subcommittee.
- Billy Coster agrees this would be a good opportunity to hear from municipal representatives but just wouldn't be able to share much from the subcommittee.
- Jaiel Pulskamp noted that several municipalities have town forests and conserved lands, so there is an intersection with the subcommittee.
- Liz Amler said that sending topics or questions would be a good use of time for these input sessions.
- Judy Dow asked how feedback from municipalities would fit into the timeline.
- Billy Coster shared the timeline for incorporating feedback from all input sessions.
- Jaiel Pulskamp asked the subcommittee for input on what to share with municipalities. Jaiel noted that she and Billy could draft questions for municipalities.

- Ryan Patch shared that the subcommittee should review what Billy and Jaiel recommended for the municipal input sessions.

10:20 a.m. Updates on Cross-Cutting Pathways

Billy Coster

- Billy Coster updated the subcommittee on cross-cutting pathways and the work being done in those task groups.
- Andrew Milliken shared that the ag and eco subcommittee has many actions related to compact settlement, and it would be helpful to hear what they come up with in that cross-cutting task group.
- Billy Coster noted that the cross-cutting task group focuses more on emissions mitigation than resilience.
- Jaiel Pulskamp shared that these are incredibly complex issues, and the subcommittee will have to work through those actions that aren't discussed in the cross-cutting task group.

10:35 a.m. Discussion on Engaging with Abenaki Leadership

Jaiel Pulskamp, Earl Hatley, and Judy Dow

- Jaiel Pulskamp mentioned that Earl had offered to connect the ag and eco subcommittee with Abenaki leadership and asked if they would still like to do that and if they'd like to discuss that here or take it offline.
- Judy Dow noted that giving one session to just Abenaki people would not be a good use of time without including the many other cultures and groups.
- Earl Hatley agreed that he would like all BIPOC communities included and have their perspectives braided into the discussion.
- Jaiel Pulskamp asked for clarification on how the subcommittee should include underrepresented and historically marginalized communities.
- Earl Hatley would like to see one meeting dedicated to Abenaki and Indigenous groups and another for other BIPOC communities.
- Billy Coster highlighted that extensive work is being done regarding community engagement to reach these groups.
- Earl Hatley mentioned he's not seeing that work.
- Judy Dow shared that there is tunnel vision for the subcommittee input sessions and doesn't include other areas, such as water.
- Billy Coster noted the second input session is more inclusive of all ecosystem-related topics.
- Evan Horne clarified that these input sessions are more broadly focused, one on agricultural lands, including riparian areas, and the other on forested lands and other ecosystems, including wetlands and waterways.
- Earl Hatley mentioned that low-income and BIPOC communities would not feel safe sharing in these input sessions and highlighted the need for other engagement opportunities.
- Billy Coster supported finding another input session for Indigenous groups to have that safe space to share.

- Judy Dow shared that an input session should include all BIPOC communities rather than separate.
- Early Hatley mentioned he would like to see two separate meetings but understood if there was only one extra session.
- Judy Dow shared that a committee from the previous climate action plan focused on biomass and would like to see the results of a proposed study to share with BIPOC communities before meeting with them.
- Billy Coster appreciated the input and mentioned working with Jaiel Pulskamp to figure out a third input session.

10:50 a.m. Public Comment #1

- No public comment.

11:00 a.m. Task Group Timeline, Updates, and Discussion

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- Judy Dow shared that there should be some opportunity spent with State Climatologist Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny Giroux.
- Stephen Leslie shared that he would like to see a statewide land-use planning process as an outcome of this year's climate council. Stephen also shared that farmers and forests that choose to manage land in an ecologically conscious way tend to be disfavored by the system.
- Billy Coster updated the subcommittee on statewide planning, noting Act 181 charges RPCs to develop regional planning maps with consistent requirements and that the state can use these as puzzle pieces for a larger land-use plan.
- Marli Rupe highlighted some of the work Dr. Dupigny Giroux and Dr. Joshua Faulkner have done.
- Billy Coster updated the subcommittee on timelines for the subcommittee moving forward. It would be optimum for task groups to share priorities with the co-chairs one to two days before the next subcommittee meeting.
- Andrew Milliken updated the subcommittee on the status of the task group with Judy Dow and Earl Hatley.
- Judy Dow mentioned that she looks forward to Marli Rupe joining the task group to provide feedback. Judy also would like more information on how current work is being implemented.
- Billy Coster mentioned that he could help answer questions about how actions are being implemented.
- Andrew Milliken shared concerns about the folks invited to input sessions and wanted to ensure invitees can provide meaningful feedback on all parts of the natural landscape.
- Billy Coster asked if Evan Horne could share the invite list.
- Evan Horne reiterated that these input sessions are not focused solely on economies and extraction but are collective input sessions that include all parts of the natural world, from water to land to air.
- Jake Claro shared that his task group has met twice and is transitioning to the prioritization process. The task group is on track to have to complete the process before

the November 7 meeting. Jake is also interested in seeing additional opportunities for collaboration with other task groups.

- Ryan Patch shared an update on the mitigation task group, noting the group is meeting on October 30 with an organized set of actions to work with. Ryan said there are results from implementing the first climate action plan, and this task group can analyze the effectiveness of those practices implemented.
- Judy Dow asked if other groups are addressing actions not focused on nature-based solutions, highlighting the need for people to change their behaviors.
- Jaiel Pulskamp noted that all task groups are addressing that need.
- Alissa White highlighted that quite a few actions related to training and education exist.
- Jake Claro noted that task groups are examining these actions in isolation and want to ensure that all pathways, strategies, and actions are complementary across task groups.
- Evan Horne mentioned that he can share a list of all actions in the previous climate action plan to see what other groups are working on.
- Ryan Patch shared that regulatory actions from the federal government need to occur to have meaningful change, but there are limits on what this subcommittee and state government can do
- Billy Coster asked if the task groups could get prioritized actions before the meeting on November 7.
- Jake Claro asked for clarification on the number of priorities.
- Billy Coster asked for five or so priorities, noting the need for flexibility.
- Andrew Milliken shared their task group would have a template of revised actions and would work on trying to prioritize those.
- Judy Dow reiterated that she wanted the biomass health study.

11:50 a.m. Public Comment #2

- No public comment.

12:00 p.m. Adjourn

- Billy Coster adjourned the meeting noting there is another on November 7.