

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Governor Scott and Members of the Vermont Legislature  
**From:** The Vermont Climate Council<sup>1</sup>  
**Date:** October 28, 2022  
**Re:** Recommendations for FY24 One-time Funding to Support Climate Action Plan Implementation

Thank you for the opportunity to elevate priorities in Vermont's Initial Climate Action Plan (CAP) to be considered for the application of one-time funding in the state's FY24 budget. The Vermont Climate Council is providing a suite of recommendations, totaling just over \$51 million, in climate action. In preparing these recommendations, the Council prioritized high impact immediate actions, important to meeting the requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), well-suited to one-time monies, that could largely be accomplished within the existing administrative capacity of the state government.

The following attachments put forward consensus recommendations from the Climate Council prepared by the Subcommittees. The requests are bucketed into the following categories:

- Public engagement and outreach;
- Analyses with respect to individual elements of the CAP;
- General organizing support; and
- Implementation.

These recommendations support a just transition and conducting equitable engagement as envisioned in the recommendations brought forward by the Just Transitions Subcommittee and further supported as a high priority by the other Subcommittees and the Council as a whole. The underpinning of these recommendations speaks to the importance of this work to the successful implementation of climate strategies across all sectors. Furthermore, the recommendations reinforce the need for better data to inform policy development and implementation of programs across state government to serve the needs of all Vermonters.

Finally, and in addition to the recommendations brought forward from the Subcommittees for investment of one-time monies, the Council is requesting base funding for on-going, dedicated staff support for Council operations and coordination. The GWSA does not provide positions or funding for dedicated Council staff, but the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) provided staff in the spirit of working collaboratively to meet the aggressive timeline to develop and adopt the initial CAP. With the initial CAP adopted no update required until 2026, and with the development of the Climate Action Office, ANR is redirecting that staff capacity to Plan implementation and efforts needed to meet the requirements of the GWSA, as always envisioned. While the Council appreciates the need and value in ANR focusing existing resources toward implementation, the Council believes that ongoing staff support, at the same

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the eight administration officials who serve on the Vermont Climate Council abstained from these recommendations. Therefore, this memo is on behalf of the 15 Councilors who were appointed by the House and Senate.

level we were receiving during the creation of the initial CAP, is necessary to fulfill the GWSA's ambitious commitment to engaging Vermonters and the Council's role in implementing the CAP. The Council is therefore requesting funding for two permanent positions specifically dedicated to providing staff support to the Climate Council. This would require approximately \$250,000 annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these recommendations that will make meaningful progress in the implementation of Vermont's initial Climate Action Plan.

## **Appendices**

### **Subcommittee Budget Recommendations**

*Just Transitions Subcommittee*

*Science and Data Subcommittee*

*Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee*

*Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee*

VT Climate Council FY24 budget memo

October 10, 2022

To: Vermont Climate Council, care of Jane Lazorchak & Marian Wolz, ANR

From: Just Transitions Sub Committee

RE: Just Transitions Sub Committee FY24 Climate Engagement Budget Proposal

The Just Transitions Sub Committee (JT SC) established a small subgroup to draft a proposed budget request for the Vermont Climate Council (VCC). The subgroup presented the draft proposal during VCC's 9/12/22 meeting and then met with the full JT SC to categorize and prioritize proposed recommendations on 9/15/22. The resultant FY24 budget below includes prioritized recommendations categorized by public engagement and outreach and implementation that align with the mission of the subcommittee and are critical to implementing the Climate Action Plan. These budget priorities continue to advance the work focused on relationship building, capacity development, and community action and engagement. Reminder that the JT SC sees itself as an advisory committee that will develop and communicate just transition ideas and expectations for others to implement.

This budget acknowledges the importance of sufficiently resourcing community engagement and the need for more intentional training around equity and the Guiding Principles developed by JT SC and approved by this Council. JT SC wants to ensure that all climate actions are aligned, that we avoid duplication, but are intentional about cross-effort collaborations. These outlined recommended investments helps transform how we do our climate work here in Vermont and guide a just transition, provides critical equity training, supports individuals' involvement, & meets people where they are at.

One critical observation from the JT SC was that the top priority public engagement and outreach recommendation – direct engagement with community members – is reliant upon compensation, communications support, and translations services to be effective. Without these, the outreach efforts may not reach the most marginalized communities, without whom our efforts will result in a return to status quo, and be futile. **These prioritized recommendations remain independently listed below but should be considered collectively as the top priority public engagement and outreach recommendation.**

**Prioritized Public Engagement and Outreach Recommendations**

What	Why	How	Target Outcomes	Investment
1. Direct engagement with community members	Building relationships and trust with communities is essential to successful public engagement	Support for partner organizations and staff through a grant to an external organization to implement	1000 individuals reached  # of individuals with increased understanding of climate related science, programs and policies	<b>\$400, 000</b>  (\$25,000 per county * 14 counties) + 0.5 Full time staff member at ANR for administration (\$50,000K)

			# of supported in-person outreach events	
2. Compensation for Participation	Ensuring equitable compensation for community members and members of the Vermont Climate Council. <i>For all engagement efforts, particularly those that target marginalized communities, this must be a priority and a part of the implementation strategy.</i>	Provide stipends, supports and incentives for community members to participate through a grant to an external organization to implement	# of climate council members with increased compensation  # of community members paid for participation	<b>\$65,000</b> \$200 per diem/climate council subcommittee or task group meeting (~10 members x 20 meetings)  Average of \$50 per person per engagement (~500 individuals)
3. Communications & Marketing	Simplify messaging around climate impacts, action and opportunities through targeted messaging using a variety of traditional and non-traditional platforms. <i>For all engagement efforts, particularly those that target marginalized communities, this must be a priority and a part of the implementation strategy.</i>	Produce flyers and videos including multi language access to help build awareness on climate impacts and programs  Expand promotion of events through paid advertisement in radio, TV, local publications and locations, front porch forum, social media.	# of views of climate related videos  # of views of paid advertisements	<b>\$200,000</b> Hire consultant/contractor(s) for video production and marketing

4. Translation Services	Accessibility to information and opportunities for all Vermonters including individuals with limited English proficiency, disabilities, blind and hard of hearing. <i>For all engagement efforts, particularly those that target marginalized communities, this must be a priority and a part of the implementation strategy.</i>	Ensure that agency or state Language Access Plan(s) apply to all climate-related outreach and regulatory programs related to CAP implementation.	# of documents translated into other languages  # of requests for translation services	TBD based on what is covered by Climate Office vs additional budget needs.  Individual agencies may also need additional resources.
5. Generational Engagement	Engaging youth, young adults and seniors in Vermont are critical to ensure that every generation has a voice	Funding incorporation of climate justice into established programs through grants to partner organizations targeting specific age groups to build capacity	# of K-12 schools supported  # of seniors participating in community events	<b>\$150,000</b> 3-5 grants to partner organizations (\$30-50K each)

**Prioritized Implementation Recommendations**

What	Why	How	Target Outcomes	Investment
1. Training on Guiding Principles	Building capacity and understand how to consistently and proactively integrate principles into programs and policies design	Train, coach and engage Legislators, state agency implementers and others on general equity and just transitions concepts utilizing	# of individuals trained  # of policies and programs that incorporate the Guiding Principles	<b>\$100,000</b> Hire consultant/contractor to work in coordination with JT SC

		JT guiding principles and tools		
2. Action Opportunities	Providing funding for action by supporting frontline community-led projects including demonstration projects, community gardens or other projects to mitigate GHG emissions	Establish the Community Climate Change grant program administered through ANR and provide technical assistance to community groups to apply	# of community members reached through outreach or direct participation  % applications awarded  % awards to frontline or impacted communities	<b>\$350,000</b> (20 communities * \$15,000 + + 0.5 Full time staff member at ANR for administration (\$50,000K))
<b>Estimate Proposed Budget</b>				<b>\$1,265,000</b>

## Science and Data Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council

### FY24 Budget proposal

*Items listed in order of their priority:*

#### Ongoing work related to the Life-cycle GHG Inventory (Category: Analysis of CAP) - \$150K

Recognizing that there may be additional resources needed for development and analysis of some of the more complicated or unique elements of the Life-cycle Inventory associated with energy use in Vermont, the subcommittee recommends that one-time and on-going funding be planned for in FY24 and beyond. For example, development of emission factors for biofuels in the thermal sector, and electricity generation from nuclear and hydro power, is likely to be a new area of analysis that may require additional resources beyond the existing contract. (\$125K)

Also, once the lifecycle analysis is completed, periodic updates and revised analysis will likely be useful to inform policy development and future amendments to the Climate Action Plan. The subcommittee recommends that funding be available for ANR to support staff within the Climate Action Office to do this periodic work. This staff person could also perform updates and amendments to other analyses that are supplemental to in-boundary Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. (\$25K, annually)

#### Supplemental Agricultural Emissions analysis (Category: Analysis of CAP) - \$100K

While ANR recently received funding from the US Climate Alliance to support investigation into tools and methods for accurately estimating net and gross greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural land use and practices, additional funding may be needed to complete this work and implement any recommendations made by the contractor performing the initial investigation. The subcommittee recommends that additional funds be appropriated in FY24 to complete this work to ensure that it is most useful when serving as a tool parallel to the existing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, which accounts for emissions on a gross basis.

#### Utilizing behavioral & decision-making sciences to inform Climate Action Plan implementation and development (Categories: Public Engagement/General Organizing) - \$300K

The subcommittee recognizes that the Climate Council would benefit from a better understanding of, and the ability to utilize, behavioral and decision-making sciences in development of policies and initiatives in the Climate Action Plan. Integrating insights from behavioral science can strengthen policy and increase the likelihood of desired outcomes. This understanding is reflective and contributory to the work and budget proposals put forward by other subcommittees, including the Just Transitions Subcommittee. This could include data collection to measure public awareness of: climate change and the likely impacts to Vermont, the GWSA requirements, the Climate Council and its work, the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan; and support for: the level of funding required to implement the Climate Action Plan, and the actions in the Climate Action Plan that are necessary to reduce emissions and support adaptation. Data collection in this instance should not be one-way communication but should be used as a tool to establish relationships with communities and partner



with organizations to build trust and facilitate a productive dialogue. Following this data collection, the Council could support measuring what forms of communication and outreach can most effectively reach and engage Vermonters on climate-change related issues. By using the understanding and insights gained from these data collection, outreach and education efforts in a circular feedback loop, would better inform the ongoing implementation of the CAP and its future development.

Additional funds could be allocated to contract with a behavioral scientist and policy expert to bring the most current research on human behavior and decision-making to policy recommendations. Policy-making tools that might be leveraged include incentives, social norms, using intuitive metrics, framing and many others.

Note that the amount proposed to be allocated to this effort should be adjusted to reflect the opportunities to build upon or support the budget proposals of the Just Transitions Subcommittee related to direct engagement with community members, communications and marketing, translation services, and generational engagement.

DRAFT

TO: Vermont Climate Council

FROM: Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee

CC: Jane Lazorchak, Marian Wolz

DATE: October 7, 2022

SUBJECT: Recommendations for State Surplus Funding

At the request of the Vermont Climate Council, the Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee met on Thursday, 9/29 to discuss opportunities for funding climate action using some of the State's surplus funds. Individual members submitted priorities to the co-chairs, which were then compiled and sent out to the full Subcommittee in advance of the meeting for consideration. The following eight actions have been elevated to the full Council for consideration by majority vote of the Subcommittee.

**Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee State Surplus Funding Recommendations:**

- Fund work identified as priority by the Just Transitions subcommittee
- Provide farms in Vermont with financial assistance for the implementation of climate change mitigation practices, including: soil-based practices that improve soil quality and nutrient retention. Assistance may take the form of programs that provide education, training, or instruction to farmers. **\$1M via Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets**
- Agriculture and Forestry Resilience & Viability grants to be made to eligible projects in the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative. **\$1M via Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets**
- **\$100k** for climate curriculum that includes traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)
- Provide enhanced technical assistance and support to municipalities and regions, including outreach and education for landowners and community members, to develop and implement town plans intended to maintain forest blocks and connecting habitat as authorized by Act 171, and effective zoning and subdivision bylaws to maintain forest blocks and connecting habitat. **\$500k**
- Use best available data and mapping to analyze existing portfolio of conserved agricultural lands to identify forest, wetland or natural community restoration opportunities and prioritize funding for these projects. **\$1.5M**
- Expand use of the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program (WISPr) to improve accessibility and use for restoration projects. **\$1M via Agency of Natural Resources**
- Fund a one-year commission and subsequent report that examines if language used in State of Vermont agencies regarding natural resources is inappropriate and/or references eugenics (e.g. low-grade trees, defective trees, working lands), with recommendations for how to make changes to address and resolve harm. **\$50k**

The Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee would also like to acknowledge the influx of federal funds (e.g. Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, Inflation Reduction Act, Justice40 Initiative, etc.) to Vermont that could and should support the suite of actions in the Climate Action Plan, in order to quickly and effectively address climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. The specific actions recommended above represent only a small number of actions, in recognition of the limited funds available in the current State surplus, thus we implore the Climate Council to consider opportunities and effective means to allocate the aforementioned federal funds to meet the goals and requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act and create a more climate resilient Vermont.

	What	Why	How	Outcome	Investment
Implementation	<p><b>Technical Assistance and Education:</b> Provide funding to RPCs and local municipalities to support climate resilience and energy planning and implementation. Target municipalities with limited staff and marginalized populations that have identified vulnerabilities. Technical assistance, outreach and education will include the necessity for action, opportunities for implementation funding, and using the municipal toolkit. One-time funding will focus on supporting implementation projects and action plans for municipalities.</p>	<p>Goal from the plan: <i>Establish permanent statewide funding and technical support for local and regional climate resilience planning and project implementation to enhance rural resilience to impacts of climate change.</i></p> <p>Municipalities are expected to implement myriad climate actions, with no allocated technical support or funding.</p>	<p>Support municipalities in efforts to understand need, identify projects, apply for grants and complete projects. Examples of projects to be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Change over to electric vehicles (purchase specs and recommendations)</li> <li>•Install EV charging in public places (getting and managing funds/contractors)</li> <li>•Complete capital planning for climate adaptation and resilience projects</li> </ul>	<p>Municipalities have access to dedicated technical assistance to implement mitigation, resiliency and adaptation activities.</p>	<p>\$4 million total for two years: \$1.5m annually for 1 FTE in each RPC, plus \$500,000 dedicated to Municipal Planning Grants specifically for this priority.</p> <p>Sufficient, durable funding to support planning, implementation assistance, education and outreach is also needed.</p>
Implementation	<p><b>Infrastructure:</b> Create a permanent state fund for design and implementation of local and regional climate adaptation and resilience projects. Grant funding will be used to address vulnerabilities and can be informed by the MVI results and other analyses. Under-resourced municipalities will need technical assistance to identify and implement projects.</p>	<p>Goal from the plan: <i>Establish permanent statewide funding and technical support for local and regional climate resilience planning and project implementation to enhance rural resilience to impacts of climate change.</i></p> <p>Municipalities are expected to implement myriad climate actions, with no allocated technical support or funding.</p>	<p>Create a grant program to provide 100% funding to municipalities. If match is required it must be a sliding scale to reflect municipalities' ability to pay.</p> <p>Allow and empower municipalities to proactively address vulnerabilities that are highlighted as part of the MVI and other data.</p>	<p>Municipalities and people are less vulnerable by addressing issues.</p>	<p>Additional \$20m in flood resilient community fund, and \$20m for all-hazards and resilience and adaptation projects (e.g. energy, housing, heat and wind).</p> <p>This will not address all needs. Also need to identify ongoing dedicated funding to support municipal projects.</p>

Implementation	<p><b>Water and Wastewater:</b> Provide technical assistance and education to municipalities and private system managers/owners to assess the flood, erosion and age-related risks facing their public and private drinking water and wastewater systems and aging and vulnerable septic systems. Identify potential mitigation improvements. This includes mobile home parks and fire districts.</p>	<p>Supported throughout the Climate Action Plan for example: Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure statewide. Complete a Climate Readiness assessments of drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater infrastructure.</p>	<p>Provide dedicated technical assistance.</p>	<p>Water and wastewater systems are more resilient to the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>\$475,000 total: \$120,000 per year for two years to support expanded capacity such as a state employee up to 1.0 FTE, \$117,500 per year for two years to support related organizations such as the VT Rural Water Association. Ensure state infrastructure programs include appropriate eligibility.</p>
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