

Month Day, Year

Vermont Climate Council  
Agency of Natural Resources  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620

House Speaker Jill Krowinski  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

Thank you for including members of the Vermont Climate Council in your August 25, 2023 letter to Kristin Clouser, Secretary of the Agency of Administration.

Like you and Secretary Clouser, we remain devastated by this summer's catastrophic floods, and we continue to be alarmed by the increasing frequency of extreme weather events around our state. We also share your sense of urgency about our changing climate, which threatens all Vermonters' health, safety, and quality of life—sometimes in ways we cannot readily predict.

Since receiving your letter, the Council has worked together to determine which adaptation and resilience priorities we believe merit near-term consideration during the next legislative session. As you can probably guess, it was difficult for our diverse group to collectively prioritize climate-adaptation and climate-resilience actions—particularly in the absence of a broad vision that includes clearly articulated objectives, metrics, and timelines.

Work is under way, however, to develop just this sort of vision. Efforts toward this goal (and others) include the Council's forthcoming updates to the Climate Action Plan in July 2025 and the Administration's complementary updates to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

That vision cannot be formulated without considering the ongoing work across the state as well as foundational principles from which to build. We have included several attachments that describe the work many State Agencies are doing to increase resilience to climate change. This described work is both in support of, and in addition to, what is included in the Climate Action Plan. We also suggest this work not proceed without consideration of the following.

The Council strongly urges an ***inclusive, all-hazards approach*** to climate adaptation and resilience—one that takes all community members' exposure, vulnerability, and risk into account. This will help ensure we adhere to a science-based methodology for our planning and preparations and that we prioritize wise, equitable investments in adaptation and resilience.

We also must consider ***cascading and longer-term impacts of a warming climate***. A Vermont without native ash or hemlock trees, vibrant fall foliage, skiing, high-quality maple syrup, or popular harvest festivals is painful to imagine, for both cultural and economic reasons. But we must prepare for these potential losses—and others—if we are to maintain a thriving economy and protect all Vermonters from the potentially disastrous consequences of inexorably rising temperatures.

The elements of this vision should be considered by the legislature when assessing the recommendations for additional support needed for communities, businesses, and the people of Vermont.

## Resilience & Adaption Recommendations

The Council has reached consensus on the recommendations below. Recommendations are grouped into two broad categories that address the four items you requested the Council focus on in your letter. Recommendations in Category 1 include those that focus on community, business, and residential toolkits for facilitating expedited adaptation and greater resilience and more equitable communities (item 1 in your letter), and types of supports that communities, businesses and people need in order to make decisions (item 2 in your letter). Recommendations in Category 2 include those that focus on adaptation strategies that should be prioritized statewide for federal and state disaster recovery funding (item 3 in your letter), and what additional state capacity is needed to support Vermonters (item 4 in your letter).

We want to reinforce our support for all resilience and adaptation recommended actions identified in the initial Climate Action Plan released in 2021. Our recommendations for near-term legislative consideration focus on a subset of resilience and adaptation actions for communities and the built environment in the Climate Action Plan. Specifically, we are including recommendations for actions the state has not already begun to advance or implement.

Category 1 - Resources and tools for communities, businesses, and people of Vermont to assess and respond to vulnerabilities through adaptation, greater resilience, and more equitable communities

*[insert table]*

Category 2 - Statewide priorities for federal and state funding and additional state capacity to support Vermonters in accelerating adaptation and resilience strategies

*[insert table]*

Thank you for requesting our feedback on the climate actions we need to prioritize in order to protect and improve the health, safety, and quality of life of all Vermonters.

We welcome further dialogue on the recommendations above—and on how best to invest our time, our energy, and our other common resources in the future well-being of Vermont and Vermonters.

Sincerely,

The Vermont Climate Council

*[List all members?]*

Cc: *[?]*

Attachments:

MATRIX with on-going actions

- Ongoing climate resilience work within State Government
  - o [CAO Resilience Work Memo](#)
  - o [VTrans Flooding Resilience Activities Memo](#)
  - o Public Service Department
  - o Vermont Emergency Management
  - o Vermont Department of Health
  - o Agency of Commerce and Community Development

DRAFT