

**Just Transitions Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council
February 13, 2025, 4:00-6:00 PM Meeting Notes**

[Recording of Meeting](#)

Attendance: Elizabeth Amler, Sam Lash, Abbey Willard, Claire McIlvennie, Matthew LeFleur, Anna Guenther, Aleks Cirovic, Kelly Klein, Carey Hengstenberg, Mona Tolba, [anonymous iphone]

4:05 PM Introduction and Agenda Review (Abbey)

4:10 PM Review and Accept Minutes from the [1/16/25 Meeting](#)

4:15 PM Climate Action Office Update (Liz)

- Legislative review and introduced bills
- State of Vermont current messaging around federal funding
- Review of Climate Action Plan timeline

[CAP Revision Table of contents and drafting leads](#) – Timeline discussion:

- Next Just Transitions (JT) Subcommittee meeting on March 6th, hope to have final draft for subcommittee approval
- Making chapter accessible and available to the Climate Council's meeting on March 10th
- Need to give the council time to review it before March 10th. March 1st is a Saturday, so really it's due Feb 28th (Friday before)
- Report on public engagement practices – the other chapter the JT Subcommittee is responsible for – listed as Sophi/Kelly as leads
 - o Potentially reach out to chairs of other subcommittees for how engagement was helpful in their revision process

4:20 PM

- Liaisons share discussions and takeaways from attending other subcommittee meetings
 - o Claire – Science and Data, Health chapter shared with JT members, Will have more fleshed out drafts by Fri 2/14 and there will be other chances to weigh in
 - o Sam – Cross Sector Mitigation, got recommendations in on building thermal transportation, not sure where they landed with electricity recommendations [*comment in chat: electricity in CSM moved forward with notes of where concerns were raised*].
 - o Liz and others noted we didn't do the complete Excel sheet – just weren't able – Lots of conversation that could go into callout boxes, but that wasn't filled out as a full group so may not happen. The group noticed and plan to revisit it.
 - o As a liaison, was happy to hear them talk and think through procedurally. Invited to send recommendations for review. Drafting for chapters not due until June. Pause in meetings for now. Individuals were keeping track of what was brought

up in public comment, and did a specific community engagement session on cross sector mitigation topic – Those two ways folks worked into the working group.

- Were other folks at the Climate Council meeting on Monday?
 - [Report from Cap and Invest study](#) – Kelly suggests folks watch it, also hoping to hear from others who’ve done similar studies from Quebec, California, Washington

4:30 PM

- Matthew raised question with Climate Council meeting and raises it again now – We want to make sure Vermont gets the best deal available to us - it matters **which** cap and invest program we join – We want to make sure that it helps not just other states but *helps Vermont*. Matthew asked what can bring in net positive income for the state – Good discussion, but no easy answers.
- Sam: What do we get in terms of emissions and what do we get in terms of finances? Given the state of federal funding, this is a solid way to ensure we have revenue sources to address climate change moving forward. The negative part is that we won’t have as much control setting parameters of programs – joining programs designed for others. We’re a small state, our emissions reductions will actually happen elsewhere – but the financials should benefit us. Emissions reductions will happen in other states through our actions, and that’s valuable too. Important to separate emissions reductions and revenue when considering “what we get”. Ensure that we have resilient infrastructure for communities too. If you look at it only through emissions lens, less attractive. Also contingent on the assumption that revenue is used intentionally to support Vermonters.
- Matthew: We want to make sure the investment comes back to Vermont - something for the long term, not the short term – invest in more programming for Vermonters.
 - Some of the nuances discussed prompted by Matthew’s comment – a lot of detail, a lot of data – Discussed in detail.
 - [Feb 10 Climate Council Meeting](#) with cap-and-invest study technical report presentation
 - [Final report](#)
 - [Cap and Invest Study webpage](#)

4:45 PM

- Broadband 224 million fed funding that could get cut – email from Peter Welch. If that money is cut, we cannot achieve our equity goals for bringing fiber broadband build out.
- Vermont will be hurt desperately if these cuts go through
- Physical, emotional, economic hurt is on the horizon
- Memos Abbey has seen – and heard from federal contacts – there is a program-by-program assessment that appears to be happening of various federal funds. Some have cleared the assessment, and those dollars are now available for reimbursement and distributed, others are in a “paused state” where it’s unclear if any funds will make their way from the federal program to the state per the request for reimbursement. Other

circumstances where we have not been able to be in touch with the federal point of contact. Inaccessible, not responsive to emails or calls.

- Is there a 'list' anywhere of those federal paused/not paused? Information flood of misinformation, disinformation, would be great to be able to find that information.
- State of VT has said we have strong cash on hand reserves, recommendation for VT Agency of Administration for state programs and funds, continue business as normal. Until we hear from a particular program, keep going. Other nonprofits and towns don't have that kind of cash on hand to support while we wait for federal working through that process, while we wait.
- FEMA and HUD concerns floating around
- Federally removing programs with DEI in them
- Direct communication about removing Community Benefit Programs, DEI, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, Justice40 – more information at:
 - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/impacts-recent-executive-orders-nonprofits>
- As a public institution, State of Vermont can't change language to adapt to new federal requests – so although many federal agencies and opting-in organizations are scrubbing DEI wording from their history, because it is a public record, Vermont cannot even if they wanted to.
- Have we heard anything from the Climate Action Office? Not yet.
 - Website to track transition: <https://www.vermonttreasurer.gov/task-force-federal-transition-2025>
- “Not fair reality immigrants are facing – Even people in high positions of power are scared – People left their countries to come to the USA for a democratic society. Now looking at Palestinian land for development – this is the history of America.” We are repeating the worst parts our history.

5:05 PM

- Review Just Transitions Chapter Draft – Thank you drafters!!! Working over 6 weeks.
- Given that folks were not given a lot of lead time, plan is to go through with silent solo reading, and reading aloud.
- If people have after-the-fact thoughts/comments on draft, send to Abbey, Sophi, and Kelly who will make sure it makes it to the drafting team.

5:15 PM

- Public Comment
 - No members of the present were present

5:16 PM

- Review sections quietly and out loud together, including commentary from the plain language editors.
- Still need more accessible language if we want to reach Vermonters – we must adapt to their access needs. Everyone has them!

- Perhaps What is Just Transition and Equality vs. equity should be in call out boxes earlier on?
- Add equity visualization for visual learners

5:30 PM

- [Who is frontline section discussion] – Change “people with disabilities” to “individuals with disabilities”
- Refugees vs. former refugee language: Indra recommended “former refugee” language, noting that once people have found a new home, they are no longer refugees – they are residents and neighbors. Preference to defer to preferred language from refugee communities.
- Discussion around callout boxes, and inter-linking with other chapters as well
 - o Related would be callout boxes on energy, agriculture, etc. – summaries or datapoints w/ one data source per “callout box”
- If there are statements to make on the actions of the climate council or priority recommendations from a just transitions perspective, perhaps this is a good place to include them

5:45 PM

- Review of “then” and “now” section
 - o THEN: Note that there was actually more staff support in the first year, CBI support in the first iteration mostly from David facilitating meetings, make sure we acknowledge that
- Review of “Challenges/Stumbling blocks” section
 - o Reemphasize the compensation need
 - o If we can’t collaborate efficiently, nothing will make forward progress
 - o Not enough flexibility, availability, or compensation to do that extra work – Most people are already tapped out, even though those spread thin know that the different committees all intersect
 - o One missing part can make a whole system fall apart – a weak missing link (no compensation) – and everything falls apart.
 - o Chat comment: I like these challenges and recommendations but I feel like they are specifically focused on the Climate Action Plan process... vs. content-specific challenges and recommendations... I think we should have both in distinct sections

6:00 PM

Next Steps

- Need to aggregate comments from Abbey’s notes, meeting notes, and existing edits for the final draft
- TBD Meeting Dates – Next meeting March 6 for finalizing