

Meet Vermont's 2025 Climate Action Plan (CAP)

January 6 (6-7:15pm) and January 12 (12-1:15pm) via Zoom

Hosted by the Vermont Climate Council and Climate Action Office

Overview

These meetings focused on Vermont's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP). Required by the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2020 and updated every four years (most recently in July 2025), the CAP serves as a roadmap to reduce climate pollution, prepare the state for increasing extreme weather, and guide Vermont's role in addressing the impacts of a changing climate. The Vermont Climate Council and Climate Action Office hosted these meetings to give participants an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the updated CAP.

Councilors highlighted top priority actions selected from more than 200 recommendations, including flood resilience, compact settlement, weatherization, Cap-and-Invest, electrification and grid resilience, and workforce development. They also engaged in a panel discussion about how the plan is serving as a launching pad for work in their organizations and communities, as well as the hurdles that need to be addressed to keep making progress.

A total of 204 people attended the two sessions and were invited to ask questions and provide comments. An additional 234 people registered for the meetings but did not attend, and received follow-up emails with links to the meeting recordings, slides, and summary. This document summarizes key themes and ideas shared by participants verbally, in the chat, and via follow-up emails. Responses to a Mentimeter poll are also included as Appendix A.

- View [presentation slides](#)
- Watch the meeting recordings ([January 6](#), [January 12](#), [January 12 with American Sign Language interpretation](#))

Detailed summary of discussion themes

Participants were given a few opportunities to ask questions and share thoughts. The feedback from both meetings is summarized below, organized by theme.

Answers to participant questions are shown in italics.

- **More information on Cap-and-Invest:** Participants requested additional detail on Cap-and-Invest, including how the program would be designed and implemented in Vermont; whether costs to fuel importers could be passed on to consumers; why existing state tax data cannot adequately determine how much fuel each importer brings into Vermont; and whether the Council considered a cap-and-dividend approach to address equity.
 - *Cap-and-Invest sets a cap on pollution (that declines overtime) and requires polluters to buy allowances. Vermont already uses this approach in the electricity sector through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative*

(RGGI), where revenue has funded home weatherization. The Council's recommendation for Vermont is that funds paid by fossil fuel importers be used for grants and incentives that help low- and middle-income Vermonters take actions to reduce energy cost, such as weatherizing homes and transitioning away from inefficient, expensive energy technologies to more efficient and affordable options over time. The first step is to establish a reporting program to track how much climate pollution is produced by fossil fuel companies. See studies [here](#).

- *Even if fossil fuel corporations were to try to pass on pollution-related fees to consumers, the benefit of a Cap-and-Invest program is that the State can, as the Council recommends, use the resulting revenue to directly rebate money to Vermonters with lower and middle incomes to ensure they get money to offset those possible increases - while at the same time using another portion of the resulting revenue to fund grants and incentives to help reduce fossil fuel dependence and costs for Vermonters, via weatherization, electrification, etc.*
- **Funding mechanisms:**
 - **Emergency relief aid:** A participant asked whether the federal government could retroactively recognize and fund past unrecognized disasters that Vermont never fully recovered from, even if they weren't designated at the time?
 - *The federal administration is signaling a withdrawal from disaster response. These changes could leave municipalities responsible for significantly higher post-flood costs. Vermonters should closely monitor developments, including the state's appeal of the denied disaster declaration and how communities address the impacts of July flooding with limited aid.*
 - **Equitable funding for climate programs:** A participant asked how climate programs will be funded equitably and whether ideas under consideration include targeted revenue options such as increasing taxes on private jet fuel.
 - *The Council discussed many funding ideas but did not recommend specific revenue sources, viewing that as a political decision best left to the Legislature.*
 - **Fundraising for a green economy:** A participant asked how Vermont can raise the funds needed to implement a green economy given the lack of federal government funding.
- **Community solar, battery storage, and microgrids:** A participant asked why community solar, battery storage, and microgrids are not top priorities for protecting Vermont villages from power and communication outages, especially given the resilience benefits for communities, including many low- and moderate-income residents?
 - *A Councilor explained that these are addressed in the plan but were not designated as top priorities. The top 10 instead focused on the largest pollution drivers: the transportation and thermal sectors. Another Councilor added that the plan represents a collective volunteer effort and encouraged citizens to advocate for specific priorities.*

- **How Vermonters and businesses can take action:** Participants asked how businesses and residents can play a role in reducing carbon emissions, and suggested educating newcomers to these meetings and new Vermonters about respecting the state and avoiding environmental harm.
 - *Climate change differs from past environmental challenges because emissions are spread across individuals and small businesses, not just major polluters. Addressing it requires collective action, support for low- and middle-income households, and policies that invite business participation rather than rely solely on regulation.*
 - *Another Councilor added that building relationships in communities are essential to climate resilience in Vermont, especially given widespread social isolation and an aging population.*
- **Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative:** A participant asked how the Initiative will be implemented and noted the opportunity to create new jobs by integrating climate change education into curricula at all levels.
- **Supply chain limitations:** A participant asked whether the top 10 priority actions consider supply chain constraints, especially limited global availability of key minerals, and how those limits could affect Vermont's ability to implement climate solutions for transportation, housing, and heating, given the state's limited influence in global markets.
- **Weatherization:**
 - Participants asked whether wages, funding, and training opportunities for weatherization are improving; where individuals can become qualified as home weatherization specialists; and whether there is a priority to weatherize schools and add solar panels, given school budget constraints.
 - *A Councilor provided this resource for [training](#).*
 - Another participant noted that given school budget constraints, a template to help local schools assess the budget benefits of weatherization and solar could be valuable, both as a planning and educational tool. Subsidies may also be needed, as districts often lack upfront capital.
 - A participant noted vermiculite remediation is a huge issue in VT impacting weatherization efforts. It has asbestos and is very costly. Is there a place to get Vermiculite/asbestos training in VT?
- **Biofuels:**
 - A participant urged greater emphasis on biomass-based diesel and incentives, such as a low-carbon fuel standard for the transportation sector, noting that it is an emissions reduction strategy already adopted in California and under consideration by neighboring states.
 - A participant expressed support for a component of Emissions Reductions priority action #11: "...analyze instituting a minimum percentage clean fuel blending requirement for all liquid and gaseous fuels, utilizing an approved list of eligible clean fuels." They noted it would be very helpful to those who are trying to cut back on fossil fuel use but cannot eliminate ALL equipment that

uses fossil fuels. There are bio fuels available in some parts of Vermont but many are not able to purchase them.

- **Solar power:** Participants asked about the status of plug-in solar options and efforts to make residential solar more accessible and affordable for homeowners?
 - *A Councilor responded that a [bill](#) has been introduced to enable portable solar. It got introduced and they are taking testimony in the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee.*
- **Considering other views on climate change:**
 - A participant asked why outreach materials did not reflect public comments expressing skepticism about CO₂ as a climate threat, noting that many Vermonters hold this view.
 - *A Councilor emphasized that the plan follows science and facts rather than public opinion, while prioritizing actions that benefit Vermonters regardless of views on climate change (e.g., such as weatherization, workforce development, energy cost savings, and building resilience to increasingly frequent extreme weather).*
 - *Widespread public feedback on the first Climate Action Plan called for greater focus on resilience and adaptation, which led the Council to place a greater emphasis on preparing for floods, droughts, and severe weather in the revised plan.*
 - In meeting #2, there was debate in the chat about whether climate change should be treated as an emergency and whether CO₂ causes climate change. [NASA's Climate Change webpage](#) was recommended for science-based information on climate change caused by human activity.
- **Addressing other climate pollutants:** A participant questioned why climate policy focuses primarily on carbon, arguing that other pollutants (such as methane and aerosols) also should be addressed in the plan.
 - *A Councilor clarified that climate pollution/greenhouse gas emissions is not limited to CO₂ but includes other harmful emissions such as methane and refrigerants, all of which are addressed in emissions reduction efforts.*
- **Engagement, communications, and outreach materials:**
 - **Partnering with UVM:** A participant asked about UVM's involvement, suggesting it as a natural partnership and noting a positive experience with the Gund Institute's work despite limited resources. Another participant explained that using local climatologies can demonstrate change without focusing on attribution. They suggested developing clear graphics of long-term trends across the state and Lake Champlain, potentially as a UVM class project.
 - **Suggestion for climate education website:** A participant asked whether a climate education website is being supported or linked to, noting that recent changes to climate.gov may increase the value of a site pointing to National Academies reports and other credible sources.
- **Additional questions and comments:**
 - What's the total cost of the disasters and/or ranking as percent of GDP?

- The [National Centers for Environmental Information website](#) has some helpful information about state-specific costs of disasters that have cost over \$1 billion in losses.
 - Another helpful resource is [Rebuild By Design's Vermont profile](#).
- Did the analysis consider proportionality (e.g. large versus small fossil fuel users; many small actions versus fewer changes by large emitters, cost-effectiveness)?
- Can utilities include home insulation costs in their rate base, similar to how power plant costs are treated?
- Is there a chart in the CAP of cost vs. expected gain, and also a ranking of the main sources of GHG emissions?
- What applies to diesel fuel also applies to heating oil.
- The latest [EAN Annual Report](#) shows that Diesel is 24% of Transportation fuel in VT. Jet fuel is less than 3%.
- If you are an owner, manager, or employee of an enterprise with operations involved with the Vermont outdoor recreation economy, fill out this [workforce survey](#). This is part of the Climate Outdoors Workforce Initiative (COWI).
- Gasoline is 67% of Transportation fuel in VT.
- We recommend adopting Passive House PH Plus/Phi certification for all MF [multi-family] housing projects.
- Cut back on car travel and airline flights particularly those that are optional/recreational travel.
- Cox Automotive predicts that EVs are the future and the change in incentives just slows.
- How do you work against the tide... if the Administration is saying no problem... more oil etc. How can VT institute these policies?
- The “carbon-reduction” plan focusing on farms and forests flies in the face of the science that plants thrive on carbon and render oxygen back to the biosphere.
- **In meeting #2, participants responded to the following question: What is an immediate next step to move these actions forward, and what else can Vermonters do to help ensure successful implementation of the plan?**
 - **Marketing and communications:** A participant asked how the state plans to build public buy-in through outreach and marketing, including whether there is funding for accessible, engaging communication to support climate resilience efforts.
 - **Updating local regulations:** A participant asked whether there are model approaches or examples to help local governments update regulations to be more climate-informed.
 - **Promoting weatherization:** A participant advocated for stronger promotion of home weatherization as a cost-effective energy solution and for better enforcement or penalties to discourage unsafe, high-emission vehicle use.
 - **Mandating the use of lower-carbon diesel fuel:** A participant stated that Vermont could act immediately by requiring its vehicle fleet to use lower-carbon, biomass-based diesel, following examples from New York City and other jurisdictions.

Participants were asked to respond to the following question: “What is an immediate next step to move these actions forward?” Responses from the chat are grouped by theme below.

- **Identify funding sources**
 - Identify funding sources
 - Cap and invest
 - Funding sources
 - Funding and expert project support is critical for implementation of CAP in small, poor communities.
- **Support for the [Flood Resilient Communities Fund](#)**
 - Flooding fund
 - Permanent flood resilient fund
- **Differing opinions on potential carbon tax**
 - At some point a carbon tax is going to become politically viable. I suggest that we prepare for that day as a carbon tax has been shown to be one of the most effective decarbonization techniques.
 - There was a comment on getting ready for a carbon tax. With respect, I think all the research and policy experience shows that [carbon] taxes, any taxes, have very low implementation feasibility, even if they have high technical potential and behavioral plasticity. So I would be cautious about a focus on a carbon tax.
- **Support for weatherization**
 - Weatherization because the Trump administration has not put any caps on this.
 - Window Dressers/weatherization
 - Deep energy retrofits should be a priority
 - Small town boots on the ground work. In our town our next steps are our own city climate plan and looking for funding and momentum for our window dressers project for next year
 - Push Weatherization and Thermal Energy Networks
 - Window Dressers
 - Weatherization and upgrades are important but only a band aid on the source of the problem, private energy corporation rate hikes. Any money individuals save this way will be more than taken up by CEOs.
 - Supply the demand for the supply, eh? There are tons of houses (like mine) that need major upgrades, but the occupants can't afford them. They'd make terrific training labs!
- **Focus on equity**
 - “Creating space for equity-centered discussions in every meeting” how was that addressed tonight?
 - Addressing issues faced by low- and middle-income Vermonters
- **Workforce development**
 - How about recruiting and training young Vermonters to create and maintain energy-efficient systems and devices for and in Vermont? Brain drain is a major energy drain!

- Definitely education in the trades that will assist in our climate change, Education and funding in Vermiculite remediation
- We need more housing, workforce trainings at Tech centers. [Passive House](#) delivers resilient sustainable low energy demand buildings. Cooling loads are going to kill us, and create peak loads on the grid. [Passive House] designed projects have some of the lowest cooling loads certified and energy modeled.
- The group of Tech Centers need to be engaged fully in training and engaging the younger Vermonters in what is needed as well as retraining many who can work toward building better and rebuilding as well.
- Cart before horse. We should not trick people into training for jobs that don't exist. Create the NEED for these jobs, with proper policies, notably carbon tax, so people actually want to or have to do the work. THEN help people get the training they'll WANT because there's demand, pay.
- Workforce development
- **Energy code enforcement**
 - Keep RBES and CBES upgrades on track, don't resend the 2024 energy code upgrades
 - If we want accountability and enforcement and low carbon all-electric net-zero ready buildings/new construction/retrofits, we need contractor licensure and RBES/CBES energy code enforcement.
- **Engagement and education with community, businesses, and government**
 - Spread these discussions to the wider community. I have super-insulated my house, I have 50 solar panels, I have a hybrid vehicle, and I share my house with other people. I'd like to be able to share this kind of information.
 - Build a newsletter with everyone's email address from this event— ask folks what topics they are interested in, and provide resources and organizations we can volunteer with
 - Organize local meetings
 - Government involvement within every meeting
 - Teaching local businesses about ways to improve the efficiency and electrification within their buildings.
 - Energy navigators in Addison County are visiting homes and helping Vermonters to find energy solutions including funding sources. It's free and open to any income level.
 - Find out what specific project in my community has a need for support - not financial - and then meeting that need as best as I can.
 - I can't help but say we need to be making demands on Congress instead of giving up the ghost. Our Federal Government creates the funds it spends as our currency issuer. States and local [governments] rely on revenues as currency users.
- **Support for solar**
 - Community Solar [with] batteries
 - Solar/Community solar

- Make it much easier to put in a large solar farm. Local resistance and red tape is killing them. We cannot save Mother Earth without these huge projects, unless we eliminate almost all our electric needs (at home, business, school, etc) and that ain't gonna happen.
- **Advocate for political change**
 - Elect a governor who won't veto most climate initiatives.
 - Realistically, the Governor is hostile to climate action. We need a new Governor who will support climate action.
 - Elect candidates that are publicly committed to implementing top priorities of the CAP
- **Increase education about these topics**
 - Lots of community education to get buy in on it all!
 - Easy public awareness programs for example with demand response thermostats.
 - I think more public forums and research in all areas.
- **Food resilience and waste**
 - We work with and support farmers to close local nutrient loops - diverting food waste from the landfill, creating compost, building soil health. We need more support from state agencies!
 - Grow more food in VT
 - I'd like to add that solid waste is a crucial factor here too. Making sure no food scraps are going into our landfills... etc
- **Support for EVs and improved EV infrastructure**
 - Promoting EVs
 - Get utility executives, political leaders, business leaders (especially car dealers and hotel/motel owners) and regional commissioners together to decide how to install more EV fast chargers in public places, make level 2 chargers available in home garages and EV chargers at restaurants, hotels and motels.
- **Invest in publicly owned utilities**
 - Public owned utilities
 - We need to invest in publicly owned utilities, otherwise there are no price controls.
- **Land use and agriculture**
 - Public land stewardship and agriculture
 - Land use and farming
- **Comments that address multiple topics**
 - Social resiliency/comprehensive public health, inclusion of all Vermont communities
 - I'd also like to raise again the idea that weatherization and solar for schools might be a cost savings.
 - Flood recovery work focuses on replacing lost housing with energy efficient homes, low flow water fixtures, clustered neighborhoods close to town to facilitate walking and bikes all in existing infrastructure. As well as looking at opportunities for community solar or other opportunities.

- With respect to building energy efficiency and minimizing peak loads on the grid, building a strong renewable grid, extreme reductions in building energy use will support our net zero and renewable energy development. [Passive House](#) building designs can deliver this. We need more workforce and design trainings. We need the [legislature] to pass laws for Contractor licensure and energy code enforcement, the efforts will really pay off in the future.
- **Additional input:**
 - Overall bettering our state for next [generations]
 - Living beyond the carrying capacity of the biosphere
 - Developing a mindset for conservation
 - All of the above
 - A way of pursuing damages from disaster
 - Becoming resilient to weather diasters
 - Clarify small size of VT vs. high per-capita impact and why that obligates us to take responsibility
 - The Wendell Berry quote Chris shared is a great link with Vermont, but financial and physical/technical/capital assets are essential for adaptive capacity in this context. Vermont has a great community capacity, social and political capital, but it is limited by the financial/capital/technical assets that could be mobilized across the social and political capitals/processes.
 - Lower the speed limit from 70 to 50; it can save \$1 billion.
 - H.52 Emission goals: Changes the greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements in the Global Warming Solutions Act to goals
 - H.16 Affordable Heat Act: Repeals a 2023 law that set up but did not implement a clean heat standard
 - Changing the current CERCLA legislation that defines remediation as 'scoop, dump, or cap and build' to then move polluted sites to development to instead include true remediation in which site and toxin specific microbes, fungi, and plants can actually degrade toxins and over time facilitate clean up of these sites which could then be returned to resilient landscapes. Will it take years to clean up some of these sites due to complex toxins at high concentrations, yes! But we can train youth, like those speaking now, and have that be part of future protocols. Clean up polluted sites rather than cover them over with more development. A team of us has begun this campaign and if anyone wants to join this effort, please reach out. All hands on deck!
 - Efficiency, use less
 - I wish cleaning up Lake Champlain and preventing more polluting of it was a top priority.
 - Here's an idea for investment at no cost: allow, cultivate, encourage, and respect diversity. Human talent, ideas, experience are priceless and available to any who respect them.

Appendix A: Mentimeter Results

Participants responded to the following question: What action is most compelling to me, my organization, or my constituents in this updated Climate Action Plan?

Meeting #1 - January 6

- Use less. Oh wait, that isn't in the plan, is it?
- Accessible language
- Increasing electrification efforts
- Weatherization: support for low and medium income Vermonters
- Just sold my EV due to lack of chargers; heating costs being lowered in homes also very important
- Transportation opportunity Advancement
- Help with weatherization of aging housing stock
- Prioritizing cutting fossil fuel consumption - cap and invest
- Soil (health) has to be a key priority for the state
- Weatherizing homes (and community solar!)
- Compelling to do what?
- Having a reasonable list of priorities
- Implementing a cap-and-invest program to fund all the other actions!
- The focus on weatherization to reduce long term costs for Vermonters
- Identifying revenue sources. We've been trying to work as a green energy committee but it feels like we're running on fumes and goodwill.
- Electrification!
- The challenge of upgrading Vermont's housing through weatherization.
- Push for more local solar options like community solar and micro-grids.
- Weatherization
- Vermont Passive House/Montpelier Construction
- Buildings performance, energy efficiency
- Carbon reductions for buildings
- Electricity or thermal conversion economical plans that can be implemented almost immediately
- Electrification of our transportation systems
- Weatherization
- Reduce consumption
- Climate Change effect on Public Health
- Folks all ready doing things - heat pumps, weatherize, EV etc [without] being forced to
- Word of the year: affordability. Protection for all!
- Opportunity to push forward emergency management: planning, response, recovery mitigation. NOT just for towns that get hammered all the time.
- Reduce throughput
- Weatherization for all
- Vermont needs separate consideration when the federal government is making choices.

Vermont more than needs to be able to collect relief for disasters with no limit and this is a way of pursuing that

- Electrifying transportation (major component of everyone's individual emissions), along with expanding larger renewable energy sources.
- Energy efficiency measures for low income folks
- RBES/CBES upgrades for buildings

Meeting #2 - January 12

- Addressing methane by reducing number of cows
- Weatherization
- Public health
- Creating walkable bikeable centers in all of our towns
- Protecting wetlands
- Incentivizing low carbon diesel fuels
- Compact development!
- Creating the workforce to scale up progress and provide jobs
- Electrification
- Weatherization and farming
- Cap and trade for [transportation]/heating fuels
- NATURE-BASED solutions for land - i.e. agroecology
- Many more public transportation options
- Agriculture/working lands as a key part of climate solutions/action
- Resilience and local economies
- Concentrated development (I forget the exact phrasing) - addresses the need for housing while also planning for a climate-adapted future
- Tie between maintaining [Flood Resilient Communities Fund] and invest in municipal infrastructure to support compact development. Many co-benefits with each.
- Compact development provides a very compelling case for both reduced overall and per capita emissions and environmental impact
- Supporting the farm community to adopt advanced practices that help capture carbon.
- Weatherization (individual, not an [organization])
- Investing in small scale agriculture
- Enacting Polluters Pay
- Weatherization/electrification
- Community-led resilience
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Flood resiliency
- Enabling electrification
- The flood resilience point is important for the future health of those communities
- Increase in weatherization
- Direct support for climate smart commodities such as crops on trees and shrubs - agroforestry system
- Community flood resilience and funding

- Workforce development and support
- Creating workforce
- Finding permanent funding.
- Based on comments in this chat, it seems climate science education is still falling short.
- Investing in resilience and climate workforce
- The job creation that comes along with energy grid expansion and weatherization
- Renewable diesel
- Remembering light pollution is a health issue
- Artists joining the conversation and creating work to inform
- Adapting to and mitigating more frequent flooding
- Education
- EDUCATION. Needs to be more of a priority if we want to set ourselves for success.
- Doubling down on weatherization, workforce, cap and invest
- Weatherization
- Equitable activities to address the environmental inequity
- Nature-based solutions
- Affordability
- Nature-based solutions!!!!
- Nature-based solutions.
- Resilience and local economies
- Infrastructure resiliency
- Electrification
- Weatherization/Electrification
- [Agriculture] and working land for nature-based solutions
- Using empty buildings for housing
- Changes to the electric grid to benefit the community
- Funding resilience measures
- Solar Power
- Food system overhaul: more local, more plant based, less waste
- Thriving local economies
- Finding ways to take advantage of water events to make power
- Workforce and housing development in tandem
- Sustainably funded public transportation that serves compact communities and connects them
- Federal sanity
- Public transportation
- Cap and invest
- Identify revenue sources
- Tax fossil fuels!
- Cap and invest
- Plug in solar
- Weatherization
- Penalizing single-occupancy vehicle use, and speed control on our highways. (Think F-250 with single driver at 80 mph on the interstate)