

Youth Participation in The Vermont Climate Council

Rationale:

As we know, young people are going to be the people who are most impacted by the climate crisis and will bear the brunt of the negative effects. Because we are the ones who will grow into the policies implemented today, we should be involved in the decisions made.

Although there has been a youth member on the climate council, there has been an immense amount of work saddled on that member. Many of the other members of the climate council are appointed in their capacity as paid professionals or individuals with teams to support them. Moreover, many of the meetings of the climate council and the subcommittees thereof occur during school hours, meaning that the youth member has been expected to miss extended periods of class time over the course of the work. Because of these issues, the following is proposed.

Proposal:

- A Youth Advisory Group is created, in which a Youth Representative is selected for each subcommittee through the regular subcommittee member selection process.
- All Youth Representatives are convened in a meeting chaired by the youth member on the Climate Council (not a public meeting) in advance of each Climate Council meeting in order to share updates and communicate work.
- The Youth Member on the Vermont Climate Council, continues on, and may be a member of subcommittees in addition to the Youth Representatives.
- Youth Representatives are compensated as subcommittee members and are afforded a full voice in all discussions of subcommittees.
- Vermont Climate Council Youth Member and Youth Representatives are offered staff support from [Vermont Energy Education Program](#), a local non-profit focused on energy and climate education.

Implementation:

- A call for applications and nominations will be put out for the Youth Advisory Member positions, with a period of no less than 2 weeks given for receipt of said materials.
- This process will be conveyed to the incoming youth member
- The Youth Advisory Council and Youth Member of the Vermont Climate Council would have the staff support of the Vermont Energy Education Program at the onset of these changes, and throughout. This support would be as needed or requested, and could range from assistance with meeting scheduling, to support in incorporating this important work into a credit bearing educational experience.