

Resilience Implementation Strategy Kickoff Events

A Summary of Views

April 2024

Overview

Vermont's Climate Action Office and the Office of the Vermont State Treasurer hosted two public meetings, on April 22 & 25, to kick off the development of the state's Resilience Implementation Strategy.

Governor Phil Scott and Treasurer Mike Pieciak announced the joint initiative earlier in the year and set a timeline to complete the effort by July 2025. The Strategy will offer a coordinated, accelerated approach for Vermont to prepare for, and adapt to, the consequences of climate change.

This document provides a high-level summary of views expressed during the virtual kick-off meetings, attended by more than 120 Vermonters.

Treasurer Pieciak and Julie Moore, Secretary of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, provided opening remarks at both meetings and spoke about the need for a strong, coordinated state strategy in the face of climate impacts, such as intense floods, heat waves, and smoke from wildfires.

The meetings included interactive exercises to capture participants' views, small group conversation, and discussions among all participants.

Initial exercise: What does resilience mean to you?

Using an online interaction tool, participants offered a short phrase to answer the question: *What does resilience mean to you in the face of a changing climate?* Participants reviewed each other's answers as they scrolled across the screen.

Many phrases spoke about the ability to bounce back, recover quickly, survive, look after ourselves and our community, and be prepared. Other phrases spoke to having a future for all, Vermont's ability to adapt, and having social safety nets as well as





road, culverts and other key assets that can handle storms. All the phrases are included as Annex 1.

Discussion: A vision for climate resilience

First in smaller groups, then together in plenary, participants discussed their views on the question: *In your lifetime and your children's lifetime, how would you like to see your family, your community, and the state, be more resilient to climate change?*

The purpose of the conversation was to start building a shared vision of climate resilience in Vermont, an initial step in developing the Resilience Implementation Strategy. The vision will be used to set criteria for prioritizing eventual measures.

Participants offered a wide range of views. Facilitators encouraged participants to consider the implications for households, for communities, and for the entire state. Below is a list of common themes that emerged across the conversations.

- **Community building:** Vermont will be more resilient the more its neighborhoods and communities have effective communication and connection tools, physical places to gather and provide shelter (resilience hubs), and support networks. Vermont should invest in training for municipalities and support community conversations on resilience.
- **Nature-based solutions:** Vermont must learn to live with its rivers and other natural systems, and within ecological limits. Update flood maps and make them widely available. Work with farmers and landowners on nature-based solutions.
- **Infrastructure:** Vermont infrastructure should be built to withstand climate impacts and provide connectivity during climate events. Consider microgrids as an option for energy resiliency.
- **Services:** People need access to services that help them prepare for and bounce back from events. Mental health is an important element.
- **Coordination:** There are many agencies and people working hard. Use this process to coordinate and streamline communication and resources for communities and individuals.
- **Inclusivity:** Include voices in this work that aren't typically part of these conversations.
- **Priorities:** Consider budget constraints and focus on the biggest risks.

Recordings of both meetings are available [here](#) along with presentation materials.

