

**Science and Data Subcommittee  
Vermont Climate Council  
August 9, 2024 (1:00 – 2:45)**

**Subcommittee Members in attendance:** Breck Bowden, Jared Duval, Ken Jones, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Claire McIlvennie, Richard Hopkins, David Grass, Tara Kulkarni, Collin Smythe

**State Staff/Contractors in attendance:** Catherine Morris, Brian Woods

**Others in attendance:** Alex Reese

## **Meeting Summary**

### *Overview*

Members of the Science and Data (S&D) Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council met on August 9, 2024, with the following objectives.

- Clarify the role and workplan of the Science and Data Subcommittee in the context of the Council's development of an updated Climate Action Plan (CAP).
- Review the current and planned contracted technical work and solicit recommendations on additional technical work to support the Climate Action Plan update.

Below is a summary of key points from the meeting.

### *Approval of Minutes*

- Minutes for 4/24 and 6/21 2024 **were approved.**

### *Review and discussion of Draft Public Engagement Best Practices document*

- Collin Smythe provided in advance of the meeting the draft version of the Best Practices document that has been reviewed by the Council. Final edits made by the Council will be incorporated and the final draft shared with S&D and other subcommittees.
- In discussing the document, members were generally supportive. One member cautioned that the suggested practice of responding to public comments during the meeting should be handled with discretion to avoid using too much of the meeting time.
- A member involved in drafting the best practices document agreed that the intention is to ensure transparency about when and how comments will be addressed if not during the meeting and clarity around how comments are being taken in.

### *Update on changes to social cost of GHGs recommendation*

- Jared Duval reviewed the changes suggested to S&D's recommendations on the social cost of greenhouse gases (SC-GHG). The changes are meant to clarify how this recommendation relates to the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) recommendations on social cost of GHG estimates.
- Several subcommittee members expressed their agreement with the changes.

- An opportunity for public comment was provided. There was no public comment
- **Decision:** There were no objections to the edits from the subcommittee members present, so they are approved and will be provided to the Council for their consideration at the September meeting.

*Workplan and Subcommittee Role:*

The committee reviewed the Climate Council’s evolving workplan, discussed the role of the S&D Subcommittee in supporting that work, and the implications for the Subcommittee’s workplan.

- Review of the general timeline for updating the CAP indicates that the subcommittees responsible for drafting sections will need to complete their prioritization of actions and strategies to present to the Climate Council by December 2024.
- S&D Subcommittee was previously responsible for two contributions to the CAP content: 1) the social cost of GHG recommendation, which is substantially completed; and 2) the chapter on Climate Change in Vermont.
  - The updates to the climate change projections and impacts chapter include a more thorough consideration of the public health, water, and economic impacts, and integration of the most recent science and projections in the Fifth National Climate Assessment.
  - It was noted that there is considerable expertise on the S&D Subcommittee to serve as leads or co-authors for many of these updates.
  - One member suggested that the S&D Subcommittee should revisit the CAP to see if there are weaknesses in prior analyses that could be addressed, and where additional work would help the next plan, e.g., the economic analysis could go beyond net benefit to the economy to provide more information on action costs. The data used for forecasts is also likely to be reviewed by the Cross Mitigation (CSM) Subcommittee and S&D may want to contribute to that discussion.
- Next Steps:
  - Dr. Dupigny-Giroux volunteered to draft an outline of the updated chapter for review at the next S&D meeting.
  - Richard Hopkins, Tara Kulkarni, David Grass, and Breck Bowden volunteered to help Leslie-Ann Dupigny-Giroux with this chapter.
  - The goal is to complete this chapter by December so it is available for subcommittees who will be drafting action recommendations.

Other responsibilities of the Subcommittee include robust review and feedback on contracted analysis. Three analyses are currently underway or about to be launched: Below is the summary of S&D’s role and timeline in each:

**1. Measurement and Progress (MAP) tool (ERG)**

- ERG and ANR kickoff meeting is Aug 19
- Scope of Work includes:

- Review frameworks, tools, and data governance team; intended to cover mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and equity metrics
- Develop logic models and use cases and most important metrics and data sources
- Mapping out and contacting agencies that have data to meet the needs; contractor recommendations on what dashboard tool will look like
- In discussion, the point was made that the PUC needs a tool to track progress against CHS targets, and ANR will need a way to track progress against the GWSA targets. However, the MAP tool is designed to gather information about the number of units installed or measures adopted (e.g., EVs purchased) in response to mitigation actions, and does not analyze the emissions impact. The GHG inventory is considered the ultimate indicator of whether GWSA targets are being met, while acknowledging the challenge of the lag time in getting the final inventory data.
- Next Steps:
  - Collin Smythe will ask CAO how best to include S&D subcommittee members in the kickoff discussion
  - Member interested in participating in this Task Group: Richard Hopkins, Ken Jones, Jared Duval, Claire McIlvennie, and Tara Kulkarni

## **2. Cap and Invest Analysis**

- Contractors include Cambridge Systematics, Resources for the Future (RFF), and a public engagement contractor
- Brian Woods provided an overview of the scope of work, explaining that this work was contracted to look at Vermont's participation in other multi-jurisdictional programs including the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) or the NY Cap and Invest program for the transportation sector (or perhaps longer term as a program that covers more sectors or is economy wide)
- The review team is already established in statute, but there will be an opportunity for CSM and S&D Subcommittees to review a public draft

## **3. Pathways Update**

- Contractor is Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI) and scope of work is still under discussion. CAO is engaging with them for:
  - Use and support with LEAP model (VT pathways model)
  - Updating baseline scenario with additional and/or updated information
  - Updating existing mitigation scenarios
  - Other work as assigned through task orders
- Next steps
  - S&D members who volunteered for this task group include Ken Jones and Claire McIlvennie

## **Additional topics for S&D SC workplan**

- What role should S&D Subcommittee take to review parts of the plan that are under scrutiny, including the foundational underpinnings of the plan?
- Richard Hopkins offered to review what this task might entail.

*Public Comment*

There was no public comment.

*Next meeting:* Collin Smythe will poll the group around availability to move the next meeting to Tues., Sept.10<sup>th</sup> or Fri., Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>