



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
115 STATE STREET  
MONTPELIER, VT  
05633-52011

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August 25, 2023

House Speaker Jill Krowinski  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

Secretary Kristin Clouser  
Agency of Administration  
109 State Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05608

Dear Secretary Clouser,

I want to start by thanking you for your public service to Vermont and all that you do to support Vermonters. I am writing to you today in your role as the Chair of the Vermont Climate Council (VCC) with the hope of getting an update on the VCC's plans in the coming months and urge a focus on climate adaptation and resiliency recommendations in light of the ongoing extreme weather events we have seen in our state.

Vermont is seeing more frequent and drastic weather events as a result of climate change. This was evident this past winter has been even more dramatic and - devastating - with this summer's catastrophic floods. A wide variety of weather projections were included in the 2021 Initial Vermont Climate Action Plan, but it is becoming increasingly clear that extreme weather events in Vermont, and across the country, are occurring at a more rapid pace than previous data assumed. Since the beginning of June, we have seen torrential rains devastate communities across the state. A wet spring saturated our Vermont landscape and by the beginning of June was at capacity for being able to manage any additional precipitation. Not only have these storms featured higher than average rainfall, but many have also been hyper localized and dumped historic amounts of rain on a few communities in a matter of hours. It is clear that this is becoming our new norm and we must work together to do everything we can to help our communities, businesses and people move even faster to adapt and build resilience.

Since Irene's devastation in 2011, we have made significant investments in projects across all 14 counties to reduce emissions, protect our natural and working lands, build resilient communities, and work to lift up historically marginalized populations. While we have seen the success of many of these investments, we clearly need to expedite this work to better protect us from the escalating deluge of catastrophic weather

events. In the VCC Initial Report there are a variety of recommendations, many of which the legislature has passed into law and our now being implemented by state government and our community partners. To date these recommendations have focused on reducing emissions and helping Vermonters anticipate a fossil fuel free future. We must continue that work, but I believe that we must also quickly home in on a smaller set of recommendations in line with the “Pathways for Adaptation and Building Resilience in Communities and the Built Environment” strategies included in Vermont’s Climate Action Plan ahead of the next legislative session.

It is my hope that the VCC can spend the upcoming weeks and months focusing on:

1. Recommendations for the upcoming legislative session that will specifically look to create **community, business, and residential toolkits for facilitating expedited adaptation and greater resiliency and more equitable communities** in the face of climate change and these extreme weather impacts.
2. Recommendations on the **types of supports that communities, businesses and people need in order to make decisions** about what property public dollars must defend, what property public dollars should no longer defend and how to assist Vermonters that need or want to get out of the way of flood waters.
3. What **adaptation strategies should be prioritized statewide** for federal and state disaster recovery funding
4. While I am pleased that Doug Farnham has been named to lead the recovery efforts, I would also like us to consider recommendations from the Council on **what additional state capacity is necessary to support Vermonters in accelerating community, institution and personal level adaptation and resilience strategies.**

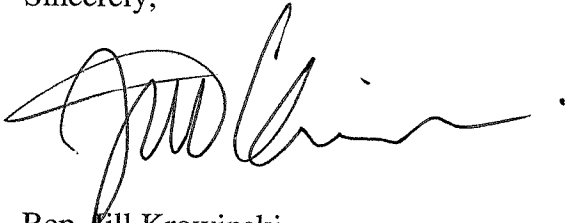
The VCC work and plan contains pathways and strategies – below and beginning on page 138 of the plan - that contemplate the aforementioned recommendations and would support the VCC’s ability to make recommendations for legislative consideration.

1. Pathway 1: Increase capacity for climate resilience planning and implementation, and address inequities of under-resourced communities.
  - Provide tools and resources to help communities assess climate vulnerabilities and create climate resilience plans.
  - Establish permanent statewide funding and technical support for local and regional climate resilience planning and project implementation to enhance rural resilience to impacts of climate change.
2. Pathway 2: Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure statewide.
  - Create a policy, planning and organizational foundation to support effective investments in infrastructure resilience.
  - Public, private, and nonprofit entities should be prepared to respond and recover quickly to disruptions caused by severe weather and other climate change threats.
  - Increase the resilience of critical infrastructure to severe weather and other climate change threats by reducing vulnerabilities of specific facilities.

Our economy and the health of Vermonters will continue to be at the mercy of these weather events, but I believe that we can all work together to expedite mitigation efforts to decrease future disruptions and adapt the Vermont quality of life we know and love.

Again, thank you for all you do for Vermonters, and I look forward to continuing these discussions in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Krowinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "K".

Rep. Will Krowinski  
Speaker of the House  
Vermont House of Representatives

CC

Julie Moore, Secretary, Agency Natural Resources  
Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets  
Chris Winters, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families  
Eric Forand, Acting Director, Vermont Emergency Management  
Joe Flynn, Secretary, Agency of Transportation  
June Tierney, Commissioner, Department of Public Service  
Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development  
Jared Duval, Co-Chair of Climate Council  
Lauren Oates, Member of Climate Council  
Abbie Corse, Co-Chair of Climate Council  
Kelly Klein, Member of Climate Council  
Liz Miller, Member of Climate Council  
Bram Kleppner, Member of Climate Council  
David Deen, Member of Climate Council  
Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Member of Climate Council  
Johanna Miller, Member of Climate Council  
Paula Melton, Member of Climate Council  
Richard Cowart, Member of Climate Council