

## **Vermont Climate Council Outlook for January-March 2025 Council Meetings**

*Draft – 12/23/2024*

### *Overview*

The Vermont Climate Council aims to complete the draft core content of an updated Climate Action Plan by late March, early April, to kick off a month-long public comment period. This document sketches out the five Council meetings that would support this goal.

The document also suggests a modified method for incorporating public comment during these meetings.

### *Meeting Schedule*

#### **January 13 (virtual, 3 hours)**

- Focus on the priority actions
  - Dedicate most of the meeting to this.
  - Councilors will have received a survey in early January that lists the priority actions offered by the subcommittees in December and asks Councilors to select one of three options for each action (Looking good, coming together well; Looking good, and I have comments to make it better; This needs further discussion, I have serious concerns)
  - Using the survey results, we will focus discussion around key areas needed discussion.
- Report to the Legislature
  - Each year the Climate Action Office needs to prepare a report to the legislature about the Vermont Climate Council's activities. The Steering Committee will look at a draft on January 6, and the Council will confirm the draft, with notes if needed, in this meeting. The report is due at the end of the week.
- Confirm writing assignments
  - Confirm specific Councilor roles and deadlines.
- Managing public comment
  - Confirm the approach for managing public comment during these meetings.

#### **January 27 (recommend switching to an in-person 4-hour meeting)**

- Focus on the detailed recommendations from each subcommittee.
- Include dedicated reading time (and well as an expectation of pre-reading)
- Focus on the specific issues Councilors most need to address given their core concerns / interests

- Include time to connect as Councilors around our shared goals (likely facilitated by Indra Acharya)

**February 10** (virtual, 3 hours)

- Focus on the Cap and Invest study, and its implications for the updated Climate Action Plan
- Provide an update on the Business as Usual study
- Offer guidance to writing individuals/groups

**March 10** (in-person, 4-5 hours)

- Review of draft chapters and any revisions to priority actions and other specific actions
- Develop a punch-list of work needed prior to March 31 meeting.
- Confirm method for signing off on draft material that will be part of the public comment process in April.

**March 31** (virtual, 3 hours)

- Review of Business and Usual and Scenarios modeling
- Final review and sign-off of materials for April public comment

*Ideas for Public Comment during these meetings*

The council has expressed support for hearing public comment during its meetings, with the intent of listening to comment prior to final discussion and decision-making. At the same time, the Climate Action Office is undertaking multiple strategies to engage Vermonters around the issues being addressed by the Council and plans a series of outreach and engagement activities in April around the draft updated Climate Action Plan.

The December 2024 Council meeting showed that public comment can take up significant time on an agenda. The facilitation team suggests the following approach for managing comment during the January-March Council meeting:

- Have dedicated public comment time on each agenda, probably towards the middle of the meeting.
- Schedule a predicable amount of time each meeting, probably in the 20-30 minute range.
- Stick with a 2-minute time limit for individual commenter.
- End the public comment period at the end of the allotted time. If people still have their hands up, direct them to the other channels for providing comment, such as the website, the voicemail, etc.
- At each Council meeting, also dedicate the first 10 minutes reviewing comments received since the last meeting. The Climate Action Office will prepare a summary

of those comments. This review of comments might constitute the Just Transitions reflection at the start of the meeting.

- (Tentative) If many hands are raised at the start of a public comment period during a Council meeting, the facilitator will first call on individuals who haven't spoken in the previous two meetings.