



Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy

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Prepared by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and Vermont State Treasurer's Office



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Charlotte, Vermont
Cover: Pawlet, Vermont

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We also thank the many state agency staff and other partners who helped craft and provide feedback on the actions included in the Strategy. The work to build resilience to the impacts of climate change does not lie with any one agency, and this Strategy demonstrates the coordination and collaboration needed to strengthen Vermont's resilience to the impacts of our changing climate.

Finally, we thank the many Vermonters who provided feedback, asked questions, and shared their visions for a climate-resilient Vermont.

Opening Statement



On January 3, 2024, we announced an initiative to create a Resilience Implementation Strategy for Vermont. The completed *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy* builds on work already being done by state government to adapt to the changing climate, evaluates gaps in current services, and identifies opportunities to accelerate implementation. We are pleased to be able to share the results of this effort.

This inaugural *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy* catalogues and builds upon current resilience-related work by state government, drawing from more than 300 identified efforts. Our Strategy-development teams organized and prioritized this recent climate action work while looking for missing elements. This process involved gathering input from the public, municipalities, advocacy groups, and state agencies. The result is a list of 126 actions—some implementation-ready and others requiring additional planning and development. All are presented in tables in the Priority Actions section.

Preliminary estimates indicate the total cost of these actions to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. While investing in resilience saves money long-term, implementing the full scope of actions identified in this Strategy in the near term is not feasible. As a result, we have identified a manageable set of priorities. We believe these actions will have significant risk-mitigation benefits and reduce recovery costs following major weather events. These key initiatives are:

- **Flood Resilient Communities Fund:** This established, demonstrably effective program will take on increasing importance given the elimination of federal programs like FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. Sustained, annual investments in this program would allow towns across the state to work with Vermont Emergency Management to make proactive investments that will reduce damage and costs associated with significant climate events. Identifying a dedicated source of revenue for this work, without increasing taxes or fees paid by Vermonters, is a top priority.
- **Dam Safety Coordination Exercises:** This relatively small investment would expand existing capacity to convene regional tabletop exercises on dam safety and emergency action, having potentially significant value if a public or private dam experiences some degree of failure in a future weather event. Expanded capacity to conduct these exercises will support state government officials, emergency officials, and utilities in preparing for such an event.

- **Municipal Climate Recovery Fund:** Following the 2023 and 2024 flooding events, the Vermont Bond Bank, in partnership with state agencies, the Treasurer’s Office, and other partners, stepped in to help bridge financing costs for towns across Vermont until FEMA dollars arrived. Much of the initial capital used to support these loans is no longer available. Recapitalizing this fund, to be managed by the Bond Bank, would ensure no-cost financing is available to Vermont municipalities immediately following a disaster, thereby reducing the costs towns bear from climate-related events.
- **Hydraulic studies:** Another small-dollar investment with potentially significant value is a set of hydraulic studies focused on shifting riverbeds near populated areas that have significant future flood risk. The Agency of Natural Resources would identify priority reaches—places like the Lamoille River near Hardwick or the Huntington River near Texas Hill—where the river’s course has been altered by recent flooding. These studies are important for improving the site-specific understanding of channel processes and for helping to identify and evaluate potential interventions that could reduce future flood risk, such as creating increased storage capacity in the floodplain and undertaking targeted dredging.
- **Educational outreach:** Vermont’s Department of Financial Regulation and the Agency of Natural Resources’ Department of Environmental Conservation have recommended a targeted outreach campaign to explain the benefits and costs of flood insurance. Increasing the number of active flood insurance policies for property owners in and along the edges of FEMA flood zones, in areas where Vermont data indicates the structure may be at some risk, would meaningfully increase the resources available to property owners in the event of a flood and is not a new cost to state government.

We believe that a clear set of affordable, prioritized actions is critical to the successful implementation of this Strategy. That said, we acknowledge that climate work is dynamic and must continuously adapt to changing conditions, evolving science, and new technology. Given this reality, the *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy* will be updated once every four years, with the next version issued by December 1, 2029. The revision will assess progress, evaluate current needs and opportunities, and identify the next set of prioritized actions for improving Vermont’s resilience.

Julia S. Moore, P.E.



Secretary
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

Mike Pieciak



Vermont State Treasurer



Jericho, Vermont

1. Why We Need a State Resilience Implementation Strategy

Rising Climate-Related Risks in Vermont

For many years, Vermont has felt the growing impact of climate change. The state has experienced an increase in the scope and scale of floods, droughts, wildland fires, and heatwaves. These events have created ongoing challenges for our environment, economy, and communities. They continue to pose a serious risk to our future.

Human actions are the main cause of climate change. We release greenhouse gases into the air when we burn fossil fuels and change how we use land. These gases act like a blanket, trapping heat and warming our climate. This leads to the changes we see in temperature and weather. Over the last 50 years, global temperatures have increased at a faster rate than at any other time in recorded history.¹

Flooding is a major issue in Vermont. Since 2010, the state has had 22 federal disaster declarations due to flooding. That is almost two per year, a significant increase from the 1960s to the 1980s when flood-related disasters occurred roughly once every other year. In the single year between July 2023 and July 2024, major floods led to five federal disaster declarations. Taken together, these floods have affected all 14 counties in Vermont and over 150 towns, resulting in more than \$1 billion in damage.²

Flooding is a very costly climate-related hazard in Vermont. However, other impacts, including changing temperatures and extreme weather swings, also pose serious threats to the state. In May 2023, a sudden frost after a warm spring heavily damaged Vermont's orchards, causing them to lose about 60% of their income for the year, a loss of around \$11 million.

Climate change affects everyone in Vermont—people, towns, businesses, and natural communities—with the state's frontline and vulnerable communities bearing a disproportionate burden.³ These communities often lack capacity and access to the services and financial support needed to handle the effects of climate change.



Addison, Vermont

The Case for Resilience

Building resilience requires taking actions to prepare for, respond to, adjust to, recover from, and reduce the risk associated with the impacts of climate change. These actions bring many benefits, including preventing damage from future disasters and creating economic, social, and environmental gains. Climate resilience is also good for our communities. Studies show that the benefits of resilience projects often go beyond the value of losses they prevent. This means that investing in resilience is worthwhile even if a future disaster does not occur.⁴

Examples in Vermont show how this works. Projects that reduce climate risks, like protecting natural lands and restoring floodplains and wetlands, provide direct economic value. For example, restoring the Otter Creek floodplains and wetlands near

Middlebury is estimated to deliver at least \$126,000, and possibly as much as \$450,000, in flood protection every year.⁵ An analysis of Vermont's investment in land conservation found that for every dollar the state spent, communities received about \$9 worth of natural benefits. These include not only flood protection but also cleaner water, better habitat for wildlife, and other important co-benefits.⁶

Building resilience saves money in the long run. National studies show that every dollar invested in resilience and preparedness saves up to \$13 in avoided costs from damages, repairs, and cleanup.⁷ On the other hand, every dollar not invested today can cost communities up to \$33 in lost future economic activity.⁸

Vermont has already seen the benefits of building resilience. After Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, 34 new bridges were built to better handle higher water flows and debris. In the July 2023 floods, only two of those bridges were destroyed. Across the state, efforts such as moving homes out of floodplains, preparing communities for hotter summers, and building stronger roads and bridges have already made Vermont safer and more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Building resilience requires sustained attention and investment over time. Several of the actions identified in this Strategy will require changes to how we live on the Vermont landscape—including where we build, how we size our bridges and culverts, and what systems we put in place to respond to disasters. In addition, many of the actions identified in this Strategy come with upfront costs that will need to be effectively communicated to ensure that they are seen by Vermonters as reasonable and prudent investments.

Scaling Up Statewide Action

Since Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, Vermont has put numerous policies and programs in place to build resilience; at the same time, over the last 15 years, climate-related hazards have become more frequent and more severe. In response, Governor Phil Scott and State Treasurer Mike Pieciak initiated this *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy*. Its purpose is to guide state agencies in expanding their resilience work, help policymakers find gaps, and build on existing state government efforts in ways that are cost-effective and bring multiple benefits.

The work identified in the Strategy doesn't start from scratch. Vermont's *State Hazard Mitigation Plan* (SHMP) identifies natural hazards that affect Vermont, assesses risk and vulnerability to these hazards, and identifies top priority state-level mitigation actions to create a more resilient Vermont. The *Vermont Climate Action Plan 2025*, developed and adopted by the Vermont Climate Council, recommends actions to help protect Vermont communities and landscapes from the greatest risks of climate change. The Strategy draws heavily on these plans and others developed by Vermont state agencies to lift up priority recommendations. We have developed the Strategy to complement existing plans by focusing on how work can be scaled



Sudbury, Vermont

up and the cost of doing so, in order to arrive at a set of cost-effective priority actions that build resilience to the risks posed by climate change.

The Strategy identifies steps that are ready for state agencies to implement right away, while also recognizing the need for continued and expanded collaboration with regional and local partners. It identifies actions that will strengthen planning and ensure Vermont uses the best available science to prepare for future conditions.

The actions in this Strategy represent near- and medium-term efforts that state government can take to strengthen resilience. They are not a complete list of all the needs across Vermont; instead, they provide a strong foundation by building on systems and structures that already exist. Taken together, the actions show a coordinated approach that connects communities, natural systems, infrastructure, emergency response, and the economy.

The Treasurer's Office estimated costs for a suite of priority actions, and these costs serve two purposes. First, they show the scale of resources needed. Second, they show that there are many investments that are both realistic and achievable. Estimating costs of actions helps prioritize the use of Vermont's available resources for maximum effect.

Often, the actions in this Strategy are not stand-alone actions. They are connected, and each one strengthens the others. In some cases, one action provides the foundation for others to succeed.

This Strategy is not an endpoint but a building block in state government's long-term resilience. The priorities here offer a roadmap for near- and medium-term actions and investments, while also setting the stage for the broader resilience work Vermont will need to undertake in the years ahead.



Neighbors share their experiences of flood levels to inform hydraulic models and a future Granite Street Historic District Flood Resilience Plan.

Centering Community in Flood Emergency Management

Following devastating floods in 2023 and 2024, Hardwick has transformed its approach to emergency management to one led by the community in an effort to be better prepared for the next emergency. This approach views planning, emergency management, and recovery as a continuous cycle, where every solution centers on local knowledge and collaboration to strengthen future preparedness. It also acknowledges the interdependence of Vermont's towns and the power of regional, collaborative solutions.

The foundation of Hardwick's approach is year-round neighborhood engagement. "Any time you do emergency response or hazard mitigation, funders tell you to talk to people in the town and get feedback," says Kristen Leahy, Resilience and Adaptation Coordinator for the Town of Hardwick. "And what often happens is there's one small meeting. We weren't happy with that approach."

In Hardwick's approach, town staff considered five geographic sections of town that always flood and assigned volunteer monitors within each section to provide crucial real-time updates during potential flood events and to act as points of contact for their neighbors—using their own preferred communication channels. This aims to give a voice to impacted residents—including those who aren't inclined to attend traditional town meetings—and supports neighborhood-specific preparedness and response.

Each section of town is working on at least one hazard mitigation project, specially tailored to that neighborhood and focused on the needs of vulnerable areas. This results in a range of project types and requires varied sources of funding. Hardwick is pursuing state- and federal-level grant funding, either alone or in partnership, to support these projects and their coordination. Funding for the planning and organization of community volunteer groups, which are critical to Hardwick's commitment to community-led resilience planning, was provided by the Vermont Council for Rural Development.

A critical component of Hardwick's readiness is the dedicated Emergency Supply and Support Center. The center, which is stocked with industrial fans, blowers, dehumidifiers, tarps, and generators, assisted 85 people in 2024 and can aid neighboring towns. Additionally, formal agreements with Hazen Union and Hardwick Elementary Schools provide well-equipped emergency shelters offering backup power, supplies, and pet and family accommodations.

Hardwick also supports community members after a disaster by waiving permit fees and walking people through the permitting process. Permits are required for certain types of home repairs when a town is part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). NFIP offers flood insurance for the community while keeping the town eligible for federal hazard mitigation funding that helps repair roads, wastewater plants, fire stations, and other municipal infrastructure.



A Hardwick resident explains the path and height of 2023 and 2024 floods to engineers.

“One of the reasons why Hardwick does what we do is because we're at the crossroads of three different counties,” says Leahy. Being a resource for surrounding towns goes beyond physical supplies. Town staff also share their knowledge with nearby communities when capacity allows, such as lessons learned for improving regulations in the floodplain.

In the wake of disaster, Hardwick's highly collaborative approach with local organizations ensures an effective response and comprehensive community support. Vermont state government seeks to build regional networks to encourage cross-watershed coordination between towns to help them learn, prepare, and adapt to flood risk. As we move towards a future where watershed-scale planning becomes the norm rather than the exception, Hardwick's approach is a model for rural emergency management to be shared statewide.



Lincoln, Vermont

2. The Many Impacts of Climate Change in Vermont

Climate-Related Hazard Impacts

Three major factors make Vermont vulnerable to extreme weather. These are its geography, its history, and where people live and work.⁹ The state's mountains and steep valleys play a significant role in determining where climate-related disasters occur and how they affect towns and cities, creating different impacts across the state.

Increased Flooding and Extreme Precipitation

A changing climate is causing more intense and frequent rainstorms, making Vermont a wetter state. Since the 1960s, average annual precipitation has increased by nearly six inches, with the largest increase occurring in the mountainous regions.¹⁰ The bigger problem is not just the total amount of precipitation, but the way it now falls. Vermont experiences more powerful storms that can drop two or more inches of rain in just a few hours.¹¹



More Rain in the Future

Vermont is expected to get an additional four to nine inches of precipitation each year by 2100. The bigger problem is not just the total amount of precipitation, but the way it now falls.

New Haven, Vermont

This type of rainfall is especially dangerous in our state. Many Vermont communities lie in steep, V-shaped river valleys. This geography funnels huge amounts of water into rivers, causing sudden and destructive flash floods that have become an immediate and growing threat to our homes, roads, and communities.¹²

Changing Winters and Reduced Snowpack

Vermont winters are warming faster than any other season. The winter of 2023–2024 was the warmest on record since 1895.¹³ This warming trend has noticeable effects. For example, Lake Champlain rarely freezes over completely anymore.¹⁴ While dangerous cold snaps will still happen, the growing season for plants is now about two weeks longer than it was 40 years ago.¹⁵

This shift means more winter rain and less snow, leading to a less reliable and diminished snowpack. When it snows, storms are more likely to produce heavy, wet snow near the freezing point.¹⁶ This wet, heavy snow is a growing danger to our infrastructure, as it can easily damage power lines. As a result, researchers predict the risk of power outages will increase by 5%–10% by 2050.¹⁷



Warmer, Shorter Winters

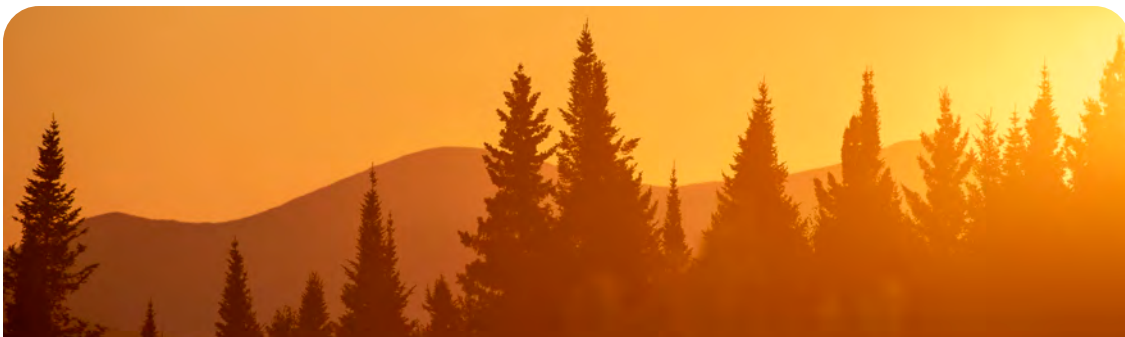
Vermont winters are warming faster than any other season. As a result, Lake Champlain has rarely frozen over completely since 2008, marking a major shift from its historical patterns.

Lake Champlain

Extreme Heat

Vermont's summers are also getting hotter. Since the 1960s, the average summer temperature has risen by 1.7°F.¹⁸ Scientists predict this warming trend will continue, causing more frequent and severe heatwaves. These heat events lead to drier summers and can worsen droughts. The state's average yearly temperature will likely rise by more than 2°F by 2050.¹⁹ This warming will more than double the number of days that reach 90°F or hotter, increasing from about four days a year to nine by 2050.²⁰

This extreme heat poses a significant health risk, particularly for older adults, children, outdoor workers, and individuals without air conditioning. By 2100, Vermont could face 15 to 45 days a year above 90°F depending on future emissions.²¹



Warmer Days

The average summer temperature has risen by 1.7°F since the 1960s. The number of days 90°F or hotter each year is projected to more than double by 2050, from four to nine days.

Westmore, Vermont



Brighton, Vermont

Towns Grapple with Preparing for Heat

Vermont, a state typically known for cooler climates, is increasingly experiencing more frequent and dangerously hot weather due to climate change. Each year, approximately 90 Vermonters visit the emergency room due to heat, and at least 15 have died from excessive heat exposure since 2015, more than double the number of heat-related deaths in the previous decade. While everyone faces health risks, vulnerable populations—such as older adults and young children, outdoor workers, people with chronic health conditions and disabilities, and those who are unhoused—are particularly at risk. Towns are attempting to plan ahead to support these residents and reduce health impacts, but success varies.

[Read more](#)

Drought

It seems like a contradiction: Vermont is getting more precipitation, but our risk of drought is still growing. This is happening for two main reasons. First, rainfall patterns have changed. Instead of gentle, soaking rains, we now see more heavy downpours followed by long dry periods.²² During a heavy storm, much of the water runs off into streams and rivers before it can be absorbed. This leaves the soil to dry out during the rainless times that follow. Second, rising temperatures are actively drying out the landscape. Warmer air, especially in the summer, pulls more moisture from the soil and plants through evapotranspiration. This water loss can be powerful enough to offset gains from increased rainfall. This effect, combined with less spring meltwater from a shrinking snowpack, leaves the soil drier and increases the likelihood of droughts.²³



More Rain but Drier Soil

Even with more total precipitation, rising summer temperatures pull moisture from the ground through evaporation, increasing drought risk.

Middlebury, Vermont

Wildland Fire and Smoke

Large wildland fires are still rare in Vermont, but the risk is growing as conditions get hotter and drier. A more immediate and familiar problem is the smoke from massive fires burning far away. For example, smoke from recent Canadian wildfires traveled hundreds of miles to Vermont. In 2023, Vermont recorded nine days that exceeded fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from wood smoke—a stark contrast to most previous years, which had zero. This long-range smoke is now a major public health concern. It poses a risk to all Vermonters and is especially dangerous for those with respiratory conditions.



Impacts on Air Quality

In 2023, 30 times the usual amount of wildland fires occurred in Quebec. That year, Vermont saw nine days with high levels of wood smoke harmful to human health.

Fair Haven, Vermont



Warren, Vermont

Economic Impacts

Almost every sector of Vermont's economy is affected by the sudden disasters and long-term challenges caused by climate change. These impacts can cause physical damage and increase financial costs. Climate change may also create new market opportunities in areas like agriculture, where Vermont can adopt crops and farming practices that are already common farther south. The interconnectedness of Vermont's climate resilience and sustained economic stability is one impetus for the work contained within this Strategy, which identifies investments in resilience that will save Vermonters money, reduce risk to towns and villages across the state, and allow for a more effective response to disasters when they occur.

One clear example of economic damage is in Vermont's farming and forestry sector, which adds about \$580 million annually to Vermont's gross domestic product (GDP).²⁴ In 2023 and 2024, Vermont experienced 18 unique agricultural disaster designations, and eight federally declared disasters across all 14 counties.²⁵ According to Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets survey data, disasters in 2023 and 2024 caused an estimated \$303.7 million in losses for the agricultural sector. Tourism and recreation are also major parts of Vermont's economy, bringing in about \$2.5 billion each year, with three of the state's 30 largest employers being ski resorts.²⁶ Shifting weather patterns could put these contributions at risk too.

Sudden climate-related natural disasters can cause severe harm to local economies. After the July 2023 flood, the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation reported on economic damages in 18 neighboring municipalities. It estimated the flood caused \$300 million in losses, affecting 46.6% of businesses, and resulted in \$147 million of debt accumulation that “compounds the already challenged recovery landscape.”²⁷

These examples don’t fully show the pressure on state government’s budget resulting from climate-related disaster recovery and unpredictable weather patterns. Rebuilding transportation and government infrastructure, helping municipalities recover, increased social service needs, additional stress on the housing crisis, and other expenses all add to budget pressures.

The timing of this Strategy is important because the economic risks from climate change are growing, while federal support for disaster recovery is being reduced for states and local economies. The *Treasurer’s Task Force on the Federal Transition: Final Report*, published in July 2025, details this vulnerability:

The FEMA backstop has been a critical pillar for state or regional-level financial institutions’ willingness to lend post-disaster, including the Treasurer’s Office. With Vermont now the fourth highest receiving state in the country on a per capita basis between 2011 and 2024, the loss of that backstop would increase the vulnerability of the state to natural disasters like flood and severe winter storms.

Policy changes under consideration—like changes to the per capita indicators or the balance of State to federal funding percentage requirements—would also increase the threshold for FEMA support and the burden on State funding resources.²⁸

In June 2025, S&P Global Ratings issued a report titled *Federal Disaster Relief Funding Proposals Could Elevate Credit Risks for U.S. Governments*, in which S&P projects that potential changes to individual assistance delivery and aid to states after a disaster could place significant demands and stresses on state-level reserves, require cash flow borrowing, and negatively impact local economic activity.²⁹ Together, these impacts could hurt the Vermont state government’s credit ratings, which would make borrowing more expensive for both state government and local organizations that depend on its credit rating or receive its backing.

Insurance is another way to protect the economy after a disaster. Rising premiums and declining coverage due to climate-related damages are making traditional insurance too expensive for some people, and the changing market is hard to navigate. Without enough federal support and insurance options, municipalities, businesses, and individuals will turn to state government for help to cover recovery costs.

The *Vermont Climate Action Plan 2025* highlights job opportunities that would result from efforts to address climate change, including several specifically from the Plan's priority actions that were pulled forward into this Strategy. These include work related to weatherization, switching to cleaner heating, and clean energy. The Department of Public Service reports that about 18,000 people work in Vermont's clean energy economy, making up roughly 6% of Vermont's workforce.

If Vermont state government and our partners can invest in the actions in this Strategy, we can strengthen vulnerable parts of our economy, create better tools to prepare for disasters, make communities more resilient to major events, and improve how we recover when disasters happen. All of this will help protect Vermont's economy and lower the costs of recovery.



Rutland, Vermont



Barnard, Vermont

3. About the Resilience Implementation Strategy

On January 3, 2024, Governor Phil Scott and State Treasurer Mike Pieciak announced an initiative to create the *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy*. The Strategy is intended to build on the work already being done by Vermont state government to adapt to our changing climate, evaluate and address gaps in current services, and identify strategic funding priorities to accelerate implementation. Creating the Strategy involved gathering input from the public, municipalities, non-profits, and state agencies, and suggesting how to prioritize and allocate state support for climate resilience projects.

The Climate Superfund Act (Act 122, 2024) cites a “Resilience Implementation Strategy” as one of the tools to identify and prioritize climate change adaptation projects to be funded through the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program Fund. Under the Act, a “climate change adaptation project” means a project designed to respond to, avoid, moderate, repair, or adapt to negative impacts caused by climate change and to assist human and natural communities, households, and businesses in preparing for future disruptions driven by climate change.

Vision for a Climate Resilient Vermont

Crafting a vision for a resilient Vermont allows us to describe a shared expression of aspirations and values that captures how the things we love most about Vermont can help us be more resilient to the impacts of climate change. It allows us to shift our focus from the negative impacts of storms and droughts to the positive changes we’d like to see in Vermont that help us be more prepared and bounce back faster from the impacts of climate change.

Visioning Process

We did not start from scratch in developing this vision. The Resilient Vermont Project, conducted from 2012–2013 following Tropical Storm Irene, was led by the Institute for Sustainable Communities in partnership with Vermont’s state government, non-profit organizations, and Vermonters. It resulted in a set of recommendations and a vision, concluding with an acknowledgment that the vision crafted for a resilient Vermont in 2013 will change as we continue to adapt, new collaborations arise, and we are impacted by new disasters. Twelve years following the development of that vision, we used it as a starting point for a new vision for a climate-resilient Vermont. This vision was shaped through public feedback on the key climate change issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermonters. As Vermont has implemented new policies, launched new programs, and welcomed new people, this vision reflects the values of Vermonters today.

Early in this Strategy’s development, the vision served as a starting point to identify high-level opportunities for state government action to build resilience. These opportunities guided conversations with partners and ultimately informed the priority actions presented in this Strategy.

Our Vision

A resilient Vermont can anticipate, withstand, respond, adapt, and thrive in the face of current and future conditions and disasters related to climate change. Vermont will take proactive steps to reduce vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change on the economy, environment, and human health and well-being. It will also improve response and recovery efforts. This will be done in ways that are inclusive, participatory, and culturally appropriate, acknowledging that resilience often depends on access to resources and support structures.

A resilient Vermont incorporates climate adaptation across state government's systems to improve our interconnected human and natural communities. A shared sense of responsibility and commitment drives Vermont forward, ensuring that all communities and livelihoods can thrive in the face of climate change, now and for future generations.



Middlebury, Vermont



School Street bridge in Wolcott will be replaced, allowing the river to widen its flow.

Proactive Flood Mitigation along the Lamoille River

In the wake of devastating floods in 2023 and 2024, communities like Wolcott are proactively preparing for future events. Its work to increase flood resilience aims to lower the height of floodwaters, have fewer people in harm's way, and reduce damage to critical public infrastructure. Wolcott exemplifies a watershed-scale approach, partnering with state agencies, regional groups, and non-profits.

Wolcott's flood mitigation blends natural solutions with vital infrastructure upgrades. A core focus is restoring natural floodplain lands, allowing rivers to soak up and store floodwaters—a cost-effective approach. A project with the Fish and Wildlife Department included removing berms off Elmore Pond Road to ease water flow and creating stabilized, anchored log jams along the Wild Branch of the Lamoille River to prevent the erosion of North Wolcott Road. The town is seeking grants to remove old bridge abutments on Route 15 that are pinching river flow, allowing an open floodplain and flood benches that let flood waters disperse.

Wolcott is systematically upgrading its infrastructure. Many culverts are undersized, so the town adopted Agency of Transportation (AOT) standards for future upsizing. When a particular culvert was expected to soon fail, Wolcott Selectboard Chair Linda Martin sought a grant from the state to have an engineer design the replacement. A hydraulic study, some of the permitting, and easements were also completed.

This foresight meant that when the culvert washed out in 2023, replacement was completed in just two months. Martin credits Wolcott's successes to pre-planning and strong partnerships. She advises other municipalities: "Be in a place where, if a funding opportunity is available, you're prepared. I think that's the biggest thing."

Another significant infrastructure project involves relocating the town's wastewater system. Existing system components are near the river, prone to flooding and

pollution. Wolcott is constructing a new system and moving the leach field to the elementary school, a location above the floodplain. This required coordinating with AOT for sewer force main placement on the new School Street bridge, and with Northern Rivers Land Trust for the force main to cross protected forestland. Extensive community outreach ensured town approval.

Wolcott is proactively addressing flood risk by assisting landowners with buyouts of damaged homes and buildings within the floodplain. This strategy opens up land to provide more space for floodwaters and offers relief to residents traumatized by repeated events.

This broad array of projects is possible thanks to strong partnerships. Martin emphasizes networking as an ingredient to success: “One thing I like to do is just get to know the players. Then I know who to ask and I can shoot ideas out to them and get advice.” The Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) has been instrumental in providing technical assistance, flood modeling, and project administration. Other key partners include AOT, FEMA, Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and Watersheds United Vermont.

Funding, staff capacity, and technical assistance remain key needs of small, rural communities. Wolcott’s upstream neighbors in Hardwick and downstream neighbors in Morrisville, Johnson, Jeffersonville, and Cambridge are also hard at work undertaking similar projects benefitting their communities. These towns show that even with constraints and obstacles, we can take meaningful steps towards a climate-resilient future by planning ahead, forging strategic partnerships, and seeking out peer-to-peer learning. When such projects occur along all parts of a stream network, from small headwater streams to bigger rivers, communities throughout the watershed benefit.



The Lamoille River runs through Wolcott.



A home affected by flood-induced erosion was bought out.

Definitions of Resilience

Climate resilience: The ability of interconnected ecological, social, and economic systems to anticipate, adapt, withstand, respond, and thrive in the face of current and future conditions and disasters related to climate change. These complementary systems form the foundation for thriving communities where ecosystems, economies, and societies support and reinforce one another.

Community resilience: A human community's ability to anticipate, withstand, and adapt to climate-exacerbated disasters and learn from past events to improve response and recovery. Resilient communities rely on systems that support human health and well-being, social and economic equity, sustainable infrastructure, and coordinated communication and planning.

Ecological resilience: A natural community's ability to absorb shocks and recover from disturbances. Ecosystems can maintain their pieces, patterns, and processes, which allow plants, animals, and fungi to thrive, migrate, and move.

Economic resilience: An economic region's ability to endure and sustain stability when faced with economic disruptions or pressures. Resilient economies support essential services, enable diverse livelihoods, and foster equitable and sustainable access to resources that respect environmental limits.

Core Components

The development of the Strategy began with five core components: community-centric approach; early warning systems and fast, effective response; economic and environmental sustainability; infrastructure design and reinforcement; and nature-based solutions. A sixth core component, government systems, was added in recognition that structures that support more efficient use of resources, prioritization of funding, and technical assistance to our communities, while often invisible, act as the critical framing on which many of the recommendations in this Strategy are built.

Each core component offers opportunities and actions where state government can lead in strengthening Vermont's ability to respond to the effects of climate change on our communities, infrastructure, economy, and environment.

Core components are the foundational building blocks of this Strategy.

Each core component addresses a vital area where targeted investments, policies, and partnerships can reduce risk and strengthen Vermont. Together, they provide a framework for organizing state government–led resilience efforts and guiding action over time. The six core components are:



1. **Government systems:** The systems that support the government’s role in building resilient communities are often invisible, but they form the foundation for many of the recommendations included in the Strategy. Structures that support the efficient use of resources, prioritize funding, and provide technical assistance to our communities serve as the critical framework on which a resilient Vermont is built.



2. **Community-centric approach:** This core component includes actions that protect and build the resilience of human health and well-being, help communities plan for the resilience of their ecological, social, and economic systems, bring local perspectives and needs into climate resilience policy conversations and decision-making processes, and promote community engagement in line with Vermont’s Environmental Justice law.



3. **Early warning systems and fast, effective response:** This core component includes actions that enhance Vermont’s early warning mechanisms, provide fast, effective responses to ensure Vermonters’ safety from climate change impacts, and enable Vermont to anticipate and swiftly respond to climate-related impacts.



4. **Economic and environmental sustainability:** This core component recognizes the interconnection between climate resilience and economic stability. This component includes actions that support businesses and working lands in adapting to changing climate conditions.



5. **Infrastructure design and reinforcement:** This core component looks at the impacts of climate change on Vermont’s roads, bridges, drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, power lines, and communication services, and recommends actions to protect, repair, or relocate these critical assets.



6. **Nature-based solutions:** This core component includes actions that uphold our reciprocal relationship with the land—safeguarding ecosystems, promoting biodiversity, and ensuring that as we receive from nature, we also give back. These solutions buffer the state’s communities, lands, and infrastructure from the impact of extreme weather events while fostering a mutual land ethic between people and place.

Opportunities

Opportunities are specific areas of focus within each core component that translate the component's big-picture goals into defined, actionable work. They reflect state government's most promising and impactful leverage points, identifying where targeted investment, innovation, or collaboration can lead to measurable progress. Within each opportunity is a set of implementable priority actions.



Hardwick, Vermont

Priority Actions

Actions are the functional steps to improve climate resilience within each opportunity. Each action is designed to be practical, measurable, and specific. Actions use tools available to state government to build resilience: policy, funding, programming, collaboration, regulation, and incentives. Actions vary in scale, but all aim to reduce risk, support communities, and build long-term resilience across Vermont.

Actions are prioritized based on urgency, anticipated impact, and readiness for implementation. To focus resources where they are most needed and most likely to succeed, actions are grouped into two tiers. This tiered approach enables Vermont to address the most pressing needs while building momentum for broader, long-term resilience.

Tier 1: High Urgency, High Readiness

These actions are both critical and ready to move forward. They are the top priorities for near-term investment and coordination. The cost of implementing most of these actions has been estimated by the State Treasurer's Office in partnership with

implementers from across state government. Some Tier 1 actions do not have a cost associated with them because they focus on regulatory reforms or policy changes and may not require a significant cost to implement, while other actions require additional planning before a cost can be estimated.

Tier 2: Important, but Less Urgent or Less Ready

These actions remain important to Vermont's long-term resilience goals, but they require additional planning, collaboration, or capacity-building efforts before they can be implemented. Tier 2 actions will proceed as conditions and resources allow. A number of Tier 2 actions have had the cost of implementation assessed by the State Treasurer's Office. These actions were selected because they focus on funding and financing climate resilience, supporting immediate response to climate-related disasters, and providing high value for risk mitigation.



Southeastern Vermont Community Action's weatherization crew works on a home in Windsor.

Weatherizing Homes and Supporting Vermonters

As Vermont works to adapt to climate change, comprehensive weatherization of buildings enhances the resilience of the state's aging housing stock, supporting current and future generations to live in health, safety, and comfort. Impacts of a changing climate—such as flooding, excessive heat, increased humidity leading to mold, more frequent power outages from storms, and more—directly affect Vermonters, especially those in precarious housing situations. Weatherization projects reduce the amount of fuel needed to heat homes, allowing Vermonters to keep money in their pockets while keeping harmful pollution out of the air.

[Read more](#)

Developing the Strategy

People and Process

The Agency of Natural Resources' Climate Action Office (CAO) led the development of this strategy. A steering committee with representatives from 13 different departments and agencies provided support and direction.

Agencies Represented on the Steering Committee

The following agencies selected a representative to serve on the Resilience Implementation Strategy Steering Committee:

- Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development
 - Department of Housing and Community Development
- Agency of Human Services
 - Department of Health
- Agency of Natural Resources
 - Secretary's Office, Climate Action Office
 - Department of Environmental Conservation
 - Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
 - Fish and Wildlife Department
- Agency of Transportation
- Department of Public Safety
 - Vermont Emergency Management
- Department of Public Service
- Office of Disaster Recovery
- Office of the State Treasurer
- Vermont State Climate Office

The process began in February 2024, and the CAO held public meetings that spring to help establish a guiding Vision for a Climate Resilient Vermont. The vision was developed with input from Vermonters through two public events, an online survey, and CAO community engagement efforts. A review of existing reports and the public input they contained also informed the development of the vision. This analysis helped identify the priorities of Vermonters and refine broad topics into specific areas of focus.

After establishing a shared Vision for a Climate Resilient Vermont, the next phase was to understand state government's current climate resilience work. The CAO sent a survey to all state agencies and departments asking targeted questions. Agencies reported a total of 330 unique initiatives. These projects spanned 30 different agencies and departments. This inventory provided an overview of state government's ongoing efforts.

Explore the Inventory

The inventory of state government's climate resilience activities was compiled into a [publicly accessible database](#). Use the database to explore a variety of state government activities, such as landslide response, grants to mitigate flood risk to buildings, technical assistance programs available to farmers and loggers, and more.

This inventory of resilience activities made it possible to identify strategic opportunities for action by looking at gaps in current systems or areas where efforts could be adjusted to better consider the impacts of climate change. These opportunities became the focus of a collaborative workshop. The workshop brought together more than 100 state staff and partners from 50 different organizations and local governments. Attendees brainstormed concrete actions needed to turn each opportunity into a tangible outcome. The session generated hundreds of innovative ideas, forming a pool of potential actions for the final Strategy.

The final phase involved combining ideas from the workshop and then working with the Steering Committee to prioritize actions. Committee members evaluated each action for its practicality, potential impact, and timing. This resulted in a tiered plan to focus finite resources where they will produce the greatest benefits. The Strategy includes Tier 1 actions, which are urgent and ready for implementation, and Tier 2 actions, which are still critical but need to be more fully developed before being ready for implementation.

Prioritizing Resilience Actions

To help identify the most important resilience actions for Vermont, a prioritization system based on three criteria was used.

Practicability: This considered alignment with existing programs and statutes, political and technical/knowledge feasibility, resource needs, and cost savings or avoided losses in relation to investment needed.

Impact: This considered the scale (benefits to who/what), the urgency of climate hazards addressed, and equity outcomes (benefits to frontline or vulnerable groups).

Timing: This considered when tangible outcomes will be realized and whether the action addresses immediate or long-term resilience needs.



Stratton, Vermont

Protecting Nature for Climate Resilience

Vermont Conservation Design identifies the most important lands and waters for maintaining ecological function. Together, they make up a connected landscape of large, intact forests, healthy waterbodies and wetlands, and a full range of physical and geologic features. Protecting these places supports natural and human communities alike in the face of climate change, now and into the future.

[Read more](#)

Throughout the development of the Strategy, the CAO met with partners, such as the Environmental Justice Advisory Council, to gather feedback on the vision and the priority opportunities for action. The CAO also gathered input from Vermonters across the state, through attendance at events, public meetings, and focus groups, with the goal of speaking directly with Vermonters by meeting them where they live, work, and gather.

This multi-phased process has ensured the *Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy* is far more than a list of goals. It is a specific, measurable, and prioritized roadmap. It provides Vermont state government with a path forward to advance its climate resilience objectives.

Costing Methodology for Priority Actions

In July 2025, the CAO shared with the Treasurer's Office a consolidated list of over 100 priority actions; 66 of these were demarcated as Tier 1 actions, meaning that they are likely closest to implementation. The Treasurer's Office then worked to evaluate, estimate costs, and consider funding approaches for carrying out these actions. The Treasurer's team further identified six key financial categories among the actions—these are separate from the subject matter-based core components—and sorted the actions among these categories to triage costing investigations given a limited working timeframe. These categories are:

- Actions that clearly call for a funding or financing source
- Actions that largely involve regulatory reform or policy changes
- Actions related to the provision of educational resources or technical assistance
- Actions that require significant additional planning or preparation steps at the outset or in order to ascertain the scope of costs
- Actions related to immediate disaster response and recovery
- Actions related to the evaluation of risk and high-value mitigation plans

The Treasurer's team focused on assessing the cost of as many of the Tier 1 actions as possible as well as, based on the aforementioned analysis, a subset of Tier 2 priority actions that, from the Treasurer's perspective, are relevant to future risks for communities or finances. The additional Tier 2 priorities mostly fall into the categories of actions that clearly call for a funding or financing source, actions related to immediate disaster response and recovery, and actions related to the evaluation of risk and high-value mitigation plans.

The costing methodology varied significantly from action to action based on available information. The Treasurer's team investigated each priority action by asking the department or agency listed as the "implementer" for any information, resources, or background information that could assist in detailing the financial scope and for projected or theorized costs associated with each action.

The evaluation sought to separate one-time and recurring costs, depending on the initiative. The Treasurer's team found that agencies were at varying stages in their ability to estimate costs for priority actions. While some had preliminary information available, others were still in the process of defining priorities and determining the best path forward for implementation.

The Opportunity and Priority Action Tables include all 126 priority actions grouped by core component, with estimated implementation costs (where possible) listed in the last column. Forty Tier 1 and eight accelerated Tier 2 actions (48 in total) have associated one-time or recurring costs. It is important to note that while the actions listed in the tables have costs attributed to them, the numbers presented are not exact at this stage. For example, some of the numbers presented are based on data extrapolated from older projects that may or may not be replicable under current economic circumstances. There are also several actions included in the list where it would be possible to scale efforts based on funds available, and it is important not to view these actions as a simple all-or-nothing proposition.

Implementation of the subset of 48 priority actions, where cost could be estimated by the Treasurer's team, would require a large investment of about \$270 million in one-time funds and \$95 million in recurrent annual costs (in 2025 dollars). Given this magnitude and the finite capacity of Vermonters and state government to support this work, it is impractical to pursue all of these initiatives at the same time. The structure of this Strategy, however, allows for multiple investments over time in a way that reflects changing priorities, needs, and available resources. This Strategy is meant to be a living document that can guide continued investment over time that is aligned with a clear set of resilience priorities.



Brandon, Vermont

4. Priority Actions

In the Opportunity and Priority Action Tables on the following pages, the actions prioritized for implementation are listed under each core component and opportunity and are categorized into two tiers.

We have assigned agencies, departments, and other state government partners to lead actions. Partners have been assigned as implementers where the actions are tied to a specific program, plan, or initiative already being led by that partner, or where the partner's expertise would make them the lead to coordinate with other entities on the implementation of that action.

- **Tier 1: High Urgency, High Readiness**

These actions are both critical and ready to move forward. They are the top priorities for near-term investment and coordination. The State Treasurer's Office has estimated the implementation costs for most of these actions.

Some Tier 1 actions do not have a cost associated with them because they focus on regulatory reforms or policy changes and may not require significant implementation costs. Other actions require additional planning before a cost can be estimated.

- **Tier 2: Important, but Less Urgent or Less Ready**

These actions remain important to Vermont's long-term resilience goals, but they require additional planning, collaboration, or capacity-building efforts before they can be implemented. Tier 2 actions will proceed as conditions and resources allow. This tiered approach enables Vermont to address the most pressing needs while building momentum for broader, long-term resilience.

A handful of Tier 2 actions have had the cost of implementation assessed by the State Treasurer's Office. These actions were selected based on their focus on funding and financing climate resilience, their support for immediate responses to climate-related disasters, and their ability to provide high value for risk mitigation.

Tier 1 actions are listed first in each table, followed by Tier 2 actions. Core components and opportunities are not listed in any particular order.

Opportunity and Priority Action Tables

Legend of Table Fields

Opportunity	Named at the top of each table, this is the climate resilience objective that the actions address.
Action Number	A unique identifier assigned to each resilience action.
Action	The proposed measure.
Lead	The primary agency or organization responsible for implementation. The lead is identified based on initiative and/or subject matter expertise and will often need to coordinate with other partners to carry out the action effectively.
Tier	The priority ranking of the action, reflecting its relative importance or readiness for implementation. Tier 1 actions are both critical and ready to move forward. Tier 2 actions are important but less urgent or less ready.
Duration	If investment is needed for implementation, this indicates whether the investment is a one-time cost or an ongoing need over time. For actions where investment is not needed, N/A is used. Tier 2 actions where a cost was not estimated have this field grayed out.
Estimated Cost	The projected financial resources required to implement the action, expressed in 2025 dollars or cost ranges. Actions that can be carried out with existing resources are noted as “Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.” Actions requiring additional time and coordination to develop cost estimates are marked as “Costing for this action is ongoing.” Tier 2 actions where a cost was not estimated have this field grayed out.



Government Systems

Opportunity 1: Evaluate and redesign planning and implementation systems around regional geography, not town lines, to ease local burdens and expand the impact of resilience activities.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
1A	Pilot a regional governance structure in an underserved area to test resilience-focused county-level governance functions.	State Recovery Office	1	One-Time	\$250,000
1B	Following the pilot of a regional structure focused on supporting climate resilience, establish entities that offer services comparable to a county government.	State Recovery Office	2		
1C	Establish a structure to incorporate climate resilience into plans at the watershed or other regional scale that aligns with Tactical Basin Plans (TBP) using the recommendations from the Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		
1D	Secure sustainable funding for Regional Planning Commissions to implement municipal and regional climate resilience projects and planning initiatives that deliver multiple co-benefits and are prioritized based on local community needs, not dictated by the terms of a specific grant.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		



Opportunity 2: Advance resilience through investments that prioritize adaptation, while deploying innovative tools to bridge the gap between immediate post-disaster needs and the resources required for resilient rebuilding.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
2A	Secure sustainable, long-term funding to expand and maintain a permanent Flood Resilient Communities Fund (Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund) for the design and implementation of local and regional climate change adaptation projects and community resilience. Funding may be used as a local match for federally funded hazard mitigation programs, as well as for hazard mitigation activities not eligible for FEMA.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	1	Ongoing	\$5,000,000* * Minimum amount needed
2B	Develop costed-out “resilient rebuild” templates for common structures (homes, small businesses, mobile homes, etc.) so that people can quickly understand the cost of resilience upgrades, what portion is typically covered by aid or insurance, and what funding gap needs to be addressed.	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	1	One-time	\$500,000
2C	Explore and recommend the development of state-backed or public-private programs that offer low- or no-interest loans, bridge grants, or revolving funds for resilient rebuilding and for gap coverage between standard recovery funds (e.g., FEMA, insurance) and the cost of building to a higher standard.	State Treasurer's Office	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
2D	Based on a review of past climate-related emergencies and recent recovery efforts, identify proven permitting flexibilities and efficiencies (e.g., wastewater, stormwater, Act 250, emergency water supply connections, gravel extraction). Use these findings to inform the development of legislation that streamlines or fast-tracks pathways for resilient, post-disaster rebuilding and relocation.	Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
2E	To address the significant flood insurance gap in Vermont, launch a joint public education campaign, co-led by the Department of Financial Regulation (DFR) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), on the importance of flood insurance. Building on the resources available on the Flood Ready Vermont website , this campaign will consolidate and enhance existing state resources into a single source for homeowners to evaluate their flood risk and insurance needs.	Department of Financial Regulation (DFR); Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
2F	To ensure resources are available for rapid deployment after a disaster, secure dedicated funding to expand a pre-positioned recovery fund, such as the Municipal Climate Recovery Fund (MCRF), for immediate community needs that bridge the gap between standard recovery and the cost of building to a more resilient standard.	State Treasurer's Office	1	One-time	\$5,000,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
2G	Explore and recommend structures to support pooled funds for flexible, gap-filling capital to facilitate short-term recovery, particularly for low-income, rural, or marginalized households.	State Treasurer's Office	2		
2H	Select and fund a portfolio of high-priority water and wastewater capital infrastructure projects that showcase best practices in resilience.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		
2I	As funding allows, fund repair and recovery efforts following disasters in a way that complements federal assistance and ensures timely support for restoring homes, businesses, infrastructure, ecosystems, and community services.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		



Community-Centric Approach

Opportunity 3: Establish cross-agency processes to collaboratively plan, align, and deploy financial and technical assistance resources to support community resilience needs tailored to community priorities.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
3A	Expand technical assistance to support municipalities in creating annexes for hazard-specific events that include volunteer and donation management.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
3B	Enhance relevant training programs, such as Vermont Local Roads (VLR) and Rivers and Roads, to help municipal highway departments and town governments better understand the connections between transportation best management practices (BMPs) and climate resilience.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$40,000 \$10,000
3C	Develop a user-friendly guide for municipalities detailing which disaster recovery and resilience programs are eligible for pre-approved match sources, how the match can be used (planning, design, construction), and pre-approved cost categories.	State Recovery Office	1	One-time	\$30,000
3D	Expand the capacity of the Office of the Vermont State Climatologist to conduct climate hazard research, develop hazard-specific plans, and provide climate data and education to Vermonters.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	1	One-time	\$320,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
3E	Leverage existing state agencies' community partner inventories to explore how they can be scaled to support coordination across state agencies on climate resilience–focused community outreach.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		
3F	Improve the design and execution of transportation resilience projects at both the state and municipal levels by establishing a collaboration framework that includes: a formal process for construction professionals to provide constructability input during project design, joint training for designers and contractors on best practices for resilient infrastructure, and on-call engineering support to help field crews address challenges during construction.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	2		
3G	Coordinate across state agencies to develop unified messaging at the municipal level on climate resilience planning, engagement, and implementation.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		



Opportunity 4: Empower municipalities to develop and implement plans that incorporate climate resilience best practices, foster cross-sectoral and regional implementation, and maximize the impact of planning.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
4A	Identify best practices for climate resilience and match them to existing state programs (e.g., waste heat recovery for wastewater projects, housing built outside the floodplain incorporated into Department of Housing and Community Development State Designation Programs).	Climate Action Office (CAO)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
4B	Amend the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant decision criteria to give greater weight to applications that align with shelter locations identified in Local Emergency Management Plans, ensuring that municipal shelter locations have sustainable energy backup systems.	Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
4C	Secure funding to support municipalities in utilizing the Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide to incorporate climate resilience into their municipal plans.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2	One-time Ongoing	\$300,000 \$100,000
4D	Coordinate with state agencies that fund planning and project implementation to amend their funding decision criteria to give preference to projects that incorporate climate resilience best practices.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		
4E	Tie implementation funding, additional capacity support, and cohort model support to completion of existing planning processes that incorporate climate resilience at the municipal level.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		



Opportunity 5: Enhance state capacity to identify climate change impacts on human health, implement adaptation strategies, and support individual, community, and organizational resilience.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
5A	Allocate state funding to ensure the Department of Health (VDH) and the Agency of Human Services (AHS) retain the necessary capacity, including dedicated staff, to plan for, prepare for, and respond to climate-related health hazards, with a specific focus on disproportionately affected populations.	Department of Health (VDH)	1	Ongoing	\$492,500
5B	Provide guidance, funding, and technical assistance to Regional Planning Commissions, municipalities, health and residential care facilities, and other organizational partners to prepare for and respond to climate hazards affecting human health.	Department of Health (VDH)	1	Ongoing	\$670,000
5C	Provide training, guidance, and resources to community health workers, case managers, and other organizational partners that can support individuals and households in building pre-disaster resilience and addressing post-disaster needs.	Department of Health (VDH)	2		



Early Warning Systems and Fast, Effective Response

Opportunity 6: Strengthen cross-government structures for rapid, coordinated emergency response and recovery that align local, regional, state, and federal efforts and mobilize Vermont's volunteer spirit.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
6A	Develop and implement a targeted outreach campaign to increase VT-Alert subscriptions among key community partners, local organizations, and underserved populations.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
6B	In partnership with the Department of Health (VDH), Department of Children and Families (DCF), and other state agencies and departments, build and support a network of local organizational and community contacts to receive time-sensitive alerts and relay them through their trusted channels.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
6C	Conduct a comprehensive, cross-agency review of the Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies (CARE) to identify user barriers, resource constraints for expansion, and potential technology upgrades. Use the findings to relaunch and expand the program with improved community partnerships, clearer messaging, stronger operational integration, and a modern data management solution.	Enhanced 911 (E911)	1	One-time	Costing for this action is ongoing.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
6D	Provide wildland fire training for local fire departments with the goal of having at least one person trained in wildland fire response at each department.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	1	Ongoing	\$250,000
6E	Expand capacity to convene regional tabletop exercises on dam safety and emergency action plans in partnership with electricity utilities and municipal emergency management directors.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	Ongoing	\$175,000
6F	Establish and fund a permanent State Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) role to: foster and maintain relationships among government, voluntary, faith-based, and community partners to support the delivery of services to address unmet needs for individuals; and maintain a system for the coordination of volunteers in times of disaster.	Agency of Human Services (AHS)	1	Ongoing	\$150,000
6G	Explore the feasibility of establishing a Vermont Corps modeled after AmeriCorps that supports year-round resilience work and can be rapidly activated as a disaster response and recovery resource during climate-related emergencies.	SerVermont	2	Ongoing	\$1,500,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
6H	Provide funding to support long-term recovery and mutual aid groups in operating during and outside times of disaster as well as to develop and maintain systems for disaster response and recovery, so that community volunteers do not have to establish new disaster recovery processes for every new disaster.	Agency of Human Services (AHS)	2		
6I	Through implementation of the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) strategic plan, develop a Volunteer Deployment Playbook that includes step-by-step guidance on activation protocols, safety procedures, site management and demobilization, and communication and reporting structures to be used by municipalities and community-based organizations supporting volunteer coordination after disasters.	SerVermont	2		
6J	Establish a statewide system that includes dedicated funding across agencies and departments in base budgets for translating emergency communications, including pre-scripted messages and capacity for near-real-time translation during events.	Agency of Administration (AOA)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
6K	Educate municipalities on the process for communicating and using 511 to display transportation infrastructure closures and reopenings, and develop a simple, visual guide to incorporate into municipal Local Emergency Management Plans that explains the process.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	2		
6L	Revise the methodology for identifying state transportation resilience projects to align with shelter locations identified by municipalities in Local Emergency Management Plans.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	2		
6M	Evaluate and pilot the use of alternative platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, SMS groups, community radio) to deliver emergency alerts to populations unlikely to enroll in VT-Alert.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	2		
6N	Building on existing FEMA training, develop an anytime learning opportunity available in the Learning Management System on volunteer and donations management best practices, in partnership with SerVermont, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), and the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS).	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	2		



Opportunity 7: Equip Vermonters, especially those most at risk, to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-driven disasters by delivering tools, information, and support that are culturally relevant, linguistically inclusive, and accessible to people of all abilities, backgrounds, and income levels.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
7A	Develop and implement a standardized climate equity and justice training for Vermont's resilience and emergency management personnel. This training program will be co-developed with community leaders and organizations representing frontline communities, including BIPOC, low-income, disabled, older adult, and rural Vermonters, so that these communities benefit from improved, equitable service. The training will provide personnel with the information needed to ensure equitable outcomes, including understanding structural inequities, practicing culturally competent crisis communication, facilitating inclusive planning processes, and applying trauma-informed response techniques.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$80,000 \$10,000
7B	Expand capacity for disaster case managers at the Agency of Human Services to continuously support individuals in accessing critical resources regardless of Federal Disaster Declarations.	Agency of Human Services (AHS)	1	Ongoing	\$150,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
7C	Develop a Statewide Individual Assistance Plan that outlines how Vermont will administer FEMA Individual Assistance and support Vermonters in recovery from disaster, and that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of Long-Term Recovery Groups and other recovery partners to ensure coordinated, equitable support for disaster survivors.	Agency of Human Services (AHS)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
7D	Establish a peer-to-peer support structure under disaster case managers through avenues like office hours. Here, individuals, case managers, and Long-Term Recovery Groups that have successfully navigated disaster case management resources can provide guidance to others looking to navigate or support those resources.	Agency of Human Services (AHS)	2		
7E	Identify funding sources that can be used to augment those available through the FEMA Individual Assistance program following a Federal Disaster Declaration.	State Recovery Office	2		
7F	Identify funding sources to provide direct financial assistance to individuals and households that are impacted by disasters that do not rise to the level of receiving an Individual Assistance Declaration.	State Recovery Office	2		
7G	Designate mobile outreach teams to attend events and increase understanding of floodproofing strategies, especially in underserved communities.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		



Opportunity 8: Enhance Vermont’s ability to anticipate and respond to climate-driven hazards by modernizing and integrating statewide monitoring, modeling, mapping, and risk assessment systems that reflect future climate risks and guide targeted resilience investments.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
8A	Building on existing risk assessments and inventories, create a comprehensive inventory of vulnerable state facilities by identifying and mapping locations at risk from climate-related impacts, such as flooding, landslides, and wildland fires.	Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS); Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)	1	One-time	Costing for this action is ongoing.
8B	Update statewide landslide inventory and develop a landslide risk model using the updated inventory.	Vermont Geological Survey (VGS)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$300,000 \$150,000
8C	Develop landslide forecasting by integrating the landslide risk model with precipitation forecasting to predict landslide risk and issue alerts.	Vermont Geological Survey (VGS)	1	One-time	\$20,000
8D	Explore and identify viable, affordable products, in addition to US Geological Survey (USGS) gauges, that enable early warning and alert systems on rivers tied to flood stages.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
8E	Adopt and institutionalize a consistent global climate model framework across state government to inform long-term planning, investment, and policy decisions, ensuring that agencies are working from a shared understanding of Vermont's projected climate-related hazards and impacts.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	1	One-time	\$200,000
8F	Secure funding to complete the statewide 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP), which provides a modern and precise digital map of Vermont's surface waters. This foundational data is critical for accurately modeling flood risks and designing resilient infrastructure, such as bridges and culverts, and will advance resilience priorities across state agencies.	Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)	1	One-time	\$1,026,130
8G	Identify priority locations to receive supplemental flood risk mapping that incorporates future climate conditions, such as projected increased precipitation and storm intensity, so that planning and investments reflect projected flood vulnerabilities, not just historical ones.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	One-time	Costing for this action is ongoing.
8H	Establish a structure for shared data and project coordination on hydrologic mapping and risk modeling between the Agency of Transportation (AOT), Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI), and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)'s Functioning Floodplains Initiative.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
8I	Use the Municipal Vulnerability Indicators tool and other relevant tools and datasets to identify the drinking water and wastewater assets most vulnerable to climate-related hazards. Develop a multi-year plan to fund upgrades needed to mitigate vulnerabilities.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
8J	Conduct hydraulic studies to improve understanding of river channel dynamics in locations where recent flooding has shifted riverbeds near populated areas. These studies will support the evaluation of interventions that can reduce long-term flood damage.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	Ongoing	\$50,000–\$150,000 per study
8K	Establish a structure to track the vulnerable sites inventory during times of disaster, informing the rapid deployment and prioritization of recovery resources.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	2		
8L	Integrate asset inventories and landslide risk modeling in the Municipal Vulnerability Indicators tool, enabling agencies and municipalities to monitor risk, prioritize maintenance, and plan for resilience investments in real time.	Vermont Geological Survey (VGS)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
8M	Conduct an assessment to identify priority locations for installing new air quality monitoring stations to improve data collection in underserved areas, reduce the long-term impacts of poor air quality on human health, and support modeling for public health advisories.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		
8N	Use high spatial and temporal resolution Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) as a cost-effective remote sensing tool to monitor geophysical changes, such as land movement, soil saturation, and deformation, in areas at high risk of landslides, flooding, and other climate-related hazards.	Vermont Geological Survey (VGS)	2		
8O	Update Vermont's hydrologic modeling standards by incorporating the latest global climate models and future precipitation projections. Using these updated standards, conduct a robust, 75-year simulation of the state's hydrological cycle to inform future infrastructure design, land-use planning, and ecosystem management.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		
8P	Identify a process to integrate updated modeling into existing hydraulic flood models for future planning and mapping needs.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		



Economic and Environmental Sustainability

Opportunity 9: Support Vermont businesses, especially small and underserved businesses, in building capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-driven disasters, while also advancing economic diversification and adoption of climate-resilient business practices.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
9A	Identify long-term, sustainable funding for the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program (BEGAP) to provide both proactive resilience support, such as coaching and disaster preparedness, and post-disaster recovery grants to businesses and nonprofits.	Department of Economic Development (DED)	1	One-time	\$32,000,000* *Total allocated dollars to the program for 2023 and 2024 flooding.
9B	Launch the Climate Outdoors Workforce Initiative in partnership with the Department of Labor and the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA). This project will define climate-resilient jobs, skills, and career pathways specifically within Vermont's outdoor economy. Activities of the project include surveying businesses to identify needs, developing training curricula, and creating marketing materials to attract job seekers to these roles.	Climate Action Office (CAO); Department of Labor (DOL)	1	One-time	\$100,000
9C	Identify long-term sustainable funding for the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund to provide grants to farms and forestry operations to cover losses resulting from climate disasters.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	One-time	\$7,500,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
9D	Provide financial assistance for upgrading logging equipment for efficiency and Acceptable Management Practices (AMP) compliance and for providing loggers with equipment linked with improving water quality (e.g., portable bridges, crane mats).	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	1	Ongoing	\$500,000
9E	Conduct a business climate change needs assessment, partnering with business support organizations, to determine resource and tool needs and gaps for small businesses, focusing on those that are underserved, to prepare for and recover from climate-related hazards and withstand seasonality and extreme weather events.	Department of Economic Development (DED); Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC)	1	One-time	Costing for this action is ongoing.
9F	Leveraging the framework and findings from the Climate Outdoors Workforce Initiative, develop a comprehensive, five-year statewide resilient workforce development plan. This plan will align with the U.S. Climate Alliance's Climate Resilience Workforce Framework and relevant National Governors Association projects to expand the initial framework to other sectors and identify the full programmatic and financial resources required for statewide implementation.	Climate Action Office (CAO); Department of Labor (DOL)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
9G	Launch and fund peer-learning networks for businesses actively implementing climate adaptation measures.	Climate Action Office (CAO); Department of Economic Development (DED)	2		
9H	Based on the findings of the business climate change needs assessment, develop technical resources and tools to help businesses diversify and prepare for, as well as recover from, climate-related hazards, with a focus on small businesses owned by women, BIPOC, and minority communities.	Department of Economic Development (DED); Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC)	2		



Opportunity 10: Advance the resilience and long-term viability of Vermont’s working lands, both agriculture and forestry, by expanding equitable access, promoting sustainable practices, and strengthening support systems to ensure they remain productive, adaptive, and central to Vermont’s climate and economic resilience.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
10A	Develop and launch a statewide self-evaluation tool for farm-level climate resilience and recovery, with aggregate results used to inform state planning, funding, and technical assistance efforts.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM); Climate Action Office (CAO)	1	One-time	\$6,500,000
10B	Work with federal partners to update and revise crop insurance programs to better support Vermont farmers and explicitly cover diversified farms.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
10C	Expand the Farm and Forest Viability Program at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), offering specialized business planning and risk management assistance tailored to climate-resilient and diversified agricultural operations.	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)	1	Ongoing	Costing for this action is ongoing.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
10D	Expand the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)'s farmland acquisition fund, prioritizing historically underserved, new-entry, and small-scale farmers.	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$10,000,000 \$350,000
10E	Develop a new communications campaign for working land succession programs, such as Vermont Land Link, to directly match retiring farmers and forestland owners with a new generation of producers and land stewards.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	2		



Opportunity 11: Strengthen the resilience and security of Vermont’s food system through integrated planning, expanded access to processing infrastructure, and systems that enable equitable access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant foods, especially for underserved communities.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
11A	Allocate sustainable, long-term funding to develop regional food system infrastructure, such as hubs for aggregation, processing, and cold storage, to strengthen the resilience of Vermont's food supply and ensure equitable food access.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	One-time	\$175,800,000
11B	Building on the work of the Vermont Agriculture Recovery Task Force and its <i>Extreme Weather Impact and Recovery</i> final report, form an agricultural emergency response team trained to coordinate agricultural recovery during climate-related disasters.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	Ongoing	\$110,000–\$140,000
11C	Building on the work of the Vermont Agriculture Recovery Task Force and its <i>Extreme Weather Impact and Recovery</i> final report, grow and enhance investments in agricultural resilience and adaptation to address loss of agricultural topsoil, crop loss, and other climate-driven ecosystem threats to farms and food systems.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	Ongoing	Costing for this action is ongoing.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
11D	Establish formal agreements linking regional food hubs directly with emergency food distribution systems.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
11E	Address farmworker housing and safety in state and local emergency management planning and disaster response protocols.	Vermont Emergency Management (VEM)	2		



Infrastructure Design and Reinforcement

Opportunity 12: Develop and implement climate-resilient infrastructure systems that are designed for long-term adaptability to climate-related hazards.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
12A	Identify and work with municipalities to pre-approve safe relocation sites for housing post-disaster aligned with state planning goals.	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
12B	Enhance the Agency of Transportation (AOT)'s Hydraulic Assistance Program through the improvement of existing tools and enhanced technical assistance to municipalities to support more efficient and accurate design of climate-resilient infrastructure projects.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	One-time	\$340,000
12C	Accelerate the implementation of resilience improvements for the top five high-risk state routes in the Vermont Agency of Transportation <i>Resilience Improvement Plan</i> , which will enhance the transportation system's resilience for residents, businesses, and tourism.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	One-time	\$25,000,000
12D	Explore new funding opportunities and enhance existing sources for climate change adaptation projects related to transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, railroads, and transit systems.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	One-time	\$150,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
12E	Complete a review and evaluation of building codes from other jurisdictions (to include residential and energy codes) to determine what codes could be best suited to Vermont, including standards for new construction, best practices for existing buildings, and consideration of changing climate and hazard risk profile (e.g., building retrofits in flood hazard areas, new construction in wildland/urban interface, consideration of overheating or extreme heat).	Division of Fire Safety (DFS)	2		
12F	Build on utility efforts and outcomes of the grid resilience proceeding to help utilities develop capabilities to identify vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards, quantify risks, analyze costs and benefits of mitigation alternatives, prioritize investments, and measure the benefits of interventions.	Department of Public Service (PSD)	2		
12G	Initiate a process to ensure recreational infrastructure on state lands can withstand future climate-related events. Assess all assets against the Vermont Trail System standards once finalized (July 2026), and implement a capital plan to systematically upgrade all non-compliant infrastructure.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2		
12H	In partnership with the Vermont Bond Bank and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, develop a standardized capital planning toolkit for municipalities that includes templates, checklists, and guidance for asset inventory, condition assessment, and project phasing.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		



Opportunity 13: Align infrastructure planning and investment with climate resilience priorities to support a transparent, data-informed foundation for valuing, identifying, prioritizing, and institutionalizing investments in climate-resilient infrastructure.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
13A	Modernize and streamline state permitting processes to remove barriers and create predictable pathways for climate resilience projects. Priority should be given to initiatives that either relocate essential infrastructure out of vulnerable areas or support compact housing development in designated growth centers (e.g., Act 250 Tier 1A and 1B areas).	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); Department of Public Service (PSD)	1	Ongoing	Costing for this action is ongoing.
13B	Provide grant funding to municipal and cooperative utilities to assist in the acquisition of software and hardware systems to enable real-time system and device visibility, communication, and control in support of demand management, including during periods of capacity or energy shortfalls.	Department of Public Service (PSD)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$3,500,000 \$200,000
13C	Increase funding for building weatherization, with an emphasis on low- and middle-income households and using sources that do not increase electricity bills, to improve energy efficiency, reduce heating and cooling demands, and ease the load on utilities during extreme weather.	Department of Public Service (PSD)	1	Ongoing	\$26,500,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
13D	Develop a prioritized clearinghouse for state transportation projects to most effectively implement available funding and build climate resilience.	Agency of Transportation (AOT)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$250,000 \$50,000
13E	Establish a framework to evaluate and quantify qualitative and quantitative resilience co-benefits, such as avoided outages, cost savings, and emissions reductions, within the electricity and telecommunications sectors.	Agency of Natural Resources (ANR); Department of Public Service (PSD)	2		
13F	Explore potential funding and financing pathways, such as state programs, grant access, or pooled resources, to help municipal electric utilities and electricity co-ops fund major projects when third-party revenue is unavailable. Based on identified funding pathways, fund grid upgrades and other projects that increase stability and resilience.	Department of Public Service (PSD)	2		
13G	If recommended as an outcome of the Public Utility Commission Resilience Proceeding, update utility grid reliability targets to include climate resilience and electrification, based on benefit-cost analysis, and create a mechanism for periodic review of these targets.	Department of Public Service (PSD)	2		



Nature-Based Solutions

Opportunity 14: Accelerate the protection and restoration of natural and working lands by strengthening and scaling up conservation efforts and land acquisition programs.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14A	To accelerate the pace of high-priority land conservation, revise Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) easement and co-holder policies to reduce administrative burdens. Streamlining these requirements will increase the capacity of VHCB and its partners, leading to the faster acquisition of more lands critical for climate resilience.	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
14B	Develop rapid ecological assessment and recovery protocols for state lands in response to post-disaster events (e.g., floods, wildland fires) to support habitat restoration and minimize biodiversity loss, serving as a model for private lands.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR); Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	1	One-time Ongoing	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
14C	Formalize and scale a unified statewide technical assistance initiative targeting small landowners (generally holding less than 25 acres) to promote climate resilience, biodiversity, and forest health. Modeled after programs like Coverts, LakeWise, and StreamWise, this program would train and support local staff and volunteers, such as conservation commissioners or peer landowners, to deliver place-based guidance on stewardship practices, introduced species of ecological and management concern, and ecological forestry.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD); Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$125,000 \$115,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14D	Create a Vermont Conservation Fund, housed at the Vermont Community Foundation, funded by private donations, endowments, and charitable giving that supports the recovery of rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats.	State Treasurer's Office	1	N/A	Implemented with existing or ongoing resources.
14E	Secure additional funding to expand the implementation of Supporting Loggers to Comply with Acceptable Management Practices (SLoCAMP), intended to assist logger contractors to ensure implementation of proactive and preventative water quality protection and climate adaptation practices on harvest sites through the water quality assistance program.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	1	Ongoing	\$1,000,000
14F	Secure a dedicated pot of funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) to add wetland and floodplain restoration into farmland conservation projects.	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM); Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)	1	One-time Ongoing	\$50,000 \$4,100,000
14G	Expand Fish and Wildlife's Environmental Protection Agency Program, dedicated to wetland and floodplain restoration and acquisition in the Lake Champlain Basin, to work statewide.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	1	Ongoing	\$115,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14H	Evaluate the feasibility of a more equitable user fee system for access to state lands (i.e., conservation license), to expand resources available for land stewardship, public access, and species management on lands prioritized for their benefits to resilience and biodiversity.	Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	1	Ongoing	\$400,000
14I	Establish or expand the use of impact fees in Act 250, Section 248, and other regulatory proceedings, and the opportunity to pool those fees in a mitigation bank held by the Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD), as a means to magnify the benefit of those impact fees at scale on land conservation, biodiversity protection, and resilience. Some portion of the fees should be directed to support FWD staff directly involved in this work.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	2	Ongoing	\$60,000
14J	Establish a state tax credit for landowners who donate a permanent conservation easement to a qualified land trust or state agency. This incentive would be prioritized for lands that support climate resilience and biodiversity in statewide plans, such as Vermont Conservation Design.	Department of Taxes (TAX); Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2	One-time	\$50,000
14K	Support holistic biodiversity protection for resilient ecosystems on public and private lands at a watershed scale with secure, dedicated, sustainable funding for species most at risk via the Nongame Wildlife Fund.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	2	Ongoing	\$115,000

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14L	Increase the Fish and Wildlife Department's capacity to provide technical assistance to landowners, supporting them in the enrollment and management of ecologically significant treatment areas under the Use Value Appraisal (UVA) program to maximize biodiversity and climate resilience benefits.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD); Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2	Ongoing	\$57,500
14M	Building on the Community Wildlife Program, train technical service providers, realtors, and local leaders to better communicate available conservation resources to new landowners.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	2	Ongoing	\$115,000
14N	Establish sustainable funding for the continuation of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation's Growing Vermont's Forest Resilience: A Collaborative Strategy, which will link the management of forest products with increased forest resilience, enabling markets for forest products to become markets for resilience.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2	Ongoing	\$2,000,000
14O	Revise tactical basin plan templates to prioritize ecological climate resilience outcomes, such as those advanced by protecting biodiversity.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14P	Review and revise Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) statutes related to land acquisition to streamline processes, noting the difference between the Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD), Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).	Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	2		
14Q	Pilot a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) program with a focus on small and mid-sized landowners to expand beyond traditional agricultural conservation to include forestland owners.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2		
14R	Expand the River Corridor Easement Program by: expanding the existing Rivers Program ecosystem calculator to include biodiversity, carbon storage, and habitat quality metrics; revisiting the administrative model for holding easements to increase the program's scale and scope; and expanding funding for easement acquisition in coordination with partners like the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) to deliver greater flood resilience and habitat restoration benefits.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14S	Strengthen existing statewide coordination between entities that manage introduced species of ecological concern, including the Forest Pest Advisory Committee, the Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) and Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM), and the Vermont Invasives and Exotic Plant Advisory Committee (VIEPAC). Collaborate to establish a statewide high-risk introduced species strategy with a specific focus on biodiversity and prioritization for resilience. The strategy should clarify jurisdictional roles and prioritize regional coordination with Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs), other states, Canadian provinces, and private landowners for early detection and rapid response and for long-term management of introduced species that threaten native species or ecosystems, impacting biodiversity and habitat health.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR); Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	2		
14T	Streamline and align Vermont's participation in multi-state and regional conservation initiatives (e.g., Staying Connected Initiative, Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change Network, Lake Champlain Basin Program) to advance landscape-scale biodiversity protection and climate resilience efforts by incorporating Vermont landscape-level analysis and tools, such as Vermont Conservation Design, into multi-state and regional initiatives.	Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD)	2		

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
14U	Building on existing resources, launch a unified and joint communications strategy across state agencies and conservation organizations to present consistent, coordinated messaging that resonates with diverse audiences about climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and clean water. This messaging promotes the idea that protecting intact systems is cheaper and more resilient than restoration after a disaster.	Climate Action Office (CAO)	2		
14V	Develop metrics for access to public outdoor spaces for communities across Vermont to understand where to prioritize funding for open space and recreation-based conservation.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	2		



Opportunity 15: Integrate resilience objectives into the planning, funding, and implementation of water quality projects to deliver co-benefits such as flood safety, habitat connectivity, and climate adaptation.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
15A	Expand the Community Canopy tree giveaway program by partnering with Vermont nurseries to increase the supply of locally grown seedlings and saplings, prioritizing native and climate-resilient species.	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)	1	Ongoing	\$57,500
15B	Leverage existing funding to prioritize water quality projects that deliver climate resilience co-benefits. Acknowledging current measurement challenges, this effort will focus on creating practical, effective metrics that integrate co-benefits, such as flood resilience and biodiversity impacts, into project selection and scoring.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	Ongoing	\$710,000 (first five years) \$510,000 (per year after)
15C	Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to expand the use of the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program (WISPr). This strategy should market to Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) applicants, provide technical assistance to help applicants navigate the program, and establish a system for identifying and pairing traditional infrastructure projects with nature-based solutions.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	1	Ongoing	Costing for this action is ongoing.

Action Number	Action	Lead	Tier	Duration	Estimated Cost
15D	Revise the project selection and scoring criteria for Vermont's clean water funding programs to explicitly prioritize prevention-focused projects, such as conserving intact wetlands, floodplains, and river corridors that build climate resilience.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		
15E	Expand the use of Clean Water Project Surveys and Flood Damage Verification efforts to evaluate resilience outcomes of water quality investments.	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		
15F	Evaluate climate risks to infrastructure longevity when considering feasibility constraints on infrastructure projects that are required to occur as part of operational permits (e.g., stormwater controls in flood-prone areas).	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	2		



Montpelier Tree Board member with a downtown maple tree.

Local Trees Grow Resilient Communities

Vermont communities are grappling with big challenges that hit locally—more extreme weather, aging infrastructure, health disparities, and more. Urban and community trees are a practical, place-based response. They soak up excess water, cool our streets and buildings, capture planet-warming carbon, and improve air quality. They also offer something less quantifiable but deeply needed in hard times: comfort, connection, and a sense of place.

Trees don't just make places more beautiful—they make places better. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry (VT UCF) program is committed to helping communities unlock the benefits of trees, whether it's by training local tree stewards, supporting planting projects, or offering technical assistance to towns creating tree inventories and management plans.

The VT UCF program is almost entirely federally funded, and the future of those funds is unknown. Amid much uncertainty, the program is adapting. This means working in partnerships, leveraging relationships, seeking new funding sources, and sharing tools and resources to make urban and community forestry more accessible and impactful across the state.

As Vermont navigates a complex future, these projects offer something enduring: hope, shade, stability, and a reminder that even in uncertain times, we can grow resilient, equitable communities. Past VT UCF projects include the following.

Check Out Forestry

[Check Out Forestry](#) is a financial and technical assistance package that unites the benefits of trees with the vibrant role of public libraries. Participating libraries in 2025 were Carpenter-Carse in Hinesburg, Morristown Centennial, and Varnum Memorial in Jeffersonville.

Climate Smart Schoolyards

[Climate Smart Schoolyards](#) collaborated with Northfield Elementary School to design and implement a tree planting project that meets the needs of the school.

Community Tree Fund

The [Community Tree Fund](#), offered in partnership with Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO), supports Vermont's communities by addressing the need for more flexible funding for small-scale tree planting projects. Recent awardees include Townshend, Pittsfield, and a Vermont-based non-profit.

Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal Grants

As Emerald Ash Borer continues to cause ash die-off across the country, dead trees pose safety hazards to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. 2025 Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal Grants supported selected municipalities—Grafton, Calais, Strafford, and Royalton—to take down ash trees within the municipal right-of-way along unpaved roads.



Johnson Tree Committee member with a sycamore tree in the community's arboretum.



Island Pond, Vermont

5. Implementation Considerations and Measuring Progress

Federal Funding and Policy Shifts

Since early 2025, the new federal administration has made major changes in federal policy, a number of which have impacted federal funding being delivered to Vermont. These changes affect both Vermont's economy and state government's financial stability.

Vermont receives about 36% more federal funding per person than the average U.S. state, and federal dollars make up about 35% of state government's budget. In Fiscal Year 2025, climate-related investments in Vermont for both greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resilience projects totaled over \$524 million, and about 75% of that came from the federal government.

Cuts in federal funding create serious challenges for Vermonters. They reduce access to healthcare, create uncertainty for businesses, and shrink programs that have long supported state government's ability to respond to disasters. One example is the elimination of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which helped Vermonters complete projects that lowered risks from climate hazards.

The federal landscape is still shifting and much remains unclear. If states are required to pay a larger share of disaster recovery costs, Vermont's ability to both recover from disasters and prepare for future ones could be significantly challenged.

Because of these uncertainties, this Strategy is designed to evolve. It will adapt as new funding opportunities emerge, programs are curtailed, and as federal policy continues to change. Stable and predictable federal support is essential for Vermont to build resilience, recover from disasters, and protect communities in the long term.

Implementation

The Strategy lays out a set of priority actions that state government can move forward, based on a review of programs completed in 2024. As federal- and state-level funding and policy decisions change, these recommendations may also shift. This Strategy sets clear but flexible actions, maintaining our ability to adjust as new priorities emerge.

The recommendations seek to enhance and expand Vermont's climate resilience work across state government, as funding allows. Much of the work will also depend on partners across Vermont who have close ties to their communities. The recommendations were not fully vetted with these partners before the Strategy was finalized, so the first phase of implementation will include reviewing the priority actions with them. This will ensure that the intended outcomes align with on-the-ground experiences. Strong collaboration, both within state government and with outside partners, will be key to making sure actions deliver the greatest resilience benefits.

Many of the actions identified will require additional funding. The Agency of Natural Resources' Climate Action Office (CAO) will work across state government to support the implementation of the priority actions identified in this Strategy. The success of the Strategy depends on partnership, flexibility, and sustained investment to turn priorities into real results for Vermont communities.



Firefighters respond to the 2025 Scotch Hill Road Fire in Fair Haven, Vermont.

Changing Patterns in Wildland Fire Risk

While Vermont is not typically associated with wildland fire risk, higher summer temperatures and drought have increased fire risk in the summer and fall in recent years. In the fall of 2024, drought paired with some of the warmest temperatures on record resulted in more acres burned that year than the past 25 years on average. In 2025 Vermont experienced a record drought, resulting in 164 days with “Moderate” or greater fire danger. The number of fires and acres burned during the summer of 2025 was above average compared to previous years.

Vermonters can [sign up for daily Fire Danger Forecasts](#).

Engaging Vermonters in Next Steps

As the Resilience Implementation Strategy moves into action, partnership with regional, local, public, and private entities will be key to success. Direct engagement will inform implementation and next steps. To introduce Vermonters to the completed Strategy, the Climate Action Office attended [community events around the state](#) and hosted two virtual launch events.

Looking Ahead: Headlines from 2075

One engagement activity asked participants to imagine the year 2075...

The scenario: Vermont has just faced a major climate-related event. Thanks to the choices we made today, the state was prepared. What headline would you hope to see in the newspaper the next day?

This exercise revealed how much people value climate resilience in our communities, infrastructure, farms, forests, and livelihoods. The imagined headlines highlight themes of safety, strong local systems, equity, and connection.

THE VERMONT RESILIENCE TIMES

“Vermont Communities Enriched by Global Climate Refugees.
Their Ideas for Land Stewardship Were Implemented.”

“Local Resilience and Watershed Efforts Have Paid Off.
The Flood Came, and No Meaningful Damage to Human Resources Took Place.”

“As the Nation’s Supply Chains Buckle, Vermonters Show
How Resilience Comes From Strong Local Systems.”

“Floodplain Resilience Saves the Community!”

“Despite Disaster, Vermont Schools and Farms Continue Collaborating to
Support Communities—a Model For Rural Places Nationwide!”

“Urban Tree Canopies Kept Vermont Cool While the Country Cooked.”

“Wow! That is Some Clean Water!”

“Roads Fixed in Record Time.
Greenhouses Held Up to Provide Food for All Vermonters. Grid is Stable.”

Pulse Check: What Vermonters Value

If you were able to choose how the State of Vermont invests its limited resources in climate resilience, what would you do?

Those who stepped up to answer this challenging question received four tokens to allocate across the six core components (see pages 22–23). In-person events showed the strongest emphasis on *nature-based solutions* and *economic and environmental sustainability*, while participants at virtual events prioritized *infrastructure design and reinforcement* and *early warning systems and fast, effective response*. Altogether, approximately 300 Vermonters took part in this exercise. This snapshot provides some insight into public values while engaging Vermonters to think critically about our state’s priorities during a time of limited funding.

Thoughtful engagement with Vermont communities—especially those hit hardest by climate-related hazards—will help inform implementation of specific actions. Since the Strategy is a living, breathing document that will be regularly updated, conversations like these allow state government to be in tune with and responsive to the needs of Vermont communities.



Shrewsbury, Vermont

Measuring Outcomes

The Climate Action Office is currently developing a tool for monitoring and evaluating progress on key strategies and activities intended to drive emissions reductions and improve resilience in line with the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) requirements. Specifically, the GWSA requires that state government track key components of its climate action, including:

- Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions and progress towards reducing emissions
- the effectiveness of the initiatives, programs, and strategies set forth in the Climate Action Plan
- the effects of climate change on Vermont's climate, wildlife, and natural resources
- progress towards improving the existing resilience of Vermont's communities, infrastructure, and economy to current and anticipated effects of climate change

The four primary goals for the tool are the following:

1. **Policy decision support:** Support state government and its partners in making climate policy decisions with the best available information.
2. **Sustainable data management:** Create a data governance plan, flexibly accommodate future data needs, and coordinate relevant data and reporting across multiple private and public entities.
3. **Open and accessible data:** Provide access to key data sources to organizations and members of the public engaged in climate action that wish to utilize Vermont's data to support their work.
4. **Public education:** Inform the public about progress on achieving GWSA commitments, including GHG emissions, emissions reductions, sequestration, adaptation, resilience, and equity.

This work will occur largely between now and 2026. Metrics developed to track resilience will support our overall understanding of how the implementation of actions in this Strategy is helping us achieve the Vision and intended outcomes.

Future Updates

Building from the list of key actions identified in this Strategy, the Climate Superfund Act (Act 122, 2024) directs the development of criteria and procedures for “prioritizing climate change adaptation projects eligible to receive monies from the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program.” Following the release of this Strategy, the CAO will be collaborating with partners to establish metrics and criteria for the prioritization of specific climate change adaptation projects. This work is expected to begin early in 2026.

The Agency of Natural Resources and the Treasurer’s Office will revisit the top priorities outlined in this Strategy no less than once every two years, ensuring they remain responsive to emerging priorities, new funding opportunities, and evolving science. An updated version of the Strategy will be released by October 1, 2029, to assess progress made and identify the next set of actions that should be prioritized for maximum impact in improving Vermont’s resilience. This process will be undertaken in collaboration with state agencies, municipalities, and other partners as needed, recognizing that building resilience requires shared commitment and coordination across Vermont. Through regular updates, the Strategy will continue to provide a clear and adaptive framework for guiding Vermont’s investments in resilience.

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