

Letter from the Council

The destabilization of the climate, primarily driven by the burning of fossil fuels, is causing increasing costs and harms to Vermonters and people around the world. Vermont is experiencing this disruption in many ways, especially from the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather. In this context, we recognize a responsibility to work together, both to respond to the effects that climate disruption is having on Vermont and do our part to reduce the pollution that is at the source of the problem.

This revised Climate Action Plan (CAP), a requirement of Vermont's Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), provides important recommendations for how Vermont can adapt our communities and built environment to a warming planet; work to protect natural and working lands from the damage created by climate change; support and enhance the resilience of Vermont's landscape and communities amidst a changing climate; and do our part to reduce climate pollution toward meeting our legal commitments. Our recommendations were selected in consideration of multiple criteria, including cost-effectiveness, equity, and feasibility.

We recognize a particular urgency to this work because of the degree to which climate disruption is already harming Vermonters. Of the 62 federally declared disasters since 1953, 31 were made between 2011 and 2024 alone, with 2011, 2023 and 2024 having particularly high numbers of declarations. Lamoille and Washington counties accounted for the some of the highest numbers of disaster declarations in the 2011-2024 period.¹

We also recognize that this work will not get easier in the years ahead. Important federal programs and resources that Vermont relied on after the passage of our initial Climate Action Plan in 2021, both for disaster response and for pollution reduction, are now ending or, at best, facing an uncertain future as we look ahead to the 2025-2029 period that this plan is designed

¹ <https://www.fema.gov/data-visualization/disaster-declarations-states-and-counties>

to cover. This will put additional pressure on state-specific action and necessitate a continuation and deepening of multi-state and regional collaboration.

Many carefully researched reports provide underlying data and analysis that underpin our work and help point the way forward. Additionally, the Council benefitted from robust public participation in the development of this plan. In particular, we sought feedback on early drafts of our recommendations via 12 input sessions (three virtual, nine in-person) across Vermont, attended by over 400 people.² We also appreciated and incorporated information provided via more than 125 submitted written comments.

We are grateful for the dozens of devoted subcommittee members; the many committed participants, from members of the public to technical consultants, who attended our meetings and events; and the thousands of Vermonters who were able to engage with us in this process. Many of you spent countless hours helping us develop Vermont's initial Climate Action Plan – thank you.

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<https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/CAPSpringInputSessionsSummaries.pdf>