Priority Recommendations

Top 10 Priority Recommendations (*Note: Recommendations are not listed in priority order.)*

Make Vermont more resilient

- Expand and maintain a permanent Flood Resilience Communities Fund – see Rural Resilience & Adaptation #3
- Invest in municipal infrastructure to support compact development – see Rural Resilience & Adaptation #10

Support climate-informed land use

- Increase funding and adapt existing Vermont programs that achieve climate goals on farms and in forests – see Agriculture & Ecosystems #1
- Promote equitable landscape connectivity and conservation for 30x30 and 50x50 goals – see Agriculture & Ecosystems #13

Reduce climate pollution

- Weatherize homes, focusing on low- and moderate-income households – see Emissions Reductions # 7
- Take preparatory steps now and join a cap-and-invest program as soon as a viable option is available – see Emissions Reductions #1
- Support utility programs that ensure the electric grid supports customer electrification and resilience –see Emissions Reductions #4 and Emissions Reductions #6.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and buildings through electrification – see Emissions Reductions #2 and Emissions Reductions #9.

Identify funding and also support the needed workforce

- Identify revenue sources to immediately support these priority actions – See Cross-Cutting Issues #7

- Implement the Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative and related actions – See Cross-Cutting Issues #4

A longer description of these actions is included in the list of top 52 actions below.

1) **Take the following steps to join a cap-and-invest program**:
    - Develop a framework for the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions data from fuel suppliers and other significant emitters of climate pollution. ANR will work expeditiously to put a reporting framework in place and recommend to the Legislature by December 15, 2025, statutory changes and funding needed to support streamlined reporting requirements and a stepped implementation plan.
    - Determine the most appropriate and feasible mechanism(s) for addressing affordability concerns related to the implementation of a cap-and-invest program.
        - Ensure that a significant portion of cap-and-invest revenues are used to provide direct payments or rebates in as close to real time as possible to Vermonters with low- and middle-incomes, to prevent cost of living increases for those households from the program. Another significant portion of revenues should be used to provide direct incentives to support low- and middle-income households in reducing pollution and saving money via increased energy efficiency and adoption of no or low-carbon technologies.
        - ANR, in collaboration with the Public Service Department, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and the Vermont Climate Council, will advance a study that will make specific technical recommendations around achieving affordability, including potential limits on allowance prices (i.e. a price ceiling).
    - Monitor cap-and-invest programs and continue to track updated economic analysis to understand the costs and benefits on implementing the program in Vermont, and join the best available program, such as the Western Climate Initiative or the New York Cap and Invest, based on the above analysis.

The Council views a cap-and-invest program as an overarching policy to provide predictable and substantial emissions reductions in Vermont over time. However, alongside such a program, additional policies will be needed to achieve targeted reductions, deliver benefits to lower-income Vermonters, and to achieve the scale of emissions reductions required by the GWSA. In the thermal sector, this plan recommends important investments in weatherization and lower

emission heating systems, which can provide near-term emissions reductions. The Council also acknowledges the need to explore and implement other complementary policies to accelerate the transition to non-fossil heating fuels. Options include a thermal energy benefit charge and thermal sector performance standards, such as a modified clean heat standard, equipment standards, and fuel standards.

2) **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles by:**

i. Continuing to monitor and maintain Vermont's adoption of the California Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) and Advanced Clean Trucks, including adopting rule amendments adopted by CARB that provide increased compliance flexibility.

ii. Urge the Vermont Attorney General to join and participate in any litigation defending California and the Section 177 states' authority under the Clean Air Act.

iii. Supporting vehicle electrification ensuring long-term, consistent funding for EV incentives to low- and moderate-income car purchasers which aligns with estimates provided for the VT Agency of Transportation's February 2024 Clean Transportation Incentive Programs Report; as well as guidance from the February 2025 Legislative Report on Vermont Clean Transportation Incentive Programs.

iv. Supporting vehicle electrification investment for the equitable deployment of fast charging and Level 2 charging options to levels needed to meet the modeling done in the Pathways 2.0 Report and as estimated in the Agency of Transportation's January 2025 Statewide Level 3 Report, Map, and Funding.

3) **Invest in public, active, shared, and multimodal transportation, such as transit, micro transit, biking and walking.**

- Use VTrans' July 2024 Vermont Smart Growth, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and GHG Research Project Report and the November 2023 VT Agency of Transportation Carbon Reduction Strategy and associated GHG Sketch Tool to guide investments, to reduce the need for single occupancy vehicles, also known as reducing vehicle miles traveled, which has important co-benefits such as cost savings to individuals and families, access to jobs, and health and environmental benefits.

- Leverage the Downtown Transportation Fund in a manner that most effectively accelerates this policy.

4) **Support cost-effective load management, grid hardening, and optimization, e.g., through advanced metering, storage, targeted siting of generation, rate design, and distributed energy resource management systems statewide to enable customer programs and avoid or delay more expensive physical upgrades.**
    - Continued Public Utility Commission (PUC) oversight of utility load management programs, investments, and rate designs, and consideration of regulatory approval improvements for efficient generation and infrastructure siting**.**

5) **Review and implement as appropriate recommendations from Act 179 study regarding evolution of community-level renewable energy programs, especially for low-income customers.**
    - With community and customer input, utilities continue, or consider, creating procurement and customer enrollment programs to support community-based renewable energy projects. Primary considerations for any such program should be cost-containment actions, funding avenues that are not electric customer supported, and how approval for community-based project siting occurs.

6) **Support existing programs and expand as needed to ensure the electric grid supports customer electrification necessary to meet Global Warming Solutions Act goals, including service drops, transformers, smart panels, EV chargers, storage, etc.** Highlight importance of cost-effectiveness and equity in design, implementation, and affordable funding.
    - Continued Public Utility Commission oversight of utility programs (e.g. Tier III); consider expanding credit in Tier II for these purposes; seek state or federal sourced funding where possible; strive for deployment across utility territories with ability to participate for all customers, including rural/low-income.

7) **Sustain and expand funding for comprehensive weatherization focused on low- and moderate-income households.**

Through legislation or administrative action, ensure that the current scope of weatherization being conducted is sustained, while aggressively working to ensure that 79,000 additional homes are comprehensively weatherized as soon as practicable, with a priority on low- and moderate-income households.

- The weatherization work should recognize energy efficiency broadly. It should include traditional energy efficiency measures, electrical, health, and safety measures needed to comply with codes, and needed infrastructure upgrades such as wiring and service panels to enable electric vehicle charging, the adoption of heat pumps for space and water heating, and other strategic electrification opportunities.
- Current programs (funding and workforce) are able to weatherize approximately 4,000 homes per year at an average cost of $11,000 per unit. Much of the recent funding has come from federal sources, which are unlikely to be renewed.
- It is essential, however, that Vermont take steps to maintain and accelerate its current pace of weatherization in order to complete the additional 79,000 units as soon as practicable.

8) **Through legislation or administrative action, ensure additional commercial, industrial, municipal, and non-residential buildings, as modeled to be necessary, are comprehensively weatherized by 2030, and secure the funding needed to achieve the target.**
    - Including “weatherization ready" project needs
    - With priority for supporting/expanding existing programs (i.e. the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, Municipal Technical Assistance Program, Building Communities, etc.).

9) **Secure funding for electrification of space & water heating for low-and moderate-income households.**
    - Develop programs for implementation regarding 200-amp service and related building upgrades, coordinated with weatherization, efficiency, and equipment incentive programs (EV chargers, heat pumps, storage, etc.), and ensure that any potentially related statewide program (such as Clean Heat Standard, if adopted, or enhanced weatherization efforts)

includes building electrical upgrades in their design and funding models in order to enable decarbonization.

10) **Conduct a study that considers the technological options and market feasibility for emissions-based equipment standards for various types of heating.** The purpose is to better understand the feasibility and considerations of Vermont adopting thermal equipment emissions standard(s), either for oxides of nitrogen or, more broadly for Greenhouse Gases.
    - The legislature needs to fund the study
    - The Agency of Natural Resources needs to file a report with the Vermont Climate Council by June 30, 2027
    - The study shall consider:
        - adoption by other states,
        - the means by which equipment standards can influence market activity,
        - the most equitable approaches, and
        - how to secure the greatest emissions reductions

    Study is contingent on securing funding.

11) **Analyze options for a performance-based Clean Fuels Standard that implements a declining carbon intensity (CI) score eligibility requirement for residential, commercial, and industrial (RCI) fuels and can be implemented gradually alongside other complementary policies that would be necessary**. As a potential alternative, analyze instituting a minimum percentage clean fuel blending requirement for all residential, commercial, and industrial liquid and gaseous fuels, utilizing an approved list of eligible clean fuels.

12) **Utilities and their regulators should adopt standards and programs to support geothermal networks, such as community-scale geothermal.**

1) **Amend the Vermont State Board of Education's Education Quality Standards to incorporate environmental and climate change education at all grade levels.**

2) **Compile an open source, accessible, and interdisciplinary climate change curriculum for Vermont educators that builds off existing resources and programs to enable teaching across subject areas.**

3) **Maintain funding for programs to educate Vermonters about their energy choices and funding options to increase energy efficiency in residential homes, including the energy Coaches and Navigator Program.**

4) **Implement the Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative to grow career pathways in climate change and clean energy fields, support new and existing workers, retain recent graduates, ensure job quality and safety, strengthen workforce diversity, and train workers in service of the collective U.S. Climate Alliance goal of 1 million new registered apprentices across 24 states by 2035.**
    - Increase the number of registered apprenticeships that can be supported in the state by Vermont State University, the Department of Labor, and other registered apprenticeship programs, especially in plumbing/HVAC, electrical, and weatherization.
    - Support training from middle school through adult education and Service-Learning programs for a wide variety of audiences, including through the weatherization training center and the many existing training programs
    - Target outreach, training, support, and Service-Learning systems for existing Vermont residents to enter and stay in careers that support on climate action, including farm and forestry, conservation, clean energy, weatherization, outdoor recreation, and resilience and adaptation careers.
    - Invest in instructors and physical infrastructure to increase the number of students who can be supported in the Career and Tech Ed system in the state including electrician, plumbing, building trades programs, as well as agriculture, forestry and other sectors mentioned above.

5) **Support programs for people to start and build their own businesses in the trades, including those offered by business development and climate change career programs.**

6) **Monitor the impacts of decarbonization on the workforce and create programs to support impacted workers by tracking leading indicators.**

Funding and Financing

7) **Interim Funding for Priority Climate Actions**: Until new and significant sources of revenue are in place to fully implement the recommended priority actions in this Climate Action Plan, the State should identify, authorize, and appropriate revenue from existing or new sources that will immediately support the creation or expansion of certain priority actions. This funding should be used to (a) establish or grow programs proven in Vermont, or demonstrated in other jurisdictions, to be cost-effective strategies for achieving climate benefits, while optimizing other public policy co-benefits, and (b) increase investment in building state agency capacity to design and implement the priority action recommendations. The source of revenue should (a) be a bridge to having adequate revenue from other programs such as a cap-and-invest system, (b) be structured to mitigate impacts on Vermonters facing financial hardships, and (c) not burden those economic sectors and programs that are essential to a transition to a low-carbon and climate-adapted landscape and economy.

8) **Support the implementation of the Climate Superfund (Act 122),** including by funding the work at the Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Treasurer's Office and any other work deemed necessary to support its implementation, helping to provide essential revenue to invest in resilience and adaptation measures.

9) **Building off recent Climate Infrastructure Financing efforts, the Vermont State Treasurer, in consultation with the Climate Action Office and Climate Council, should explore opportunities to further leverage public and private capital to make needed clean energy, resilience and adaptation investments.** This effort should focus on reducing hurdles facing Vermonters in accessing and affording cleaner and more energy efficient technologies, weatherization, and

necessary infrastructure and resilience investments. It should seek to build off existing structures and institutions to leverage programs, partners and capital (e.g. credit unions and banks), as well as explore other potentially useful strategies (such as on-bill utility financing, bonding and insurance markets)

1) **Increase State capacity to manage funding programs and provide technical assistance for the development and implementation of climate resilience plans, with a focus on maximizing the efficacy of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, and augmenting existing programs with the Municipal Planning and Resilience Grant Program, the Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide, and the Municipal Climate Toolkit.**

2) **Establish permanent, dedicated funding for Regional Planning Commissions to hire and retain staff for climate resilience and natural resources planning work, hazard mitigation application development, and management of hazard mitigation grants on behalf of municipalities or other eligible grant recipients as well as cover overhead costs related to completing Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.**

3) **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 local match for federally funded hazard mitigation programs as well as non-FEMA eligible hazard mitigation activities.

4) **Expand the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program (BEGAP) to provide financial support and one-on-one coaching to businesses and nonprofits before a disaster in addition to providing funding to businesses who are impacted by climate disasters and disruptions. Link and coordinate efforts with organizations and networks providing similar support to businesses.**

5) **Integrating regional housing targets and ongoing mapping, including Flood Insurance Rate Map updates, River Corridors, and landslide hazards, identify areas that are suitable for new, climate safe housing, and increase funding mechanisms where communities are investing in development-ready infrastructure.**

6) **The State, through the Public Utility Commission and Public Service Department, should complete the PUC resilience planning investigation underway, which is analyzing whether and how to define, value, measure, and set targets for grid resilience. Utilities should continue to integrate resilience planning into their operations.**

7) **Expand upon the Municipal Vulnerability Indicators tool to create a Municipal Vulnerability Index that can be used by state agencies and others as a resource to assist in prioritizing infrastructure resilience investments across the state based on specific vulnerabilities or combinations of vulnerabilities.** Ensure it includes currently missing data such as historic utility outage data, to the extent available, and the Agency of Natural Resource's Environmental Justice mapping tool, when complete.

8) **Develop a framework that creates a plan to identify prioritized state investments in resilience projects. The framework should be attentive to fiscal constraints, similar to the State Transportation Improvement Program, and build upon the Resilience Implementation Strategy, the State Hazard Mitigation Planning, and Hazard Mitigation Project Review processes.** The purpose of this action is to have a standing list of projects, vetted through an interagency prioritization and public engagement process, that could be implemented as funding is available.

9) **Create a transportation flood resilience funding program to design and construct transportation projects identified as high priority locations via use of the most relevant risk and vulnerability assessment tools.**

10) **Replace or harden electric and communication infrastructure with the most appropriate resilient alternative when cost effective.** For example, for aging or unreliable lines, utilities should continue to evaluate improving resilience by relocating lines underground or through other options, where demonstrated to be feasible and cost effective to electric customers.
    - Planning frameworks, valuation tools, and metrics resulting from the Resilience Investigation (Case No. 25-0339-PET) being conducted by the Public Utility Commission should be used to inform this evaluation.

11) **Increase investment in municipalities to harden, improve, expand and build new drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and other infrastructure to support compact development, especially growing away from climate hazards such as flooding, and ensure the assets' long-term operation and maintenance.**

12) **Continue to implement Act 181[1], an act relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection through land use, by increasing investment in walkable and livable communities while also reducing sprawl, protecting critical natural resources, addressing flood adaptation and resilience of historic villages and downtowns, and planning new development away from flood, fluvial erosion, and landslide hazards.**

13) **Provide increased capacity to strengthen messaging and awareness of local and state emergency preparedness, response, and recovery structures.**

14) **Provide funding and technical assistance to municipalities and local partner organizations to support adaptation and preparedness planning in communities, with specific focus on disproportionately affected and vulnerable populations**; including the identification, adaptation, and equipping of facilities to serve as community resilience hubs that serve as places for learning, collaboration, resource access, and refuge in response to climate-related hazards and other community needs.

15) **Provide funding for equipment, supplies, and services that improve resilience and reduce the health impact of climate-related hazards for income-qualifying households needing extra assistance.** The intent is to provide financial support for resilience needs in a similar way to existing financial support for energy efficiency (e.g., through heat pump and EV rebates). Resilience equipment and strategies should address health risks related to flooding, power outages, extreme temperatures, hazardous air quality, humidity, vector-borne diseases, and other climate-related hazards, and could include:

[1] https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.687

- **Supplies and equipment to improve heat resilience,** such as trees and other vegetative shade, window treatments (shade and thermal barriers), efficient air conditioning (heat pumps) fans, and dehumidifiers;
- **Equipment to improve indoor air quality**, such as air purifiers, mechanical ventilation (e.g. ERVs);
- **Backup power equipment**;
- **Window screens**;
- **Services** such as water intrusion and moisture mitigation & management, private drinking water testing and treatment, etc.

16) **Provide state-contracted community mental health services partners more capacity to address anxiety, depression, distress, and trauma caused by climate change and climate-related disasters.**

1) **Increase funding, enhance, and adapt existing State of Vermont programs that support greenhouse gas emissions reductions, soil carbon sequestration, and/or climate adaptation and resiliency on working lands, including through manure management.** Coordinate with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programming to defend and accelerate the implementation of federally funded climate mitigation and resilience practices in Vermont.
    - Enhance and adapt programs to better incorporate nature-based solutions as well as Traditional, Ecological and Indigenous Knowledge.
    - Example State programs include, but are not limited to: Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets (AAFM): Agriculture-Clean Water Initiative Performance (Ag-CWIP), Best Management Practice (BMP), Forestry Acceptable Management Practices (AMP), Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Farm Agronomic Practice (FAP), Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS), Pasture and Surface Water Fencing (PSWF), Vermont Pay for Phosphorus (VPFP), The Vermont Farmer Ecosystem Stewardship Program (VFESP); land acquisition, river corridor easements, wetland conservation, County Forester Program, and the recommendations in the ANR report, "Maintaining and Creating Resilient Forests (2015)."

2) **Utilize best practices to quantify carbon sequestration and emission reductions from agriculture and forestry.**

3) **Fund and implement Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) programs for lands to encourage landowners and land and water caretakers[2] to implement practices that improve soil health, crop and forest resilience, increase carbon storage, increase stormwater storage capacity, and reduce runoff.** Fund existing agricultural PES programs and expand to include or develop new programs for forestry. Note: Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) programs recognize and reward land and water caretakers for practices that enhance ecological function and community well-being,

[2] The Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee used the word "caretakers" to refer to any individual who makes decisions around the land and water. This could include land and water managers and stewards, as well as land owners.

rooted in both traditional stewardship values and modern land management. These programs do not include carbon markets or trading.

4) **Leverage the power of peer learning to advance climate resilience by funding a Request RFP that provides funds to support Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Districts, farmer organizations, and non-profit organizations with the specific objective of allowing them to reach other farmers and foresters and do peer-to-peer education about improved soil and manure management strategies that enhance climate resilience.**

5) **Create a dedicated climate impact emergency recovery fund for farms and forestry operations or related infrastructure (or ensure the agriculture and forestry sectors are given specific considerations in existing recovery funds), support leverage of federal funds and expansion of programs to support the adaptive capacity and restoration of farms and forests, and promote insurance for farm and forest landowners and businesses, to ensure that they can equitably and viably recover from climate induced disasters.**
    - The fund should be simple to access, deploy sufficient funds quickly following a disaster, be flexible, equitable, and proportional to meet the diverse needs of the farming and forestry community, and be sustained over time with predictable and consistent funding.

6) **Dedicate robust funding for farm and forest supply chain resilience and state food security, including significant investment in storage, processing, and distribution infrastructure.** Prioritize investments in farm, food, and forestry businesses, cooperatives, non-profits, tribes, and community projects that have climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation goals.
    - Funding should include a substantial increase in base funding for the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI), the Agriculture Development Grant program, as well as the Crop Cash Plus and Farm Share, dedicated appropriations for distribution and food hub operations and infrastructure, and appropriations for research, development, and support for siting and permitting process improvements that recognize the vital conservation benefits of market expansion opportunities for local wood products processing and manufacturing in Vermont.

7) **Improve funding opportunities and create equitable access for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farm, food, and forest organizations and businesses by developing multi-year unrestricted BIPOC-centered grants and loan programs.** This includes uplifting and resourcing the work of the Vermont Abenaki and other Indigenous Peoples in the State, Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB), and other BIPOC peoples and organizations in Vermont.

8) **Promote and incentivize the use of agricultural and sustainably harvested wood-based construction materials (subject to existing certification criteria or procurement standards to be developed) over less climate-friendly options, such as imported wood from locations lacking required sustainable harvest requirements and/or non-wood materials with high carbon footprints (such as steel, concrete, etc.).**
    - This could include using state procurement standards to require that publicly funded building projects, or those subsidized through low-interest loans or tax benefits, use chain-of-custody certified wood products (mass timber, cellulose insulation, advanced wood heating, etc.) and prioritize building materials—such as sustainably harvested wood—that align with climate goals and ecological values, while reducing reliance on high-carbon, non-renewable materials like steel and concrete.
    - Continue to research and develop the life-cycle accounting of these products for the greatest impact.

9) **State agencies should utilize financial incentives, siting policies, and regulations to incentivize, support, and preferentially site renewable energy capacity on buildings, parking lots (by installing solar roofs), in compact settlement areas, including renewable energy and charging facilities at rental housing, as well as in previously disturbed / developed areas, where feasible.** Avoid conversion of ecologically sensitive areas, forests, and prime agricultural soils.

10) **State agencies should promote nature-based climate solutions (NbS), Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) by considering how to gauge their**

effectiveness[3] and incorporate them into assessments, planning efforts, prioritization frameworks, and funding programs to address climate change impacts.

11) **State land management agencies should continue to adapt their management of lands using nature-based climate solutions (NbS) to address climate impacts, increase ecosystem resilience, enhance biological diversity, and improve water quality.** State land management agencies should also enhance technical assistance and resilience funds to support the financial capacity of other land and water caretakers to achieve these goals.

12) **State agencies and the legislature should identify gaps and opportunities to expand and improve current programs that promote healthy, connected river corridors, floodplains, and wetlands, prioritize restoration and conservation, and incentivize water storage in headwaters and natural areas to promote flood resilience and biodiversity through expansion of wetland, floodplain, riparian forest and river corridor easements that better compensate land and water caretakers for restoring, managing and conserving these natural water storage areas** (including opportunities presented by Act 121[4], an act relating to the regulation of wetlands, river corridor development, and dam safety.)

13) **State agencies should work with partners, and the legislature should fund the state agencies as necessary, to promote strategic and equitable statewide landscape connectivity and the conservation of priority forest blocks, farmland, and other actively and passively managed lands through planning and implementation toward 30x30 goals, and 50x50 goals in alignment with Act 59 of 2023.** This work should use the best available data and mapping, including Vermont Conservation Design, while braiding in Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous Knowledge (IK).

- Conservation planning and implementation should meet the targets set forth in Vermont Conservation Design. These goals include managing forests to achieve a target of 3-5% young forest and allow at least 9% of Vermont's forest to become (or be maintained as)

[3] The Council received a specific recommendation on how to gauge the effectiveness of nature-based solutions in the following comment from the Transnational Environmental Law Clinic.
[4] https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/ACTS/ACT121/ACT121%20As%20Enacted.pdf

old forest, specifically targeting 15% of the matrix forest within the highest priority forest blocks—including National Forests—to achieve the old growth condition and ensure the protection of sacred sites or other historically or culturally important areas as determined by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

- At the same time, protecting farmland and managed forestlands from development through land conservation and protection programs is essential to ensure these land uses continue to provide climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience benefits. Existing State land use protection programs—such as the Vermont Farmland Conservation Program and forest conservation easements—should be enhanced to improve farmland access and the protection of agricultural soils and working forests.

14) **Enhance education, outreach, research, and technical assistance programming to encourage farmers, foresters, and other land and water caretakers to adopt strategies that increase climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.** State agencies should work with and support efforts to fund partners and higher education, such as University of Vermont (UVM) Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDs).

- These efforts should be incorporated into current programs, braiding Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous Knowledge (IK), recognizing the value these bring to better understanding and taking care of the land. Initiatives should be designed to represent diverse perspectives while addressing a diversity of audiences and age groups. Simplify and assist with application processes for funding and support programs.

15) **Fund and undertake as soon as possible the study previously requested by the Vermont Climate Council on the use of woody biomass for utility-scale electric energy facilities[5].** In addition, use the guidance previously provided by the Council to the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) regarding biomass.

- The Council's biomass addendum is here: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/Biomass%

[5] This study is not aimed at smaller-scale biomass such as advanced wood heat and agricultural waste methane generation.

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