Michele Boomhower
Division Director, Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development, Vermont Agency of Transportation

Councilors and staff to the Council have worked incredibly hard, both on the plan update, as well as the numerous related plans and analyses which are the underpinning of this work. The Agency of Transportation will continue to work towards advancement of the objectives of the Plan in the constraints before us in the transportation sector at the federal, state, and market levels.

I have grave reservations that the advancement of transportation emissions reductions is being significantly undermined by federal policies, funding, and tax credit elimination, as well as the scarcity of state funding to continue incentive programs and advancement of EV charging infrastructure.

Each of these are tied together in driving market forces which impact the availability of electric vehicles, the stability/continuation of charging network buildout and charging providers' business model, and the uptake of vehicles due to availability, affordability, and operational uncertainty.

Funding alone will not move us back to the progressive trajectory have been on, it will take both funding **and** policy mechanisms in alignment at the federal **and** state level to make significant progress in the transportation sector.

Balancing Climate Action with Economic and Environmental Realities

Why I Voted No on the Climate Action Plan

By Matt Cota, Vermont Climate Councilor

Appointed by Speaker Jill Krowinski (D-Burlington) in September 2024

I do not support the 2025 Climate Action Plan as drafted by the Vermont Climate Council.

Vermont's geography and climate make reliable energy and transportation a necessity, not a luxury. Policies that raise costs without providing affordable, practical alternatives risk doing more harm than good. They deepen inequity and erode public trust in the climate transition. The Climate Council should avoid punitive measures that target existing fuel users and instead prioritize workforce training and infrastructure investments that deliver long-term, affordable, and sustainable benefits. These are the foundations of a resilient economy and an effective energy transition.

While the Plan's emphasis on workforce development and technical training is essential, many of its other priorities would impose significant and regressive costs on Vermonters. Programs like the Clean Heat Standard and Cap-and-Invest are presented as climate solutions, but in practice, they function as energy taxes—raising the cost of essential fuels such as propane, kerosene, heating oil, diesel, and gasoline. These cost increases fall hardest on rural and working-class households that lack affordable or viable alternatives. The Plan's simultaneous push to electrify both the heating and transportation sectors compounds these challenges. Many homes and businesses simply do not have the electrical infrastructure needed to support heat pumps or EV chargers. One in four Vermont homes was built before 1940, and many still rely on knob-and-tube wiring, which is unsafe for modern electric loads. Replacing this wiring typically costs between $13,000 and $15,000 per home.[1] Even newer homes with underpowered electrical service often require $2,000 or more in panel upgrades before any electrification can occur.

EV Issues

These infrastructure, workforce, and cost challenges are substantial. But even more concerning is the disconnect between the Climate Council's policy mandates and the choices Vermonters are making. The most popular car in Vermont is not a car, but a truck or SUV. It most likely runs on gas ***and isn't new.*** According to the Vermont Vehicle Index, 63% of vehicle purchases in 2024 were used, and 97% of all registered vehicles still rely on internal combustion engines.[2] Despite steady growth in ***new*** electric vehicle sales—8% BEVs and 4% PHEVs in 2024—the hurdles to greater EV adoption aren't just the upfront cost of a new car.

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[1] Center for Energy and Environment, "Dealing With Knob-And-Tube Wiring," March 17, 2023

2 Vermont Vehicle Index found at MeadowHillMedia.com/vehicleindex

One of Vermont's top EV dealers, Mark Alderman of Alderman Chevrolet in Rutland, describes how the lack of in-home Level 2 charging is the most significant barrier. He noted that customers who purchase EVs without home charging often become "anti-EV evangelists" after poor experiences.[3] We are now seeing, for the first time, a decline in consumer interest in electric vehicles. Only 22% of Vermonters in the VEC service territory report they are likely to purchase an EV, down from 34% two years ago.[4]

Thermal Barriers

The Climate Action Plan lacks meaningful input from the Vermonters who sell, install, and service electric heat pumps. This is apparent by the Plan's repetition of the word "switch." The Plan refers to air-source heat pumps as a "switching" technology, implying a full transition away from fossil fuels. But that's not what is actually happening in Vermont. While heat pumps can reduce emissions when powered by clean electricity, their performance diminishes in cold weather. As outdoor temperatures fall, heat pump efficiency drops and electricity demand rises sharply. Field data cited during the Public Utility Commission's deliberations of the Clean Heat Standard shows that most homeowners stop using their heat pumps when the temperature dips below 30°F, precisely when reliable heat is most needed. On average, these systems provide heat for less than half the winter season. Heat pump installers— particularly those who also sell heating fuels— see this firsthand, and the data backs them up. In most existing homes, electric heat pumps function as supplemental systems during the coldest months, not full replacements.

The Vermont Department of Public Service is currently studying how heat pump adoption affects heating fuel use. So far, the answer is: not much. Despite the installation of more than 60,000 cold-climate heat pumps over the past decade, heating fuel sales—adjusted for weather—have remained largely unchanged, according to the Vermont Heat Index, which tracks heating fuel sales.[5] In fact, propane sales continue to rise annually, despite the robust adoption of electric heat pumps.[6]

The Plan has chosen a "climate solution" for the thermal sector that is not delivering the results as advertised. Multiple field studies confirm this pattern: heat pumps are delivering only 20 to 40 percent of their expected heating capacity.[7] This underutilization raises critical

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[3] Testimony by Mark Alderman before the House Transportation Committee, March 27, 2025

[4] Testimony by Andrea Cohen, VEC, before the Senate Transportation Committee, February 5, 2025

[5] Vermont Heat Index found at MeadowHillMedia.com/heatindex

[6] "We're not seeing a huge impact on fuel sales right now due to electrification. The department is undertaking a study of heat pump usage, and it's really showing that folks are not offsetting the portion of their heating fuel that we would anticipate," Melissa Bailey, Public Service Department, at a hearing of the House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee, May 17, 2025.

[7] Written testimony of Raymond J. Albrecht, PE, to the Clean Heat Technical Advisory Group, October 2024

questions about the cost-effectiveness of current incentive programs, particularly if they are used primarily for summer cooling. To meet Vermont's greenhouse gas reduction mandates, climate policy must reflect how technologies are actually used, not how they perform in ideal lab conditions. A successful thermal strategy must be technology-neutral, based on real-world performance, and aligned with the realities of Vermont's cold, rural environment. Heat pumps have a role to play—but not at the expense of reliability, affordability, or environmental integrity.

Net Zero Means Zero Growth

Vermont's Climate Action Plan pursues an emissions reduction strategy that conflicts with the state's broader public policy goals. The Stockholm Environment Institute based its "Pathways" recommendation to the Climate Council on an assumption of zero population growth. The Climate Council accepted this framework, even though stagnant population growth is widely acknowledged as a threat to Vermont's health, safety, and economic security. In reality, Vermont must grow its population by approximately 155,000 people by 2035—about 12,900 new residents per year—to meet workforce and economic demands.[8]

Supporting this growth will require tens of thousands of new homes, far beyond Vermont's current rate of housing production. This growth is especially critical to attract and retain essential workers, such as the electricians needed to install heat pumps, EV chargers, and upgraded service panels that the Climate Action Plan demands. Population growth is also essential for revitalizing Vermont's rural downtowns, many of which lie in river corridors that are adapting to climate change.

While such growth is vital to ensuring affordability, economic vitality, and preserving Vermont's rural character, more people—along with the homes, vehicles, and infrastructure they require—will inevitably ***increase*** greenhouse gas emissions. This makes achieving the mandates of the Global Warming Solutions Act even more difficult.

The Voices in the Field

The perspectives of heating equipment installers and vehicle sellers—along with their firsthand knowledge of Vermont consumers—were not reflected in the development of the 2025 Climate Action Plan. These voices will be crucial if we are to have constructive dialogue about meeting our energy and climate ambitions in the future. Instead, the Plan supports mandates that benefit those who have the economic means to purchase an EV or own new homes that are EV-ready. The Plan supports complex credit trading programs favored by large energy conglomerates but opposed by the small family-owned businesses that provide most of the energy, equipment, and vehicles in rural Vermont.

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[8] Vermont Futures Project, found at VTFuturesproject.org

Let’s Be Real
While we all have a role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we must be honest about the limits of Vermont’s impact on global climate trends. The idea that any of the policies suggested in the Climate Action Plan will meaningfully change the frequency of flooding or the depth of winter snowpack is not grounded in science. Our climate policies must serve not only the environment, but the people who live in it. No plan will succeed if it leaves rural and working-class Vermonters behind.

Rather than allow a 2020 law to dictate our energy, economic, and climate policies, the Climate Council should recommend that the Legislature remove the GHG mandates and pursue a more realistic, affordable, and environmentally sustainable path forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Vermont Climate Council.

Sincerely,

Matt Cota

Matt Cota

Signing statement

Councilor Richard Cowart

Member appointed with expertise and professional experience in the design and implementation of programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee Co-Chair

I voted to approve this Climate Action Plan, and write separately to encourage action by the Legislature and the Administration to implement its most important priority actions. The CAP identifies many actions Vermont needs to take to reduce climate pollution and protect citizens and communities from the worst effects of climate change – but it cannot deliver the political leadership that is required to ensure progress.

As elected officials and administrative agencies consider next steps, we will need to overcome two misconceptions that have blocked climate action in recent years.

The first misconception is that we cannot afford to invest in more efficient cars, trucks, and home heating systems.

On the contrary, numerous studies have shown that a well-designed transition away from fossil fuels would save Vermonters billions of dollars in fuel bills and pollution costs over the lifetimes of those investments. The real affordability challenge is the fossil status quo.

Existing fuel costs are so baked into the status quo that we tend to forget that Vermont routinely spends well over $2 Billion per year to import fossil fuels, an amount about equal to the state's budget for education. Since 2021, when the Climate Council began its work, Vermonters have spent $8.6 Billion dollars on imported fossil fuels. Around three-quarters of that money simply left the state's economy.

Moreover, fossil fuel costs are highly volatile and fluctuate with world oil prices. For example, between 2021 and 2022, fossil fuel costs in Vermont rose by $750 million in a single year, a huge sudden cost increase for Vermont families and businesses. International oil companies reaped trillions of dollars in windfall gains that year – but world oil prices did not include any low-income discounts, and never will.

Recommendations in this Climate Action Plan would help Vermont households and businesses move to cleaner and less costly energy sources. I join with others on the Council to urge Vermont's leaders to take actions now to support investments those lower-cost energy choices.

This leads to the second misconception, which is about the pace of action.

Because the physical climate crisis is real and the scientific consensus calls for rapid responses, climate policy debates sometimes lead to an "all or nothing" choice. In Vermont, we know from experience that meaningful progress can occur in stages and that programs can deliver large savings as they prove successful and are allowed to grow over time. Electricity and gas energy efficiency programs, for example, have grown over time to become among the largest and least costly "sources" of energy we rely on in Vermont. Efficiency Vermont's programs are delivering over $2 Billion in net energy bill savings to Vermont customers over the lifetimes of the measures installed to date.[1]

Achieving savings of this scale requires raising the funds needed to make investments in buildings, heat pumps, weatherization, and EV charging points. This Climate Action Plan urges the Legislature and Administration to adopt one or more pathways to raise those funds and invest them, particularly to benefit those Vermonters who are most burdened by high energy bills.

But at what pace? I have long been a supporter of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate action, and I believe substantial progress can be made through smart policies. However, considering the many fiscal challenges we face today, the pending loss of federal funds, and the need to build new programs, it may not be possible right now to chart "moon-shot" progress. **But it is necessary to design programs that could grow over time and it is necessary to start them now.** Moderate progress, at a minimum, is necessary. Failure to begin is unacceptable.

This leads to one immediate, high-level recommendation as a point of beginning: the need to take near-term action to support the Weatherization Assistance Program, and to at least maintain if not enlarge its scope in coming years. Weatherization delivers bill savings, livable conditions and healthier homes to thousands of lower-income Vermont households each year. This program has grown slowly over many years but is still too small and now faces a sharp cutback in federal funding, threatening reductions in the crews of trained staff that would be difficult to rebuild. The Climate Action Plan specifically calls for actions to expand weatherization programs, and I write here to urge the Legislature and Administration to find ways to support weatherization efforts as an early action step in implementing the CAP.

In closing, I join other Councilors in giving deep thanks to the many people who have helped us to create the CAP, inform its recommendations, and provide multiple opportunities for the public to hear about it, voice their concerns and provide their suggestions. The Climate Office

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[1] https://eanvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EAN-APR-2023_Apr112024.pdf

staff and the facilitation support from CBI have been hugely helpful. I am also deeply appreciative of the excellent and dedicated work of the Committee Members and Co-Chairs of the Cross-Sector Mitigation Committee, who have shared their expertise, personal insights, and hundreds of hours over many months, to develop key recommendations in this plan. It has been an honor to work with you all.

Signing Statement
Councilor Jared Duval
Appointed to provide expertise in energy and data analysis
Chair, Science & Data subcommittee
Member, Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee and Council Steering Committee

First, I want to thank my fellow Councilors and subcommittee members, as well as state staff, supporting consultants, and members of the public. This plan was a significant undertaking and would not have successfully come to completion without the contributions of dedicated individuals from each of these groups.

I voted for this Climate Action Plan (CAP) because I believe that it, like the one that preceded it in 2021, is capable of achieving Vermont's climate-related commitments in cost-effective and equitable ways, as is directed by the Global Warming Solutions Act.

However, the CAP, in and of itself, does not guarantee progress in reducing climate pollution, building climate resilience, or lowering energy costs. Crucially, those outcomes depend on whether and how this plan's recommendations are implemented.

Context

We have much to do to make progress in reducing climate pollution and energy costs while also building resilience. This is especially true because over the past four years the most meaningful recommendations that were designed to do so from the first CAP have either not been implemented (i.e., a Cap-and-Invest policy, a thermal-sector performance standard, and a feebate program) or, if they were initially acted on, have since been paused (Advanced Clean Cars II) or ended (electric vehicle incentives).

One of the most important recommendations in the first CAP was the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII) rules. While initially advanced via rulemaking, the crucial step of the actual enforcement of the ACCII rules has since been paused by the Governor, calling into question whether Vermonters will see the pollution reduction and cost-saving benefits from increased electric vehicle (EV) supply that we had been counting on in the first CAP (and that we are now counting on in this 2nd CAP).

The other two highest impact recommendations from the first CAP – joining a Cap-and-Invest program and implementing a thermal-sector performance standard – were each opposed by the administration, without alternatives that could achieve comparable pollution reductions being put forward. Other key pollution reduction recommendations from the first CAP, such as a fee and rebate (aka "feebate" or "true cost pricing") program for vehicles have also not been advanced.

Affordability

I believe that all Councilors care about affordability and cost-effectiveness. However, the process of crafting this Climate Action Plan has made clear that various Councilors understand and use the terms "affordability" and "cost-effectiveness" differently.

Some speak about affordability in a limited, one-time way. Specifically, they note that many of the recommendations in the CAP, from weatherizing homes to incentivizing EVs and heat pump water heaters, involve an up-front cost.

It is true that, absent incentives, cleaner and more efficient vehicles and heating options can cost more up front than fossil fuel dependent vehicles and equipment. However, it is also important to consider the ongoing costs of fuel over time. Unlike equipment costs, fuel costs don't just have to be paid once, but month after month and year after year.

In the end, whether one option ends up being more or less affordable than another depends on a fuller comparison than just up-front costs. My view is that we need to look at the whole equation rather than just one part of it. Specifically, we need to account for both upfront *and* ongoing costs, to get a full picture of total costs.

When we account for fuel costs, we find that gas cars cost much more to fuel and maintain than electric vehicles (EVs). On average, it costs over $9,500 more to fuel and maintain a gas car over the life of the vehicle than a comparable EV.[1] Similarly, propane water heaters cost more to fuel than heat pump water heaters—on average, over $3,000 more over the life of the water heater.[2] Coupled with up front vehicle or equipment purchase costs, these fuel and operations savings

[1] https://eanvt.org/2024-annual-report/ page 5
[2] https://eanvt.org/2024-annual-report/ page 29

make the *total* cost of EVs and heat pump water heaters less costly than gasoline cars and propane water heaters, respectively. Similarly, savings over time from weatherization have been found to be much larger than the initial expense.[3]

I believe that the desire for affordability should not just be for a single moment in time, but for long-term, *durable* affordability—month after month and year after year. Doing so will require helping more Vermonters get off the high-cost roller coaster of fossil fuel prices. That, in turn, will require investment—including grants and incentives to help lower- and middle-income Vermonters, in particular, access weatherization and more efficient renewably powered equipment that can save them money over time, but that they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford.

Many Vermonters with disposable income are already making investments that reduce their energy costs over time. It is primarily those who *can't* afford weatherization or upgrades to cleaner and more efficient vehicles and heating equipment who are most at risk of being left stranded with less efficient, higher polluting equipment and higher cost energy sources for years to come. And it is those Vermonters that I most hope the recommendations of this plan will help, including by providing more income-sensitive grants and incentives. Indeed, if one of the key barriers to durable affordability is the lack of sufficient incentives to help Vermonters purchase vehicles and equipment, then a key part of the answer should be expanding and increasing incentive programs, especially for lower- and middle-income Vermonters, rather than ending them.

An example may help illustrate the important distinction between costs and cost-effectiveness and short-term vs. durable affordability. If you have a leak in your roof, there's a cost to get it fixed. Does that mean it's not cost-effective to get it fixed? Of course not—because the cost of inaction is greater than the cost of action.

Right now, Vermont has a $2 billion leak in its roof in the form of expensive fossil fuel spending, the vast majority of which is draining out of our state economy.[4] Yet some are saying that making investments to reduce that cost for Vermonters isn't affordable.

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[3] https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ENV_CH_WxHealth.pdf
[4] https://eanvt.org/project/fossil-fuel-sales-2025/

Such a view fails to recognize that continued inaction will not reduce costs that are right now too high and unaffordable—and that that unaffordability will continue as long as we are so dependent on high-cost, price-volatile fossil fuels. This is especially true for lower-income Vermonters who pay a disproportionate share of their income on fossil fuels, particularly propane, fuel oil, and gasoline. Such a view also fails to recognize that fossil fuels create pollution that is imposing escalating costs to society, including from the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as flooding and heat waves.

Indeed, this distinction between up-front costs vs. savings over time is important to understand not just at a household level but also on a statewide and societal level. With complete accounting, we recognize that there are not just costs related to action but also costs related to inaction (as well as savings and benefits related to action). In fact, every comprehensive analysis that has been conducted for the CAP planning process has projected net savings and benefits from the modeled emissions reduction pathways over time.

Specifically, the economic analysis that was contracted by the Agency of Natural Resources in support of the initial Climate Action Plan in 2021 estimated net societal savings of $6.4 billion resulting from the modeled economy-wide pollution reduction pathways for Vermont associated with meeting GWSA emissions reduction obligations through 2050.[5]

Most recently, benefit-cost analysis contracted by ANR and conducted by SEI projected that taking the pollution-reduction measures modeled for this Climate Action Plan would result in net savings/benefits in every modeled scenario. Specifically, the scenario that maximized emissions reduction measures toward GWSA targets resulted in projected net savings of nearly $6.1 billion in 2050, as compared to the baseline scenario, with the primary benefit being savings from avoided fuel costs. That net savings resulted from this scenario is all the more notable given that it did not include savings from health-related benefits that are associated with measures such as weatherization and reduced particulate pollution from reduced combustion.

To be clear, all economic modeling done for our Climate Action Plans, the cost of inaction – or continuing the fossil fueled status quo – has always ultimately been projected to exceed the costs of acting to reduce climate pollution. In other words, continued inaction means a delay in the

[5] https://climatechange.vermont.gov/sites/climatecouncilsandbox/files/2022-03/Pathways%20Analysis%20Report_Version%202.0.pdf

savings and benefits that come from cleaner and more efficient energy. Continued inaction also means escalating the fossil fueled harms that are hitting us and our children.

Emissions reduction targets

Members of the administration have recently expressed how difficult they think it will be to meet the 2030 emissions reduction obligation of the GWSA. I agree that meeting the 2030 requirement will be difficult—but not simply because the federal policy and funding environment has shifted so significantly in the last year.

The January 1, 2030, requirement will also be difficult to meet because, instead of moving with purpose over the last 5 years to cost-effectively reduce emissions in Vermont by following the recommendations in the initial CAP, the period of 2020-2025 has largely been lost to state level delay or inaction. The limited progress that we have made was primarily thanks to a historic investment of federal dollars that were delivered to Vermont by the previous presidential administration and Vermont's congressional delegation.

As someone whose career is dedicated to data tracking, research, and analysis, I appreciate that the Agency of Natural Resources has advanced numerous studies. However, the ultimate value of studies is not how many are conducted but whether and how well they inform well considered and effective action.

Furthermore, fixating on the difficulty of achieving Vermont's 2030 commitment to reduce climate pollution—rather than moving apace to do what we can—has become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. The closest analogy I can think of is a runner who has a goal of running a 10-minute mile. Then, once the timer begins, they spend the first 5 minutes standing on the starting line and then walking slowly. At the five-minute mark, with most of the distance still left to go, the runner says, "how can I possibly finish before 10 minutes?" The appropriate question: is it that running a 10-minute mile was impossible… or was it made nearly so by failing to try for the first half of the race? And at that point, even if finishing in 10 minutes will be incredibly difficult, it is still better to start trying.

Conclusion

Vermont is now in a difficult situation. Legal obligations to reduce pollution have not been followed and key compliance dates have almost certainly been missed (2025) or are increasingly likely to be missed (2030).[6] Meanwhile, Vermont is producing the highest per person climate pollution of any state in New England; has made the least progress toward the Paris Climate Agreement targets of any state in New England; and continues to experience some of the highest energy cost burdens in the region—primarily due to our continued dependence on high-cost and price-volatile fuel oil, propane, and gasoline.[7]

That we are in this situation is not because we lack the technology or proven policy examples that could reduce climate pollution in line with legal commitments and in ways that would reduce overall costs. Other states have clearly shown that concerted policy and regulation can shift markets in a cleaner, more equitable, and lower-cost direction.

Indeed, many of the proven policies that have been successfully utilized by other states are recommended in this plan, from a cap-and-invest program to emissions-based performance standards. But neither emissions nor costs simply go down on their own—or by virtue of the mere existence of recommendations in a plan. Actual reductions require the implementation of policy and regulation.

A lower-cost, lower-pollution, more resilient future is possible. But we will not be able to achieve that future if we continue to fail to implement recommendations like those in this plan. This work is not easy—but we have an obligation to Vermont and Vermonters to try.

[6] https://eanvt.org/project/fossil-fuel-sales-2025/. Specifically, EAN estimates that Vermont likely fell 18-39% short of Vermont's first statewide emissions reduction legal obligation under the GWSA.
[7] https://eanvt.org/project/vt-climate-responsibility/

Climate Action Plan Signing Statement
Kelly Klein, Member to Represent the Small Business Community
Co-Chair of the Just Transitions Subcommittee, Member of the Steering Committee
June 25, 2025

I was proud to vote in support of this Climate Action Plan. Having been a member of the Climate Council since its inception as the representative for the small business community, I have had the honor of witnessing and being part of the process of drafting the initial Climate Action Plan in 2021 and now this revised Plan in 2025.

This updated Plan builds upon the work of the original, and I think we have a Plan that is more robust, easier to read and understand, and does more to promote equity and incorporate public feedback. The quality of public engagement that accompanied this version of the Plan was some of the best I've witnessed. Members of the public, with a particular focus on marginalized and frontline communities, were engaged throughout the process and through a variety of different avenues. I also saw members of Subcommittees and the Council engaging more deeply with the feedback we received from the public and incorporating recommendations directly into the Plan as a result.

That said, there is always more we can do to reach Vermonters and hear their voices. Now is the time to continue the work of engaging with the public. We need to find ways to communicate this Plan to more people - not just the people who are already concerned about climate change. If we can reach more Vermonters and hear their perspectives and feedback, I believe that we can create an even stronger Plan when we revise it again in four years.

The other challenge, and one that I know is on the minds of many other Council members, is that of funding. The dramatic reduction in funding from the federal government has left us without some of the resources we hoped we could count on as we started the revision process. The state legislature and the administration will need to come up with some creative solutions in order to fund the programs outlined in this Plan. But we must also consider the cost of inaction.

In the world of business there is a saying: You have to spend money to make money. For many of the recommendations in this Plan, I would hold that the maxim should be: You have to spend money to save money. It may sound counterintuitive, but there are many ways in which a dollar spent today to prepare us for future climate disasters or help Vermonters move away from fossil fuels will have a swift return on investment and ultimately save money for them and the state of Vermont on an ongoing basis. These savings won't just come in reduced energy costs or the cost to repair buildings and infrastructure after a disaster. We will see savings in healthcare costs as more buildings are weatherized to prevent heat- and cold-related health problems, as fewer people are injured or killed in natural disasters, and as we simply enjoy cleaner, less polluted air.

I believe that Vermont can, and must, figure out ways to enact the recommendations in this Plan. We are a state made up of creative, thoughtful, and hard-working people. While we may not be the wealthiest state, we have a wealth of other resources at our fingertips. Vermonters have a long history of being adaptive, thinking outside the box, and working together to create the future we all want to see for our state and for future generations.

Signing Statement – 2025 Climate Action Plan

Liz Miller
Vermont House-appointed Utility Representative Member
Vermont Climate Council

Vermont's electric supply is among the cleanest in the nation. Utilities are fulfilling state laws that require more renewable energy in the years ahead, including more locally-based projects, and that support customers switching from fossil fuels to cleaner electricity with prices that are less volatile and are lower than the fuels Vermonters most often use to power their vehicles and heat their homes, saving them money.

I agree with the points raised by members of the governor's administration in their signing statement about the need for realistic implementation, equitable pacing, and affordability for all Vermonters — as we also work to achieve further reductions in climate pollution and help communities be prepared for increasingly severe weather. I appreciate the analysis and hard work from the agencies and others to help inform this plan, and I am also grateful for the collaborative approach from all through this process as we work to best serve Vermonters.

Signing Statement for the Vermont Climate Council's CAP:
Councilor Stephanie Moffett-Hynds
Appointed to represent rural communities

I have the honor of serving on the Vermont Climate Council as a representative of rural communities. It has been deeply reassuring to see the updated Climate Action Plan come together, carefully crafted by 23 appointees with a broad range of expertise and perspectives. In the face of the increasingly destructive consequences of a warming planet, Vermonters should take heart in knowing we are not shrinking from our responsibility. The Plan offers a clear suite of strategies and actions to help ensure that all Vermont communities — rural and urban alike — can build resilience.

Vermont is undeniably facing a range of urgent challenges — from the housing crisis and substance use disorder to a shrinking workforce and the erosion of key federal programs and funding. But turning away from the guidance of the Climate Action Plan would be a grave mistake. Climate change is not a separate issue; it is the backdrop against which all of these crises are unfolding — and it will continue to make them worse if left unaddressed. It is not a question of selecting one issue to address over another. We are capable of doing many things at the same time. And we must.

The impacts of global warming — from increased flooding and infrastructure strain to economic disruption — threaten to deepen inequality and hardship across the board. That's why policies like Cap and Invest are so important. While just one tool among many, it is designed with equity in mind, directing resources and support to low- and moderate-income Vermonters. It recognizes that affordability and sustainability must go hand in hand.

Without bold, inclusive climate action, we risk a future defined by competition for scarce resources — a survival-of-the-fittest scenario that is both unjust and preventable. The Climate Action Plan provides a roadmap that, if implemented, will ensure not only a more sustainable Vermont, but also a more equitable and resilient one. We cannot afford to ignore it.

Just as importantly, our commitment to this plan sends a vital message to current and future generations: that their well-being matters, and that their state is stepping up to confront this existential crisis. In a time of growing uncertainty, this kind of leadership offers both practical solutions and a sense of hope. It's a clear reminder that we are — and must remain — Vermont strong.

Signing Statement for Vermont's Climate Action Plan
Julie Moore, Secretary of Agency of Natural Resources

Vermont stands at a critical juncture as federal climate funding all but disappears while climate impacts are intensifying. Since the initial Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2021, Vermont has taken full advantage of unprecedented federal investment to reduce emissions and build climate resilience. Now that funding is ending abruptly, fundamentally altering underlying assumptions about Vermont and Vermonters capacity for this work.

During these last four years, Vermont also experienced a series of weather-related disasters that caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage and resulted in the destruction of scores of homes and businesses. These mounting demands and costs are straining everyone – individuals, businesses, and municipalities – regardless of their capacity. Moving forward requires a clear-eyed acknowledgment of these financial and operational constraints while maintaining our commitment to climate action.

This Climate Action Plan represents the culmination of extraordinary effort by Councilors, subcommittee members, state agency staff, community stakeholders, and countless Vermonters who have contributed their expertise and passion to this vital work.

There are many good ideas reflected in the revised Climate Action Plan. However, there is also a significant gap between the actions identified in the Plan and what will be required to operationalize this work. Successful implementation requires a commitment to finding solutions that are both environmentally effective and economically sustainable for all Vermonters. We are concerned that in striving to fulfill the obligations created by the Global Warming Solutions Act, this plan does not provide a clear pathway for resolving the tension between real-world constraints – funding limitations, technical challenges, and implementation capacity – and its ideals.

The financial challenges we face are significant. The investments required to reduce emissions, repair damage from on-going climate disasters, and adapt and become more resilient in the face of a changing climate far exceed the financial capacity of Vermont and Vermonters, especially as federal funding becomes much less reliable. This means making difficult decisions about prioritizing our collective efforts.

We recognize climate action offers significant long-term economic benefits, but without careful program design and adequate financial protections, the substantial upfront costs risk imposing unfair burdens on low- and middle-income Vermonters. Due to the constraints of time and available resources, the Council was not able to systematically evaluate the near-term financial impacts many of the policy proposals in this Plan could have on Vermont households and municipalities.

The Climate Action Plan identifies numerous areas where funding is needed to fulfill its vision, support equitable implementation and meet the obligations created by the Global Warming Solutions Act. While a worthy aspiration, it is doubtful Vermont can fully fund the scale and pace of the work envisioned during the term of this Plan.

We must be direct and open with Vermonters about the full breadth of the challenge presented by the upfront costs of climate-driven investments. It is critical that the State develop an implementation strategy that works to fill the gap in information about the costs of implementation, more fully develops options for funding this work in a manner that minimizes financial hardship for low- and middle-income Vermonters and proposes thoughtful pacing for its execution. We see this as essential to having a workable approach that both drives progress and is realistic about the myriad other societal challenges currently facing our small state – from education reform and electric grid transformation, to the short-supply of housing, rising costs of health care and public safety concerns.

It is also important to acknowledge that despite extensive outreach efforts, we continue to struggle with reaching a broad cross-section of Vermonters and are hearing primarily from those already committed to climate action. This reality underscores the need for continued engagement and inclusive dialogue as this work continues to advance.

Each of us remain committed to meaningful climate action. Moving forward, we must focus on strategic approaches that carefully balance multiple priorities. The good news is that many climate solutions can save money over time – like reducing energy costs and limiting the impact of expensive climate disasters – and can also create good, local jobs. But we need to be honest about the costs upfront and figure out fair ways to pay for them. This requires hard conversations about trade-offs, realistic timelines, and creative financing mechanisms that distribute costs equitably and maintain momentum toward our climate goals.

Only through this balanced approach can we earn the broad public support necessary to sustain long-term climate action that truly serves all Vermonters.

Julie Moore, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources

Chris Campany, Windham Regional Commission, member to represent the municipal governments

Sarah Clark, Secretary, Agency of Administration

Matt Cota, Meadow Hill Consulting, member to represent the fuel sector

Michele Boomhower, on behalf of Joe Flynn, Secretary, Agency of Transportation

Eric Forand, Director of Vermont Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety

Kerrick Johnson, Commissioner, Department of Public Service

Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Shayla Livingston, Agency of Human Services

David Mears, member with expertise in the design and implementation of programs to increase resilience to and respond to natural disasters resulting from climate change

Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

Climate Action Plan Signing Statement
Jaiel Pulskamp, Member to Represent the Farm and Forest Sector
Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee Co-Chair

The Vermont Climate Action Plan is a hopeful and ambitious roadmap for a more just, sustainable, and resilient future. It offers a vision grounded in care for our communities and a respectful partnership with nature. It lays out the steps we must take to transition away from systems that pollute and deplete, toward those that regenerate, uplift, and sustain.

While my choice for Priority Recommendations included the expansion of public transportation and scaling up community solar, I recognize that this plan is a foundation. I also support ending the burning of trees for large-scale biomass energy. However, I support the study on biomass facilities, which was included in the priorities. I urge continued emphasis on responsible development, protection of our working lands, and meaningful investments in community-scale solutions that keep people and ecosystems at the center.

Equally important, and central to solving the climate crisis, is strong support for our farmers and food producers. A resilient, regenerative food system is one of our most powerful climate solutions. Prioritizing healthy, locally grown food ensures that Vermonters are nourished while reducing emissions, protecting ecosystems, and strengthening local economies.

To meet this challenge, we need to support small and mid-sized farms, expand local food infrastructure, invest in soil health and regenerative practices, and protect farmland and forests from sprawl and speculative development.

We need to think creatively in the face of federal fiscal constraints. Chemistry and physics are non-negotiable—the laws of thermodynamics don’t wait for budget cycles. Economics is a human construct. With ingenuity, economic systems can emerge that support Vermonters and respect these laws of nature. We can and must reimagine our financial systems to support this transition, charging for pollution and extraction to fund the regeneration of our communities, ecosystems, and energy systems.

I voted *yes* in support of the Climate Action Plan because it represents more than policy; it's a promise to our children and grandchildren that we will not use up resources today and leave them with the consequences tomorrow. This Climate Action Plan is a promise that Vermont will act with courage, creativity, and compassion in the face of the climate crisis.

We are the caretakers of this little corner of the Earth. Let's rise to the occasion.