

Vermont Voices on Climate

Vermont Climate Action Office

October to December 31, 2024

Report Overview

This is a summary of public outreach conducted by the Climate Action Office with support from Consensus Building Institute during October, November, and December 2024. Previous 2024 reports are available here: [July-September](#), [April-June](#), [January-March](#). Climate Action Office's [October](#), [November](#) & [December](#) email updates shared information about climate action with subscribers.

Events Tabled and Attended

- Missisquoi Festival (Swanton)
- Intervale Fair Share Distribution Day (Burlington)
- Fish & Wildlife deer check (West Enosburg)
- Youth Climate Leadership Academy (Fairlee)
- Vermont Maple Conference (Randolph)

Reflecting on 2024 with gratitude...



In 2024 the Climate Action Office and Consensus Building Institute team conducted outreach at 24 community events, hosted 28 events and small-group conversations (both in-person and virtual), and spoke with hundreds of Vermonters along the way. Our goals have been to provide information and knowledge, center the viewpoints of frontline and impacted community members, and build relationships and communication channels.

The Vermont Voices on Climate quarterly reports share the climate stories of those who call Vermont home. These are sent to many leaders, decision-makers, and implementors across state government. The focus is to communicate the perspectives of those whose voices haven't historically been represented in government processes. Yet we know this is just a start; much more needs to be done. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have shared their voice and opinions. We will continue to listen, learn, and share—in 2025 and beyond.



October 2024

Missisquoi Festival in Swanton

Vermonters spoke about being stewards of the land and the importance of individual responsibility. Conversations touched on being in tune with the natural world from a young age; making the study of nature a part of education and programs for youth to help cultivate a greater respect for all living things; and thinking about invasive species and their effects on lakes and forests.



Intervale Fair Share Distribution Day

The Climate Action Office tabled at this event, talking with folks about various programs and distributing materials to spread awareness and to help Vermonters become more resilient in the face of climate change.



October 2024

Climate Conversation with Linguistically Diverse Community Leaders

This event gathered insights from Vermont’s linguistically diverse communities on key climate action topics including transportation, resilience, and agriculture. Discussions highlighted the need for climate action efforts to be accessible, relevant, and aligned with community realities, particularly regarding economic, cultural, and logistical challenges. During the final hour of the event, participants interacted directly with state staff who run programs related to climate action, such as transportation initiatives, emergency response, and health programs.

[Read the summary of input and staff reflections.](#) The summary was shared with the Vermont Climate Council to help inform their update to the Climate Action Plan.



Community Action Agencies: Climate Action Plan focus group with Capstone

Vermont's Community Action Agencies provide individuals, families, and communities with the tools, skills and vision for needed economic, racial, social and environmental justice. The Climate Action Office and these agencies have been building relationship with one another to discuss climate action. We met with Capstone Community Action clients and staff in Barre to discuss Vermont's Climate Action Plan update. This was an opportunity to share information about topics being addressed in the update, and to hear priorities, ideas, concerns, and questions from Vermonters who use Capstone's services.

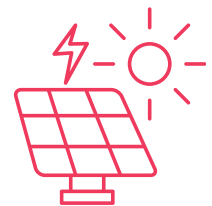
[Read the summary of input.](#) The summary was shared with the Vermont Climate Council to help inform their update to the Climate Action Plan.



Climate Action Plan Input Sessions

The 2025 [Climate Action Plan update](#) is underway. From late October through mid-November, the Climate Council's subcommittees hosted nine input sessions to receive feedback on their work to recommend updates to the Climate Action Plan. This engagement process was supported by State staff and the Consensus Building Institute.

[View the subcommittees' recommendations.](#)
[Read the summaries of input.](#)



Vermont Energy Education Program’s Youth Climate Leaders Academy

In December the Youth Representatives on the Climate Council Subcommittees convened with 90 other high school climate leaders at the Youth Climate Leaders Academy two-day retreat. The youth representatives are working on a plan to deepen youth engagement in Vermont's Climate Council and the update to the Climate Action Plan. They developed goals and action steps for this work in partnership with the Climate Action Office and supported by Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) staff. In 2025, keep your eyes out for youth-specific materials for understanding and giving input on Vermont's new draft Climate Action Plan. Contact mariah.keagy@veep.org for information on upcoming youth-specific engagement opportunities.



Community-based organizations: Measuring and Assessing Progress Tool Focus Group

The Climate Action Office is developing a tool to monitor and evaluate progress on key actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience and adaptation to climate change. While the primary users of the tool will be government staff, the intention is to develop the tool in a way that can also be useful to community-based organizations and the public.

To that end, Climate Action Office and Eastern Research Group, Inc. convened a virtual focus group of community-based organizations that serve frontline and impacted communities. Major themes included housing, food security, food producers’ livelihoods, weatherization, equity impacts of programs, flood recovery, communications and accessible information, and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.

Engagement about the tool continues into 2025; a full summary will be available this spring.

What Vermonters are saying



A sample of views expressed at events across Vermont

Vermont Maple Conference in Randolph

Somehow offset the cost of using local companies to deliver pellets to your door rather than forcing folks to go to places like Home Depot because it's cheaper.

Incentivize people to change their ways rather than making or forcing them to.

A few sugarmakers from various businesses report their sugarmaking hasn't been affected by climate change, they're still at 21 sugaring days. Vacuum technology helps offset effects of weird climate.

Sugarmakers in Quebec have been affected by beetles that are not yet in Vermont. One sugarmaker with a 60,000 tap operation lost a third of their taps. Invasive species aspect of climate change brings up the question of how to maintain healthy forests in this new context.

Programs that have been helpful include: Current Use (Use Value Appraisal) program that lowers taxes on working forests, Audubon Bird Friendly Forest Management, Certified Organic program (provides waivers for sugarmakers that help offset costs of labeling, etc), Working Lands Enterprise Fund, Vermont Agency of Agriculture programs.

Flooding affected taplines and bridge; trying to figure out how to build a flood-resilient bridge. Don't think there's enough money out there to cover the costs.

Deer check in West Enosburg

More ticks are the most noticeable thing. More deer but not sure if that's because of climate or management practices. More development and people definitely affects the hunting.

Warmer winters are affecting ice fishing season - the number of days we're getting out and number of fish we're catching. Had to cancel the ice fishing derby this and last year.

People are disconnected from the food system, where they get their food from. For example, people won't buy fresh eggs "because that came from a chicken," they want eggs that come "from a grocery store."

Coming Up in 2025...

- **Meeting Vermonters where they are:** Speak with Vermonters at community events in Bennington and Barnard.
- **Measuring & Assessing Progress Tool:**
 - Hold two virtual public meetings about a tool that will track climate action progress.
 - Hold three more focus groups that will inform Phase 1 of developing this tool.
- **Working with Community-Based Organizations:** Host one conversation for clients of a community action agency. Host one virtual meeting for community-based organizations across Vermont and expand the number and diversity of organizations involved in these ongoing conversations about state climate action efforts.
- **Cap-and-Invest Study Findings:** Host a public meeting in parallel with the Climate Council to share and discuss a new study that looks at cap-and-invest program options for Vermont.
- **Resilience Implementation Strategy:** Hold one day-long, in-person session for interested and impacted parties, plus two virtual public meetings.

Vermont Voices on Climate: Past Year of Reports

- [July, August, September 2024](#)
- [April, May, June 2024](#)
- [January, February, March 2024](#)
- [July, August, September 2023](#)

