

H. 557 – Greenhouse Gas Emission Limits

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Conservation Law Foundation supports H.557.

Climate change demands that Vermont take the actions necessary to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**. While the Vermont Legislature adopted ambitious goals to reduce emissions, the goals alone have failed to achieve the needed reductions.

Instead of achieving a 25% reduction by 2012, Vermont's **emissions have remained roughly the same as they were in 1990**.

Global scientific consensus confirms the need to keep temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. Vermont needs to look no further than the disasters of **Tropical Storm Irene to see the devastation and loss that results if we fail to responsibly address climate change**. Keeping temperature increases below 2 degrees requires at least the reductions described in this bill.

The proposed reductions are **necessary for our climate**. Experience from other states shows that the emission reductions will **support Vermont's growing economy**.

Massachusetts has had its *Global Warming Solutions Act*¹ in place since 2008. The Act requires **specific reductions in GHG emissions** from all sectors of the economy, similar to what is proposed in this bill.

In Massachusetts, the requirement has been successful. It has led to the **growth of renewable energy, energy efficiency, cleaner transportation, and closing coal and oil generating facilities**. The requirement provides the **yardstick by which progress is measured**. And it works.

The commitments to clean energy and reducing GHG emissions have contributed strongly to the **growth of the economy** in Massachusetts since 2008. Massachusetts now ranks second behind California in the *2013 Clean Tech Leadership Index*² while Vermont ranks only 15th.

Vermont has made good strides in adopting some policies to reduce emissions. Many other states, including Massachusetts and Washington which both have emission limits, are far ahead of us. **Vermont's lack of progress shows we need to do more**.

The greenhouse gas emission limits in this bill provide **one proven tool to achieve the GHG reduction goals** the Legislature established in 2006.

¹ <http://www.mass.gov/eea/air-water-climate-change/climate-change/massachusetts-global-warming-solutions-act/>

² <http://www.cleantech.com/indexes/u.s.-clean-tech-leadership-index>



Recommended Language Change (page 2, line 6)

(b) Emission limits. To achieve the purpose of this section, the State adopts the following emission limits on greenhouse gases from energy consumption in Vermont, measured against the 1990 baseline by:

- (1) 50 percent by of the 1990 level, as of January 1, 2028;
- | (2) ~~75~~25 percent by of the 1990 level, as of January 1, 2050.