

**Sunset Advisory Commission**  
**Board and Commission Review**  
**Sustainable Agriculture Council – 6 V.S.A. § 4701(b)**

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.
  - a. **The last time the Sustainable Agriculture Council (SAC) met was 2015**
2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.
  - a. **Members in January 2015**
    - i. **Chuck Ross, Secretary of Agriculture (Chair)**
    - ii. **Philip Ackerman-Leist, Green Mountain College**
    - iii. **Linda Berlin, UVM Center for Sustainable Ag**
    - iv. **Diane Bothfeld, VAAF**
    - v. **Megan Camp, Shelburne Farms**
    - vi. **Ela Chapin, VHCB**
    - vii. **Jed Davis, Cabot Creamery Cooperative**
    - viii. **Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension**
    - ix. **Gail Hall, VTDOE**
    - x. **Ellen Kahler, VSJF**
3. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.
  - a. **6 V.S.A. § 4701(b)**
    - i. **(b) A Sustainable Agriculture Council is established, to be chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The Council shall include the Secretary of Education and representatives, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, of the College of Agriculture at the University of Vermont, University of Vermont Extension, Vermont Technical College and farm organizations, and a representative of the low input sustainable agriculture program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Council shall meet on call of the Secretary and shall make recommendations regarding:**

- ii. (1) Goals and priorities for ongoing public and private research of particular relevance to Vermont agriculture, and for the coordination of research and demonstration projects on sustainable agriculture.
    - iii. (2) The dissemination of research results, the identification of future research needs and other useful information on sustainable agriculture.
    - iv. (3) The use of State-owned lands, participating farmer managed land, and land owned by the University of Vermont and State Colleges System for continuing research on sustainable agriculture practices.
    - v. (4) Techniques for financing the integration of sustainable agriculture practices into farming operations.
    - vi. (5) The teaching of sustainable agriculture practices in schools at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.
4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?
  - a. The SAC is redundant based on current independent groups and initiatives which are being undertaken on a state level.
5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?
  - a. The council has not met since 2015.
6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?
  - a. The SAC is no longer needed. The decision for the Sustainable Agriculture Council to cease meeting was due to the fact that there were so many complimentary and overlapping organizations and boards meeting to discuss and advance research and education into sustainable agriculture. Further, there were no research dollars associated with this program at the point that the Sustainable Ag Council decided to cease meeting. Many other organizations – with AAFM’s support and collaboration – were and are carrying on this important work, including: The Working Lands Enterprise Board, Farm to Plate, and the work ongoing at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture at UVM.
7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission’s functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?
8. Does the board or commission’s enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?
  - a. The council has not met since 2015
9. Provide a list of the board and commission’s last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

a. No known budget

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

a. The last report was prepared for 2015 (Attached).