

Climate Economy Action Team Platform

Advancing a Vital and Prosperous Future for All Vermonters

Climate change will require economic solutions, and will reward those places that innovate and model progress. Vermonters recognize the opportunity that tackling climate change presents and many have already grasped it by creating thriving businesses that employ Vermonters, make our state more affordable, and position Vermont as the beckoning country, attracting businesses, entrepreneurs, and young families to make Vermont their home.

In line with the Vermont State Energy Plan and the economic development and affordability goals of the Scott Administration, the Climate Economy Action Team proposes the following policy priorities and state investments to lever economic innovation and small business development, create jobs, advance the affordability of transportation, and mark Vermont as a destination for and leader in climate economy entrepreneurship.

✓ Invest in Transportation Systems Efficiency

Transportation is one of the most costly household expenses and the most significant contributor to Vermont's carbon emissions. The Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan has set standards and goals to lessen emissions in this sector including expanding electric vehicle use, and VEIC is already leading work to expand electric vehicles for consumers as well as fleet vehicles and public transportation. However, a more strategic and comprehensive effort is needed to meet the state's goals and transform our system at the individual, municipal, and state levels and move towards a low carbon future and, especially, to ensure that this progress in our transportation system improves affordability and so benefits all Vermonters. This action will also seed future efforts to expand comprehensive all fuels efficiency efforts essential to the fulfilment of the Vermont State Energy Plan.

One immediate opportunity to move towards transportation transformation is to deploy the \$18 million VW settlement funding to transform the public transportation and school bus markets. The State should issue an RFP for an administrator to manage program design and implementation of the state's environmental mitigation plan established by the settlement. Such a program should ensure that the funds are used in the most creative, strategic, and effective way to foster transformation of the transportation markets covered by the settlement. Settlement funds could be used in a strategic way to support comprehensive efficiency programs and services, expand infrastructure for EV charging, electrify heavy and medium duty trucks and transit, leverage private investment, and spur the expansion of disruptive and creative technologies to transform the system and keep hundreds of millions of dollars in the state and local economies each year.

→ See **H.487: An act relating to the Volkswagen diesel litigation settlement and Mitigation Trust monies**

✓ Fund the Climate Economy Business Accelerator Program

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund and a working group of business, finance, and economic development leaders are developing a Climate Economy Accelerator to grow entrepreneurial opportunities and provide a network for businesses to promote their solutions, products, or services that could lead to collaboration and innovation. The entrepreneurial network connects the business community to spark collaboration and stimulate growth, while the accelerator serves as a catalyst to offer comprehensive technical services, peer-support, and financing tools to entrepreneurs to attract them to Vermont as a national nucleus of climate economy leadership and innovation.

In order to most effectively implement a Climate Economy Accelerator program to grow climate economy entrepreneurial and start up enterprises, a \$500,000 total investment is needed. The State of Vermont should provide \$300,000 of seed funding to the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund to leverage private and philanthropic investment in order to carry out this work to boost economic development, innovation, and job creation in the state.

→ See **H.398: An act relating to implementing the Climate Economy Business Accelerator Program**

Vermont Climate Economy Action Team

the leadership team of the VT Climate Economy Partnership

The **Vermont Climate Economy Action Team** is dedicated to advancing initiatives to expand distributed energy generation and efficiency in Vermont, cultivate climate economy entrepreneurs and startup businesses, and reduce Vermont's carbon impact while boosting economic development, creating jobs, and attracting youth and creative entrepreneurs to the state. Members of the team represent the over 300 participants in the **Vermont Climate Economy Partnership** dedicated to building a vital future for Vermont through innovation in energy development, the wise use and reuse of resources, efficiencies, smart growth, and a strong working lands economy. Members of the Team include:

- **Joe Fusco**, *Casella Waste Solutions (Chair)*
- **Ludy Biddle**, *Neighborworks of Western Vermont*
- **Olivia Campbell Andersen**, *Renewable Energy Vermont*
- **Andrea Colnes**, *Coalition for Green Capital*
- **Rob Downey**, *Zero Gravity*
- **Chad Farrell**, *Encore Renewable Energy*
- **Judy Geer**, *Craftsbury Outdoor Center*
- **Karen Glitman**, *Vermont Energy Investment Corporation*
- **Dan Hoxworth**, *Capstone Community Action*
- **Claire Humber**, *SE Group*
- **Ellen Kahler**, *Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund*
- **Chuck Karparis**, *VSECU*
- **Neale Lunderville**, *Burlington Electric Department*
- **Linda McGinnis**, *Energy Action Network*
- **James Moore**, *SunCommon*
- **Nick Richardson**, *Vermont Land Trust*
- **Andrew Savage**, *AllEarth Renewables*
- **Brian Shupe**, *VNRC*
- **David Snedeker**, *Northern Vermont Development Association*
- **Ross Sneyd**, *National Life Group*
- **Jim Sullivan**, *Bennington Regional Planning Commission & VAPDA*
- **Larry Williams**, *Bolton Valley & Redstone*
- **Alex Wilson**, *BuildingGreen*

VCRD Staff:

- **Paul Costello**, *Vermont Council on Rural Development, Producer*
- **Jenna Koloski**, *Vermont Council on Rural Development, Manager*