



CEAT Testimony to Joint Energy Committees

Thursday October 26, 2017

VCRD: Farm Bill Statute; neutral facilitator; most experienced community facilitator in VT. We are currently working with the community of **Newport**, and producing a **Model Climate Economy Community Program with the town of Middlebury**. VCRD has a 20 year history as a policy convener on Working Lands, Digital Economy and now, the Climate Economy. We try to be neither right nor left but to be a useful facilitator toward actionable consensus.

VCRD founded and led the **Vermont Climate Change Economy Council** to produce its “Progress in Vermont” report and is now leading the **Climate Economy Action Team** to advance ideas generated. Essentially, we are working to produce a vision for the future of Vermont’s economy and pragmatic, practical steps to advance it.

VCRD held the **Catalysts of the Climate Economy National Summit** at UVM with 500 Investors, business leaders and entrepreneurship on September 6-8.

Entrepreneur and environmentalist **Paul Hawken**, opened the Summit with a profound and optimistic appraisal of climate change and the extensive work going forward globally to address it. In line with the action plan in the book, **Drawdown**, which he produced and edited, Hawken selectively overviewed the 100 economic and cultural solutions to climate change, with the central idea that we need to not only ‘mitigate’ climate change by reducing emissions, but go further to correct climate change by drawing down carbon in the atmosphere.

Paul claimed that climate change is a natural feedback loop, one that echoes a variety of planetary crises—from the dramatic loss of species, to pollution of waterways and agricultural erosion. He made the startling statement that we should be grateful to climate change because it brings all these issues to a dramatic point of broad global consciousness—and its feedback points directly to entrepreneurial opportunities and economic and human development steps that can transform energy systems, renew agriculture and forestry, and expand human health and well-being globally—also empowering us to change the climate in a positive direction!

We were joined by investors from Generate Capital, Trillium, Vermont Works, the California Clean Energy Development Fund, Ceres, the Connecticut Green Bank; who collectively hold billions in investment capital for the climate economy.

Danny Kennedy from the California Clean Energy fund which is spurning hundreds of creative businesses asserted that the climate challenge poses the greatest economic opportunity in world history.

Jigar Shah of Generate Capital shared his idea of investing half a billion dollars in VT to model the wholesale transition to electric vehicles that is on the horizon, but could happen here first, and at scale, as a model for the rest of the country!

We were joined by **Ellen Kahler** of the VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, **Mary Powell**, President and CEO of Green Mountain Power and **Neale Lunderville** of Burlington Electric Department to kick off **AccelVT**—a climate economy business accelerator concentrating on new entrepreneurship in the distributed generation sector—a doorway to education, assistance and financing for a cohort of new businesses in Vermont from across the country!

We held a **Climate Economy Pitch Competition** where creative entrepreneurs from across the country pitched their business ideas to attendees, investors, and judges for a grand prize. A Vermont company, **Packetized Energy**, won the pitch with their software platform for coordinating myriad distributed energy resources including water heaters, electric vehicles and batteries—the sweet spot at the center of smart grid functionality.

The three day event closed with **seven tours showcasing the remarkable creativity of Vermonters**—from Net Zero Burlington, the green building cluster, the food systems movement, distributed generation progress—and to meet dynamic business leaders leading Vermont’s rural renewal.

Catalysts of the climate economy are all around us. Every manufacturer has changed the lightbulbs, boosted efficiency, and is looking at what’s next. The climate economy is not a sector, really; it’s the economy of the future.

Climate Economy Action Team Action Ideas

CEAT is in the process of framing a platform of economic development ideas for presentation to the Legislature and Governor. We believe that Vermont can promote economic development and job creation in the climate economy while contributing to the Governor’s affordability agenda and protecting the most vulnerable.

We believe that there are places in the world that will lead in providing solutions to climate change...and those solutions will come from creative business development. In the end, answering climate change is all about the economy.

Vermont should make itself the most spectacularly attractive place in the country for these businesses—the beckoning country for innovative businesses and mission oriented youth.

In fact, rural renewal and our economic future depend on it...and it's already happening all around us.

We believe that Vermont needs to look to the economic foundations for progress in an age of climate change. CEAT holds that we should:

- Dramatically increase capacity for low-to-moderate-income weatherization and residential deep energy retrofits.
- Explore incentives and policies to boost net zero building and code compliance and building a structure for energy efficiency labeling and disclosure in homes sales.
- Establish a Comprehensive Energy Efficiency Utility to advance innovative new efficiency services and initiatives and implement next stage “all fuels” efficiencies in the thermal and transportation sectors in addition to the current electrical efficiency services.
- Develop and implement financing policy and structures such as C-PACE programs, to-the-meter financing, and other strategies to build access to and affordability of distributed generation in the residential and commercial sectors
- Support and expand solar on in our built environment by reducing permitting barriers and fees and structuring incentives for solar on rooftops, parking garages, and solar canopies.
- Establish a long-term sustainable funding source for the Clean Energy Development Fund and increase its capacity to seed-fund in business-led research and development and innovative enterprise startups in the climate economy.
- Expand tax structures and incentives to encourage smart growth in Vermont’s downtowns and village centers.
- Expand the mission and funding of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative to promote working lands business enterprises efforts in carbon sequestration, ubiquitous farm methane projects, compost development while cleaning VT waterways. The leverage of water quality investments is optimized when economic development, farm sequestration, and generation is advanced.
- Invest in transportation systems efficiency and electrification to advance electric vehicle charging infrastructure, transform transportation systems, and facilitate the

shift to electric vehicles and make Vermont the cold climate test center for driverless vehicles.

- Expand models for shared vehicles and clean electric public transit. Use VW Settlement Funds for electrification: no money to diesel.
- The Legislature should lead an internal and rational analysis of the costs and benefits of carbon pricing and trading models, identifying those most likely to boost economic development, innovation, and job creation in the state.
- Boost the Climate Economy Business Network and Accelerator Program at the VSJF to grow entrepreneurial opportunities and provide a network for businesses to promote their solutions, products, or services that could lead to collaboration and innovation.
- Support workforce and career development to cultivate a skilled workforce that is ready to fill climate economy jobs and work to build, weatherize, innovate, and engineer towards a climate economy future.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some perspective today and for your hard work for Vermont's future. We are making progress, but so much depends on your courage and leadership.

Members of the Vermont Climate Economy Action Team

- **Joe Fusco, Chair**, *Casella Waste Solutions*
- **Ludy Biddle**, *Neighborworks of Western Vermont*
- **Olivia Campbell Andersen**, *Renewable Energy Vermont*
- **Andrea Colnes**, *Energy Action Network*
- **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*
- **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*



Vermont Council on Rural Development

Unleashing the power of Vermonters to create a better future