

Testimony to Joint Energy Committee – November 2, 2017
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I think man-made, greenhouse-gas-induced climate change is real, and Vermont policy leaders have a moral obligation to act. The question is, how best to act? My [recommendations](#), as published on Medium.com, are my own but are consistent with the mission of the Vermont Energy Partnership and the first annual [National Clean Energy Week \(NCEW\)](#), which was endorsed by the Partnership and by Governor Scott's [proclamation](#).

I agree with what Paul Costello said last week: entrepreneurs, not the State, will drive Vermont's progress on emissions reduction. It is more consumer-friendly and therefore in the long run more sustainable and effective to empower consumers to use cleaner energy, and less of it. Look what happened when Freedom Nissan invested in consumer choice – it sold more EV Leafs, 151, than anywhere else except a huge dealership in San Francisco. Below I've isolated three niche ideas. A much more comprehensive treatment can be read on medium.com.

Bicycle sharing. Traffic jams of single-occupant cars waste two precious commodities: human productivity and fossil fuels. I suggest a “pilot” urban bicycle sharing system such as Boston's [Hubway](#) needs bikes, docking racks, and locations. This task is well-suited for a B-Corp. As for rack locations—I know at least one Burlington developer who would be receptive.

Also, our friend Andrew Savage is director of strategic development for [LimeBike](#), a dockless bike sharing company with over \$50 million in capital raised in October. He knows us, we know him, perhaps our Chittenden County legislators could lead a delegation to reach out to him to offer greater Burlington as a site.

Green roofs are as yet under-appreciated in Vermont. Growing vegetables on a “green roof” scores on four sustainability goals: superb insulation, stormwater reduction, carbon reduction, and locally-grown food. When I was a roofing contractor (2006–10), I wanted to develop this niche couldn't but find anyone who did it; there are more installers now. Possible action: 1. Imitate the [Washington DC green roof rebate program](#). 2. Promote green roof benefits and current [education](#) opportunities on state Ag and Economic Development websites. Instate contacts could include [NOFA](#), [Landshapes](#) and other businesses and trade organizations.

Energy innovation incubator. At the NCEW symposium in September, I learned about Burlington interest in [Greentown Labs](#), a clean energy innovation incubator space with many U.S. and international facilities. Ranger Solar, a major player in Vermont's solar scene, is a graduate of GL's Somerville, MA location.

In short—the path to cleaner air is through the consumer led by government/business cooperation and leadership. The masses won't be driven. But the consumer is waiting to be led.