



People. Planet. Prosperity.

2019 Public Policy Agenda

Our mission is to foster a business ethic in Vermont that recognizes the opportunity and responsibility of the business community to set a high standard for protecting the natural, human & economic environments of our citizens. Our vision is a dynamic society in which employees, employers, customers, suppliers, the communities in which they live, and future generations all prosper as a business succeeds.



Raise the Minimum Wage & Create Paid Family Leave

Vermont can fix our affordability crisis by putting our minimum wage on the path to a living wage through phased-in increases to \$15 over five years, resulting in a raise for tens of thousands of workers on a timeline that works for small businesses. The creation of a paid family leave system would give financial security to Vermonters who need to take time off to recover from an illness, care for a sick family member, or welcome a child into their household. These are both common sense and business-friendly solutions to Vermont's economic problems.

Grow Vermont's Economy with Decarbonization

Climate change has economic & environmental consequences. Burning fossil fuels threatens iconic Vermont industries such as winter recreation, agriculture, and tourism. While the White House retreats from our responsibilities to future generations, Vermont needs to lead - and show the rest of the country that a growing economy and a healthy planet go hand-in-hand. Pricing carbon pollution and using the revenue to reduce expenses for low & middle income Vermonters helps those who are most vulnerable to climate change.



Thank you to our Champion Members for their continued support

The Alchemist, AllEarth Renewables, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, City Market, Gardener's Supply Company, Green Mountain Power, Keurig Green Mountain, National Life Group, New Chapter, Northfield Savings Bank, Seventh Generation, SunCommon, Villanti Printers, VEIC, VSECU



Reform Our Broken Health Care System

The average cost to an employer for a family health care plan is approaching \$20,000 a year. The growth in health care costs is unsustainable and hampers job growth and salary increases. Vermont needs to continue to work to find ways to reduce unnecessary waste in our health care system and invest in primary and preventative care, including establishing a Universal Primary Care system and collaborating with states such as California and New York that are considering creating their own state-based universal health care systems.

Establish a Student Loan Repayment Tax Benefit

The average student graduating in 2017 has \$40,000 in college loan debt. Student loans are now the second largest category of personal debt, behind home mortgages. Many employers are now helping their workers pay off college debt by offering a student loan repayment benefit, similar to a 401K program. Unlike health insurance or higher education enrollment costs, these contributions face federal and state tax penalties. Vermont should make it easier for employers to help their employees pay off student debt by making these programs a tax-free employee benefit.



Save Our Lakes and Rivers

Poorly planned development, failing infrastructure & outdated agricultural practices have caused serious environmental consequences for Vermont's waterways. Lake Champlain alone generates \$300 million in tourism annually - our economy hurts when beaches are closed due to pollution outbreaks. We should follow the recommendation of the Vermont State Treasurer's Office to establish a small per parcel fee to fund pollution mitigation while also helping and encouraging farms, municipalities, and developers to adopt more sustainable practices.

For more information visit www.vbsr.org. To become involved, or if you have questions about our public policy work please contact our Public Policy Manager Daniel Barlow at DanielB@vbsr.org (802) 862-8347.

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