

Hello, my name is Evelyn Seidner; thank you to the committee for this opportunity to give testimony on an important piece of legislation, the Global Warming Solutions Act. I am a senior at Burr and Burton Academy, a resident of Middletown Springs, and an officer of the Vermont Youth Lobby. I am here today because we are facing a threat to humanity and the world unlike any other: the climate crisis. Everyday, the consequences of climate inaction become more dire. According to the consensus of scientists, there is no longer time to stall or debate certain policies. Now is the time to accept that we have pushed the facts of science aside for too long and now is the time to do whatever it takes to save the planet. We are nearing the point of no return. If bold climate legislation does not get signed into law very soon, we will have failed the only home we know, we will have failed future generations, and we will have failed my generation, too. Our Earth has provided everything for us while we have exploited and destroyed it to a breaking point. Together, we must do all we can to save what is left of the home we know before it is too late.

Everyone must do their part, Vermont included. While outsiders may view us as a “green” state, our carbon emissions have risen since 1990 while emissions in neighboring states have fallen. Vermont may be small, but what we do matters. Passing strong climate legislation this session, would show the rest of the country that the climate crisis is an existential threat to humankind and should be treated like one. The Global Warming Solutions Act could do this. This bill takes an important first step towards positive change by making reductions goals, requirements. It also directly cites the IPCC in its legislative findings, legitimizing the bill with the real science and facts on which to base our actions.

However, the Youth Lobby and VT youth in general believe that the timeline in place for making these reductions in emissions happen is still not aggressive enough. Last November, the Youth Climate Congress brought together youth from all over the state to call attention to the seriousness of the climate crisis. From that day came a climate declaration. Youth wrote and voted together and in the declaration, is the goal to achieve net zero by 2032, in accordance with what science is telling us. While the Global Warming Solutions Act does acknowledge the destruction our state, country and world will face if we continue to delay action, the current reduction timeline doesn't fully take into account the importance of acting as fast as possible to reduce emissions and support a transition to a carbon free state. On Page 4, point 3 of the bill there is information about the vital importance of “substantially reducing emissions” over the next ten years, but the bill has emissions being reduced by only 40%, which is not enough. The reductions timeline doesn't reflect what science is telling us, or what the youth, who will be the ones left to deal with the consequences believe to be necessary.

I am fearful of what my future might look like in 50 years if action is not taken now. I don't have the luxury of pushing aside the need to act on climate because for me, this is going to be my life. Inaction is worse than action, and we all need to do our part. I urge you do yours.

Thank you. I will now take any questions you might have.