

The latest IPCC report tells us we have till 2030 to reduce GHG emissions by half if we are not to suffer dire and world changing consequences in following decades. We have just a little more than ten years to do what Vermont can to help keep global temperatures at no more than 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels.

What will these next ten years be like if you don't enact the three bills you have before you? And how will they be different if you do?

If you don't pass legislation to prohibit new fossil fuel infrastructure, it's likely that Vermont Gas Systems, recovering quickly from tap on the wrist fines --and perhaps a little required repair work-- for botching construction of the ANGP, will go on to expand its pipeline to Bristol, then west to Rutland and on to Glens Falls, NY to link to the Marcellus, increasing on balance Vermont's GHG emissions. There will be long legal battles as citizens challenge these projects as well as civil disobedience by folks who will also oppose them, and no question about it eminent domain will be threatened and used to move people from their homes to make way for the pipelines. All of this at great cost of money, energy and time.

But that's not all. If the legislature in the next ten years does move toward the numbers of EVs and heat pumps many think will be necessary for the State to reach its GHG emissions goals, new demand for electricity at this scale could very well induce ISO New England, the manager of our grid, to renew its pressure for more gas generated electricity to meet the need. Within the last few years, there already has been one proposal for a Vermont electric plant fired by fracked gas, delivered by a Kinder Morgan pipeline. A project like this would multiply the effects I've already mentioned.

But what will Vermont be like if you do pass no new fossil fuel legislation? Vermont Gas will be foreclosed from building new pipelines, and construction of gas fired electric plants in Vermont won't be possible. There will be no costly, painful PUC hearings on new fossil fuel infrastructure projects, no need for citizens to oppose or peacefully disrupt them and no one will be driven from home by threats of eminent domain to clear a path for them.

With all this waste of time, money, human energy and imagination out of the picture, Vermonters --and I mean concerned and thoughtful citizens at large and not just legislators and state officials-- will be able to turn instead to the really hard, necessary work of planning and building renewable sources of energy to be used in state with funds that will be kept in the state's economy and not moved away. This will require Vermonters from the local level on up to make careful decisions about energy efficiency and conservation, and about land use and siting of new infrastructure, net metering, Renewable Energy Credits, and what should count as genuinely renewable and sustainable energy. In short, it's we who should get to work on these real problems without quibbling about goals, or gimmicks to meet them, and without leaving the decisions to the big nationwide or international interests who know only how to go on pressing on us the extractive and polluting technologies we know are obsolete and dangerous.

Therefore, we urge you to vote the bills before you out of committee, moving them on to the Senate.

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