



# Vermont Climate Economy Action Team

April 17, 2019

Senator Jane Kitchel, Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Senator Kitchel and the Members of Senate Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the Climate Economy Action Team, (CEAT) the leadership team of the 470 participants in the VT Climate Economy Partnership, we want to first thank you for all the work you do to manage the budget and finances of our state.

We are a group dedicated to building a vital future for Vermont through innovation in energy development, the wise use and reuse of resources, efficiencies, smart growth, and a strong working lands economy. We believe in advancing initiatives to expand distributed energy generation and efficiency in Vermont, cultivate climate economy entrepreneurs and startup businesses, and reduce Vermont's carbon impact while boosting economic development, creating jobs, capturing market share in this arena, and attracting youth and creative entrepreneurs to the state.

## Looking at the House passed budget, CEAT recognizes several key investments supporting efficiencies and electric transportation.

- \$250K collaboration with EVT to expand electrical efficiency services
- \$250K grant to non-profits for weatherization services for moderate income Vermonters
- \$350K for training to provide weatherization services in H.533
- Extension of the agreement with Efficiency Vermont to support efficiency staff in BGS
- The \$1.5M electric vehicle incentive program and \$300K for electric vehicle charging stations around the State
- Funding for \$500K for electric vehicles and charging stations for State government

## Additional Investment in Weatherization

The House acted to increase funding to begin to meet Vermont's weatherization needs. For Vermonters, more money in weatherization means warmer homes, reduction in burdensome heating costs, comfort, and a decrease in adverse health impacts. Increasing weatherization efforts will move Vermont towards statewide efficiency goals, create jobs and workforce development opportunities, reduce carbon emissions, and lower heating costs for low income Vermonters for years to come.

In 2007, the legislature set a goal of weatherizing 20,000 low income homes by 2020. As of March 2016, there was still a gap of 9,200 homes. Currently, Vermont spends about \$9.5 million annually to weatherize about 1,000 homes through the Weatherization Assistance Program. Scaling up weatherization services through the Vermont Agency of Human Services Low Income Weatherization Program and Community Action Agencies can have long-term benefits for low income Vermonters. The House passed H439 to add an additional \$4.6 million. CEAT supports the doubling of the number of low income homes weatherized with a doubling of Weatherization funding in the 2020 budget.

The **Vermont Climate Economy Action Team** is dedicated to advancing initiatives to expand distributed energy generation and efficiency in Vermont, cultivate climate economy entrepreneurs and startup businesses, and reduce Vermont's carbon impact while boosting economic development, creating jobs, and attracting youth and creative entrepreneurs to the state. Members of the team represent the over 460 participants in the **Vermont Climate Economy Partnership**

dedicated to building a vital future for Vermont through innovation in energy development, the wise use and reuse of resources, efficiencies, smart growth, and a strong working lands economy.

### CEAT Members include:

**Joe Fusco**, Casella Waste Solutions (Chair)  
**Ludy Biddle**, Neighborworks of Western VT  
**Olivia Campbell Andersen**, Renewable Energy Vermont

**Catherine Dimitruk**, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

**Jared Duval**, Energy Action Network  
**Chad Farrell**, Encore Renewable Energy  
**Laurie Fielder**, VSECU

**Judy Geer**, Craftsbury Outdoor Center  
**Claire Humber**, SE Group  
**Ellen Kahler**, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund  
**Linda McGinnis**, Independent Consultant  
**Sue Minter**, Capstone Community Action

**James Moore**, SunCommon  
**Mary Peterson**, Burlington Electric Dep.  
**Mark Sciarrotta**, VELCO

**Nick Richardson**, Vermont Land Trust  
**Brian Shupe**, VNRC

**David Snedeker**, Northern Vermont Development Association

**Ross Sneyd**, National Life Group  
**Darren Springer**, Burlington Electric Dept  
**Abby White**, VT Energy Investment Corp

**Larry Williams**, Redstone  
**Alex Wilson**, BuildingGreen

### VCRD Staff:

**Jon Copans**, Climate Economy Model Communities Program Director  
**Paul Costello**, Executive Director  
**Jenna Koloski**, Community and Policy Manager

**Continue to Facilitate a Shift to Electric Vehicles**

Because electric vehicles (EVs) are inherently more efficient than internal combustion vehicles (three times so), they can save energy, reduce costs, and dramatically lower CO2 emissions. To facilitate the long term electric vehicle affordability and accessibility for all Vermonters, Vermont should continue to increase market signals to Vermonters, making it more affordable and attractive at time of sale to purchase electric vehicles.

Toward this end, CEAT encourages the Legislature to prioritize resources to eliminate purchase and use taxes on new and used EVs and Plug in Hybrids up to the first \$30,000 of vehicular value. This incentive could dramatically expand the marketplace this year.

Thank you for your consideration,



Paul Costello

Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development, on behalf of the Climate Economy Action Team