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Dear members of the Vermont Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Committees,

Thanks for your service to our state.

Our climate is changing. Human activities are the primary cause of the changes. The effects will be enormous. Time is short. Our resources are limited.

While our state is currently working to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, much remains to be done. We need to get started with expanding and intensifying our efforts, and we need to use our resources wisely. Our State Budget should invest strategically in reducing our climate impacts. I see two key opportunities to reducing those impacts.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse-gas emissions in Vermont, contributing 43% of Vermont's emissions. One large potential contributor to eliminating these emissions is replacing vehicles powered by internal combustion engines with electric vehicles. Affordability is a barrier, particularly for those with low and moderate incomes. Funds from Volkswagen and Fiat/Chrysler settlements can help these people get over the barrier. This barrier will shrink over time as costs of these vehicles decline. With limited resources, deferring programs to help low- and moderate-income people purchase electric vehicles creates an opportunity to get a bigger bang for bucks invested. However, strategic investments now can ensure that we get even bigger bangs later. Pilot projects, demonstrations and other small projects can help us learn what programs are most effective at accelerating adoption of EV's, so that we are prepared to act quickly and effectively as prices come down. We should dedicate the \$4.5 million from these settlements to developing and implementing multi-year, cost-effective programs to accelerate adoption of EV's by low- and moderate-income Vermonters. Work on these programs should begin in FY 2020.

Vermont's Weatherization Assistance Program has been helping low-income households to become more energy-efficient for several years. The rate at which the Program has been weatherizing homes is not sufficient. We should double the number of homes assisted. Some funding should also be allocated to finding, developing and deploying low-cost methods of improving home energy efficiency. The potential savings to Vermont are large. The Vermont Energy Action Network estimated the cost of upgrading energy efficiency in Vermont's buildings at \$9 billion. This is the largest single portion of the \$33 billion in investments needed to replace fossil energy in Vermont with renewable energy. Finding practices and technologies to reduce that \$9 billion by 10% would save Vermont and Vermonters \$900 million. The public and nonprofit sectors can play roles in this that the private sector wouldn't play, due to intellectual property rights, profit potential or risk. Reducing these costs will benefit all Vermonters, accelerating weatherization at all income levels.

I appreciate your efforts to create a Vermont that will thrive into the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rick Wackernagel