



**Testimony of Peter Sterling, Renewable Vermont Interim Executive Director
in Support of Burlington's Thermal Energy Charter Change in H.448
March 22nd, 2022
Senate Government Operations Committee**

Good afternoon, I am Peter Sterling the interim executive director of Renewable Energy Vermont, the trade association representing Vermont's renewable energy industry. Many thanks for making time for my testimony here today.

REV applauds the City of Burlington, Burlington Electric Department and importantly the voters of Burlington for working together to become a Net Zero Energy city by 2030. The leadership and vision of municipalities will be critical if Vermont is going to meet the greenhouse gas reduction goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act and do its part in reducing the impacts of climate change on our ever-warming planet.

We support the City of Burlington's thermal charter change language in H.448 as an important step towards reducing Burlington's reliance on fossil fuels. Building energy use is the largest single source of carbon emissions in Burlington. Allowing the City of Burlington the authority to assess a carbon impact fee or alternative compliance fee to incentivize fossil fuel free heating and thermal systems in the construction of new buildings is a creative alternative to otherwise costly and time consuming retrofitting requirements necessary to reduce or eliminate fossil fuel use.

Importantly, this option does not seem like a significant deviation from fossil fuel reduction initiatives already underway in Burlington or statewide. Its enactment will allow the City a more active role in encouraging clean heating and cooling alternatives to fossil fuels while supporting additional work for renewable energy and energy efficiency contractors.

In this case, allowing Burlington to move faster to reduce its carbon footprint will not result in any inconsistency of policies, it's simply one municipality, Vermont's largest, trying to make progress on an ambitious local climate goal, one that moves in same direction as the rest of Vermont under the Global Warming Solutions Act and other policies.

In closing, REV believes that changes such as this one are an important step towards a 100% fossil fuel free future and that the State of Vermont and the Vermont Legislature should be encouraging municipalities to move even faster than the goals set by the Global Warming Solutions Act in order to combat the very real threats from climate change. Burlington's work to eliminate fossil fuel use in its thermal sector can and should serve as a model for the rest of the state. Thank you.

