

1 Introduced by Senator Bray

2 Referred to Committee on

3 Date:

4 Subject: Air pollution; climate change; building efficiency and weatherization;

5 Home Weatherization Assistance Fund; energy efficiency utility

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to set a goal of  
7 weatherizing 120,000 homes within 10 years; to establish a thermal energy  
8 efficiency charge; to create a study committee that will examine how best to  
9 expand the State’s weatherization and building energy efficiency programs,  
10 expand the workforce in the weatherization and efficiency sectors; and to  
11 authorize a Public Utility Commission proceeding concerning the thermal  
12 efficiency charge.

13 An act relating to the Vermonters’ Enhanced Energy Savings Act

14 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

15 Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

16 This act may be cited as the Vermonters’ Enhanced Energy Savings Act.

17 \* \* \* Building Efficiency Goals and a Thermal Efficiency Charge \* \* \*

18 Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 581 is amended to read:

19 § 581. BUILDING EFFICIENCY GOALS

20 It shall be goals of the State:



1 shall include a statement that the ~~tax~~ charge is “for support of Vermont’s Low  
2 Income Home Weatherization Program.”

3 (c) The ~~tax~~ thermal energy efficiency charge shall be administered by the  
4 Commissioner of Taxes, and all receipts shall be deposited by the  
5 Commissioner in the Home Weatherization Assistance Fund. All provisions of  
6 law relating to the collection, administration, and enforcement of the sales and  
7 use tax imposed by 32 V.S.A. chapter 233 shall apply to the ~~tax~~ thermal energy  
8 efficiency charge imposed by this chapter.

9 (d) No ~~tax~~ charge under ~~this~~ section (a)(1) shall be imposed for any month  
10 ending after-June 30, 2024. On or before May 1, 2024, the Public Utility  
11 Commission shall establish by order or rule a volumetric charge on  
12 unregulated fuels for the support of thermal energy efficiency programs.

13 Sec. 4. 33 V.S.A. § 2501 is amended to read:

14 § 2501. HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE FUND

15 (a) There is created in the State Treasury a fund to be known as the Home  
16 Weatherization Assistance Fund to be expended by the Director of the State  
17 Office of Economic Opportunity in accordance with federal law and this  
18 chapter.

19 (b) The Fund shall be composed of the receipts from the ~~gross receipts tax~~  
20 thermal efficiency charge on retail sales of fuel imposed by section 2503 of  
21 this title, such funds as may be allocated from the Oil Overcharge Fund, such

1 funds as may be allocated from the federal Low Income Energy Assistance  
2 Program, such funds as may be deposited or transferred into the Fund by the  
3 Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity, and such other funds as may be  
4 appropriated by the General Assembly.

5 \* \* \*

6 \* \* \* Study Committee and Report \* \* \*

7 Sec. 5. STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

8 (a) Creation. There is created the Enhanced Energy Savings Study  
9 Committee to study creating a complete system of delivery for services that  
10 will reduce the cost of heating homes and businesses while also reducing their  
11 greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee shall address providing sufficient  
12 revenue to expand the State’s weatherization and building energy efficiency  
13 programs, creating a system of comprehensive and integrated counseling and  
14 service delivery to support Vermonters with low and moderate-income in  
15 improving the energy efficiency of their homes, expanding the workforce in  
16 the weatherization and efficiency sectors, supporting the program of work  
17 through the use of building and energy codes, and investigating the benefits of  
18 an analogous statewide savings program for transportation energy efficiency.

19 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following  
20 members:

1           (1) Six current members of the House of Representatives, not all from  
2           the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House to  
3           represent each of the following Committees: Appropriations, Commerce and  
4           Economic Development, Education, Energy and Technology, Transportation  
5           and Ways and Means; and

6           (2) Six current members of the Senate, not all from the same political  
7           party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees to represent  
8           each of the following Committees: Appropriations, Economic Development,  
9           Housing, and Military Affairs, Education, Finance, Natural Resources Energy,  
10           and Transportation.

11           (3) The appointments shall be made within 15 days of passage of this  
12           act.

13           (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study how to:

14           (1) Ensure sufficient revenue to support the programs and initiatives  
15           necessary to weatherize and substantially improve the energy efficiency of at  
16           least 120,000 housing units by 2031 pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 581, including  
17           how to:

18           (A) Ensure sufficient revenue to expand the Home Weatherization  
19           Assistance Program and other programs that assist low and moderate-income  
20           Vermonters in weatherizing and improving the energy efficiency of their  
21           homes.

1           (B) Utilize existing and new revenue streams, including bonding,  
2           innovative customer payment approaches including on the meter billing, the  
3           collection of a thermal energy efficiency charge, and accessing health care  
4           programs and funding to support weatherization and improving building  
5           energy efficiency.

6           (2) Develop and implement a statewide integrated system of counseling  
7           and service delivery that will support low and moderate-income Vermonters in  
8           weatherizing and improving the energy efficiency of their homes, while  
9           treating them with dignity and respect.

10           (3) Develop and sustain a skilled and well-paid workforce that will be  
11           sufficient to meet the State’s building efficiency and weatherization goals,  
12           including how to:

13           (A) utilize the skills and customer networks of traditional fuel dealers  
14           to ensure that they can adopt and prosper as customers transition to fuels with  
15           lower carbon intensity, including low and no-carbon fuels;

16           (B) ensure workers with existing skills in construction-related fields,  
17           including building design, construction, renovation, and maintenance, have the  
18           training and expertise to work on weatherization and energy efficiency  
19           projects; and

20           (C) attract, train, and retain new workers, including high school  
21           students and members of traditionally disadvantaged communities and

1 communities that are underrepresented in the weatherization and energy  
2 efficiency fields.

3 (4) Examine how building and energy codes can enhance the  
4 implementation of weatherization and the transition to low-carbon and no-  
5 carbon fuels.

6 (5) Provide customers, realtors, and contractors with information on  
7 building codes and building weatherization, energy efficiency, and energy  
8 benchmarking.

9 (6) Expand the programs and services provided to low and moderate-  
10 income Vermonters by community action agencies to include transportation  
11 efficiency and savings services.

12 (d) Administrative, fiscal, and legal support. The Committee shall receive:

13 (1) administrative assistance and support from the Office of Legislative  
14 Operations;

15 (2) fiscal- and budget-related advice and support from the Joint Fiscal  
16 Office; and

17 (3) legal advice and support from the Office of Legislative Counsel.

18 (e) Report. On or before January 14, 2022, the Committee shall report to  
19 the House Committee on Energy and Technology and the Senate Committees  
20 on Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy with its findings and any  
21 recommendations for legislative action.

1        (f) Meetings.

2            (1) The Office of Legislative Counsel shall call the first meeting of the  
3        Committee within 30 days of passage of this act.

4            (2) The Committee shall select a chair and vice chair from among its  
5        members at the first meeting.

6            (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

7            (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 15, 2022.

8            (5) The Committee shall take testimony on its duties under subsection  
9        (c) of this section from a wide variety of stakeholders and experts, including  
10       the Department of Public Service, the Public Utility Commission, the Agency  
11       of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Natural  
12       Resources, and the Department of Labor.

13           (g) Compensation and reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during  
14       adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee  
15       shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses  
16       pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than twelve meetings. These payments  
17       shall be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

18           \* \* \* Public Utility Commission Proceeding and Report \* \* \*

19        Sec. 6. PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION PROCEEDING AND REPORT

20           (a) The Public Utility Commission shall calculate the amount of funds  
21       required to meet the goals of 10 V.S.A. § 581(1). The Commission shall:

1           (1) investigate how to collect the funds necessary meet those goals.

2           This investigation shall include how best to assess, impose, and collect the  
3           thermal energy efficiency charge, including:

4                   (A) how the Commission should set the amount of the charge,  
5           including the process the Commission should follow and the criteria and  
6           factors the Commission should consider in determining whether to revise the  
7           amount of the charge, including the carbon intensity of the fuel or energy  
8           source; and

9                   (B) how the charge should be utilized to support the State’s building  
10          efficiency, weatherization, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

11           (2) design a program for soliciting proposals to achieve the State’s  
12          greenhouse gas reductions, allocating funds to implement the program, and  
13          monitoring the program’s performance in meeting in goals.

14           (3) investigate any other topic or issue relevant to the thermal energy  
15          efficiency charge that the Commission considers relevant.

16           (b) On or before December 17, 2021, the Commission shall report on its  
17          findings and recommendations concerning the issues in subsection (a) of this  
18          section, including any suggested statutory changes, to the Weatherization and  
19          Building Energy Efficiency Study Committee established pursuant to Sec. 5 of  
20          this act, to the House Committee on Energy and Technology, and to the Senate  
21          Committees on Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy.

