



SIERRA CLUB

VERMONT CHAPTER

Vermont Chapter statement on adopting the Renewable Energy Standard Working Group Environmental and Utilities Reform agreement. 12/25/24

Over the last four months, the Sierra Club participated as a member of the legislative working group to draft an update to Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard statutes. We appreciated the opportunity to have a Sierra Club member, Chris Pearson, represent the working group. We are excited the process was able to create a viable solution for the majority of environmental and utility interests and hope to see this framework remain intact and make it into law.

We appreciate the work of the previous legislature that adopted the renewable energy standard that put us on the path to 75% renewable power by 2032. However, we believe that to meet Vermont's share of emissions reduction requirements we need to get to 100% renewables by 2030 and get new renewables built at a much faster pace than we are today. We must ensure that this includes more in-state renewable energy and more new renewables from within the region. The Sierra Club and the broader environmental coalition have argued that 30% of our energy should be from small in-state sources, for we believe it is important to keep energy dollars in the state and to create a resilient grid. In the end, the utilities agreed to reach 20% of power from small in-state solar, which we believe is a good start, however, we hope for them to strive for more and exceed that commitment.

Early in the process, there was broad agreement to push for 100% renewables by 2030. Some wanted a "clean energy" definition which would include nuclear sources of energy already on the grid but there wasn't much support for that idea. The Sierra Club has long questioned the inclusion of nuclear, biomass, and large-scale hydro as part of a low-carbon future. We believe that this push for new, in-region renewable sources is important to build new renewables and reduce Vermont's dependence on Renewable Energy Credits.

The unifying bill mandates 100% renewable electricity for almost all Vermonters by 2030 a significant improvement from the current requirement of 75% renewable by 2032. This bill is the result of a positive and unifying collaboration between Vermont's utilities and environmental advocates. The Sierra Club appreciates the opportunity to comment here and appreciates this committee's work to establish the working group last year. We are also grateful for Chair Sheldon and Vice Chair Sibilia's leadership of the working group. We look forward to advancing this important policy with our environmental colleagues and the utilities and urge the passage of H.289 as agreed upon.

Robb Kidd
Conservation Program Manager
Vermont Sierra Club
robb.kidd@sierraclub.org