

## Report on Vermont's Climate Council

*As created by the Global Warming Solutions Act*

**Major Time Commitment.** Monitoring Vermont's Climate Council requires substantial amounts of time. I am one of a handful of people attending as members of the public.

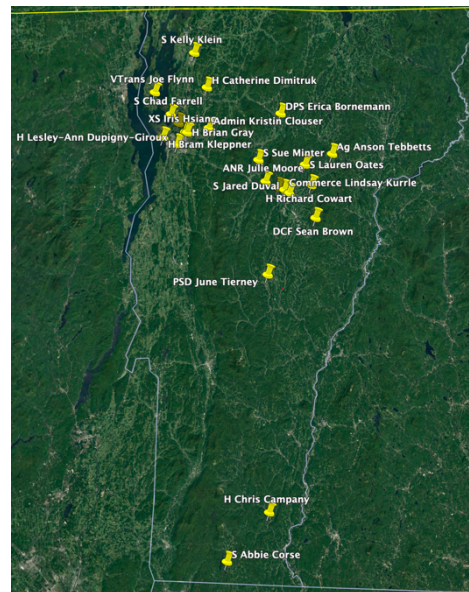
**Rural Areas Unrepresented.** Eight members are appointed to two-year seats by the Speaker of the House\*. Seven Senate Pro Tem appointees serve for three years. The remaining eight seats are written into statute representing state government. The governor's administration appointees are in the minority. Council membership is primarily made up of people who live in the "Burlington to Montpelier bubble." Incomes are not disclosed but most Councilors are likely not representative of the average Vermonters' income level. Rural areas of Vermont have no representation on the Climate Council.

**Dysfunctional Decision-Making.** The Climate Council has no decision-making structure. By statute the Sec. of Administration is Chair. Meetings facilitation is subcontracted to CBI of Mass. At the last meeting, the Report to the Legislature was an "action Item" on the agenda, was not voted on, but was sent to the legislature. Councilors did not discuss or vote to appoint Jared Duval to represent the Climate Council in the legislature. The legislature is not holding hearings to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council.

Subcommittees have co-chairs. Ag & Ecosystems has done a lot of work on their issues but feel powerless because the only mandate is emissions reductions. Cross Sector Mitigation (CSM) is the powerhouse. Jared Duval of EAN takes every opportunity to point out that without adopting this policy or that policy, the GWSA emission reduction mandates will not be met. The details of the Heat Standard were never discussed in the CSM subcommittee, which voted to support it and then recommended its addition to the Climate Action Plan. Few councilors understood and could explain the Heat Standard when it became part of the Climate Action Plan. Biofuels have never been discussed by any subcommittee or at any council meeting.

The Climate Action Plan was presented to the Climate Council less than 24 hours before the vote to adopt it. Nobody had time to read the whole thing before its adoption.

**Conflicts of Interest.** Richard Cowart is a member of the Climate Council, co-chair of the CSM subcommittee, and primary author of the Heat Standard, works for the Regulatory Assistance Project which got a \$200,000 contract to support the development of a Clean Heat Standard in Massachusetts. Other influential members of the CSM are Liz Miller who represents Green Mountain Power which will benefit financially by selling more electricity, and Jared Duval whose advocacy organization Energy Action Network's goals are advanced through the work of the CSM which is driving the Climate Council's Plan.



\*House appointments expired in October, reappointments were made without any public process, three people have left and their seats have not been filled. These appear to be appointments for life unless someone leaves voluntarily.