

Testimony in House Energy and Digital Infrastructure

In 2017 Phil Scott said we should keep our promises, but now he has referred to our goals as “arbitrary” and “too expensive”.

Firstly, these goals are not arbitrary. In a study done by Earth System Dynamics, it states that in 2035, we will cross a point of no return — after which it will be extremely unlikely we can stop Earth's temperature from rising by 2 degrees Celsius.

Between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius could mean substantially more poverty, extreme heat, sea level rise, habitat loss, and drought according to a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

As a teenager, when I hear the argument that this bill is too expensive, I hear that the investment in our future is too expensive. Your generation has profited more than from the industry pushing CO₂ into our atmosphere and yet you feel it is okay to push the cost of inaction and damage to our beautiful state to the next generation.

Hello all, thank you so much for having my peers and me here today and giving us time to speak with you. My name is Cora Potts, I am a sophomore at Harwood Union High School and I am here with my peers Jane Schaefer, Dahlia Cohn and Quincy Sabick to encourage you to not pass H.289 and continue to push Vermont to be a leader in climate legislation.

As you may know we are all a part of the Vermont Youth Lobby. Youth Lobby is an organization that has helped young Vermonters speak with a collective voice and have an impact on issues we care about for almost a decade.

I want to start this meeting by reminding you of the history Youth Lobby has had with the Global Warming Solutions Act. Almost 5 years ago, a group of high school students got out of school and got themselves to the statehouse to stand where we are today and present every committee in both the senate and the house with a climate declaration.

The Youth Lobby worked with a number of community partners to organize a Youth Climate Congress. The goal was to show lawmakers what we hoped they would do in the upcoming legislative session, and to learn from countries around the world about examples of public policy. Students gathered dozens of possible policy solutions onto a climate declaration that was shared with every committee.

These students fought hard for the passing of the global warming solutions act because they knew this bill would hold Vermont responsible for moving forward with climate legislation like a goal never could and never has.

In 2020 a former Youth Lobby member, and current climate action organizer for VNRC, Evelyn Seidner stood at a press conference in the cedar creek room and stated,

“We are nearing a point of no return, the climate crisis requires immediate action.” Our brave little state took immediate action, we passed the global warming solutions act, and we made a plan to move forward, and yet, I sit here today to ask that this progress does not become regress and we keep Vermont moving forward.

This is not another problem you can push away, it's not just a bill that you can repeal because you don't want to be the generation to pay for your mistakes. We care because by the time we are old enough to sit in your seat, we will not have the choice that you have now. This bill uses science based requirements and provides the climate caucus that will hold Vermont accountable for my future, and I don't believe that is something worth throwing away. Please take time to listen to what we are saying and vote no on H.289,
Thank you

Sources:

<https://vnrc.org/h-289/>

<https://esd.copernicus.org/articles/9/1085/2018/>

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/ipcc-climate-change-reports-why-they-matter-everyone-planet>