
To: House Committee on Energy & Digital Infrastructure
From: Lauren Hierl, Executive Director, Vermont Natural Resources Council
Date: February 4, 2026
Subject: Support for H.740, Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Registry

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.740 to create a Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Registry.

For the record, my name is Lauren Hierl, and I'm the executive director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council. VNRC is the oldest statewide nonprofit environmental organization in the state, and our mission is to promote a healthy environment and resilient communities for all Vermonters today and into the future.

As a group with thousands of members across Vermont who care deeply about clean air, clean water, flood resilience, healthy forests and wildlife, and sustainable communities, the urgency of addressing climate change only continues to grow.

As a resident of Montpelier whose community was absolutely devastated by flooding just a couple years ago, and as a city councilor for 6 years, wrestling with the growing and harmful impacts of climate change on our community, our taxpayers and our local budget - it's clear that we must continue doing our part to reduce climate pollution and build local resilience.

We also know energy affordability is a major concern in Vermont and across the country. Today, clean energy is the most affordable energy – but it takes good data and good policies to make a fair and equitable energy transition.

Unfortunately, our federal government is focused on rolling back clean energy progress and doubling down on outdated technologies. Just this past week there was a [Washington Post story](#) about how President Trump's pro-coal directives could raise energy prices by billions of dollars. The federal government eliminated subsidies, and is even trying to halt clean energy projects that are already under construction, including in New England. These actions harm ratepayers and are making energy less affordable for everyone.

Vermont is one of many states trying to take a different path forward, with solutions that can benefit our communities' health, resilience, energy independence, affordability, *and* do our part to address the climate crisis.

H.740 is a simple but meaningful bill. Creating a greenhouse gas inventory and registry will provide basic and essential information about what fuels are being used across the state, and therefore help us craft solutions to help Vermonters have affordable and resilient energy sources.

H.740 was included as a top priority of the environmental community in the 2026 Environmental Common Agenda - which represents the priorities of 22 Vermont organizations with deep ties in our communities.

VNRC was very active in the original enactment of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) in 2020. Johanna Miller on the VNRC team, who you'll hear from shortly, was appointed to the state's Climate Council, and has worked incredibly hard with the other volunteer members of that Council to craft our state's Climate Action Plan.

We knew the GWSA was essential because VNRC has worked on climate and clean energy issues for many years, and we knew that having goals and aspirations did not translate into action to help Vermonters. By creating a robust set of pollution reduction targets paired with a broad group of stakeholders to shape solutions, we could take on this huge challenge in a very Vermont way.

One thing we have learned from many years of this work is that good data is invaluable for helping understand what is happening for Vermont families, businesses and communities, and therefore what types of solutions will most benefit Vermonters.

At VNRC, we do a lot of work with local communities, and they are also trying to do energy planning, and this energy data will be incredibly useful to help them inform local strategies to help take charge of their own energy futures. We support the inclusion of regional- and municipal-level data in H.740, and in particular support collecting and providing data in some form at the municipal level since that's the level where "enhanced energy planning" is happening across the state, per Act 174.

We support the scope of the reporting program outlined by the Agency of Natural Resources - covering suppliers of transportation and heating fuels for the transportation, residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, as this will cover about 70% of greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont.

We know this work will take resources, so we also urge the committee to support sufficient funding to enable the ANR team to stand up and implement this reporting program in your budget letter to the Appropriations committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.