

H.767

Introduced by Representative Tagliavia of Corinth

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Conservation and development; climate change; air pollution;

renewable energy; land conservation; Act 250; future land use maps;

Renewable Energy Standard; Clean Heat Standard

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to pause

multiple climate-change-related laws for eight years.

An act relating to moratoria on climate change programs

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

* * * Findings and Purpose * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 59 and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181

have imposed regulatory burdens that may increase housing costs and limit

development opportunities, infringing on private property rights by overriding

individual landowner's decisions and local control.

(2) The Global Warming Solutions Act establishes emissions reduction

targets that could lead to higher energy costs through mandated transitions to

1 cleaner energy sources, restricting individual rights to choose affordable
2 energy options and violating private property rights through enforced
3 compliance.

4 (3) The Renewable Energy Standard established in 30 V.S.A. chapter 89
5 requires utilities to procure increasing percentages of electricity from
6 renewable sources, aiming for 100 percent by 2030 or 2035 depending on the
7 utility, which may result in higher electricity rates and program costs for
8 ratepayers, burdening individuals and property owners with unnecessary
9 expenses.

10 (4) The Clean Heat Standard aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
11 from heating fuels but may result in increased costs for heating and energy for
12 households with low and moderate income, limiting personal freedoms in
13 energy consumption.

14 (5) These acts, while intended to promote environmental sustainability,
15 may inadvertently exacerbate affordability challenges in housing and energy,
16 particularly in rural areas of Vermont, and encroach on fundamental individual
17 rights to economic self-determination and private property use.

18 (6) A temporary moratorium is necessary to evaluate the cumulative
19 impacts on housing availability, energy affordability, and overall costs to
20 Vermonters, allowing time for alternative approaches that balance

1 environmental goals with economic realities, while safeguarding private
2 property rights against regulatory overreach.

3 (7) On September 17, 2025, Governor Phil Scott issued Executive Order
4 06-25, which promotes housing construction and rehabilitation by directing
5 State agencies to streamline permitting processes, reduce or defer fees for
6 multifamily housing, adjust building energy standards such as the Residential
7 Building Energy Standards (RBES) and Commercial Building Energy
8 Standards (CBES) to mitigate cost impacts, identify and resolve regulatory
9 barriers, and provide monthly performance reports on permit processing times
10 and housing project approvals. This order addresses housing affordability by
11 aiming to lower development costs and accelerate the production of needed
12 housing units, with Vermont requiring approximately 40,000 new homes by
13 2030, particularly for renters who often spend over 50 percent of their income
14 on housing. However, the Executive Order's focus on administrative reforms
15 does not fully mitigate the statutory burdens imposed by the targeted acts,
16 necessitating this legislative moratorium to pause additional cost drivers and
17 allow for a comprehensive evaluation of combined impacts, including
18 protections for individual and property rights.

19 (8) Scientific evidence from the CO2 Coalition indicates that higher
20 CO2 levels, such as doubling to 800 ppm, would boost plant growth by 40–46
21 percent, enhancing Vermont's agricultural output, such as dairy and maple, and

1 drought resistance, countering mandates that treat CO2 solely as a pollutant
2 and infringe on individual rights to benefit from natural processes.

3 (9) Physicist William Happer's analyses show CO2 is essential for life,
4 with benefits like improved crop efficiency and minimal warming (1°C per
5 doubling), outweighing costs in rural economies like Vermont's, and saturation
6 physics demonstrates no dangerous warming from greenhouse gases,
7 supporting the protection of individual rights against unfounded regulatory
8 restrictions.

9 (10) Energy analyses by Peter Clack reveal decarbonization adds
10 billions in costs, such as \$275 trillion globally by 2050 for net zero
11 infrastructure, without acknowledging CO2's role in affordable energy and
12 ecosystem health, emphasizing the need to protect private property from
13 excessive financial burdens.

14 (11) Electroverse data confirms CO2-driven greening, with 55.15
15 percent accelerated global greening from 2001–2020 and global vegetation up
16 15 percent since the 1980s due to CO2, supporting Vermont's forests and
17 reducing net emissions through natural sequestration, thus benefiting
18 individual property owners in agriculture and forestry.

19 (12) Data from the 2022 Hunga Tonga eruption shows it injected 150 Tg
20 of water vapor, causing stratospheric cooling (-4K) and minor surface cooling,
21 persisting into 2025, indicating natural events like volcanic activity can explain

1 recent anomalies more than CO2, per 2024–2025 studies, justifying a pause on
2 mandates that overlook such factors while infringing on private property
3 through enforced transitions.

4 (13) Glacial ice core research, including Vostok, EPICA, demonstrates
5 CO2 lagged temperature by 800–1,000 years in historical cycles, with lower
6 glacial CO2 (190–250 ppm) acting as a feedback, not driver, supporting that
7 CO2 is beneficial for greening and agriculture, and regulations treating it as a
8 pollutant unduly restrict private property rights in land and energy use, with
9 recent 2025 studies showing CO2 lag during glacial cooling initiation, such as
10 13,000 years in Eemian.

11 (14) These scientific insights, combined with CO2’s role in boosting
12 plant growth by 40–50 percent per doubling; drought resistance; and global
13 greening, including a 14 percent vegetated area increase since 1980, highlight
14 that environmental mandates may exacerbate costs without proportional
15 benefits, while eroding private property rights and individual freedoms
16 essential for Vermont’s economic vitality, such as developing land for housing
17 amid a 24,000–36,000 unit shortage by 2029.

18 (15) Research by Bjørn Lomborg demonstrates that the total cost of
19 untreated climate change is moderate, equivalent to a 3.6 percent reduction in
20 global gross domestic product across the century, far less than the trillions in
21 costs from aggressive policies like the Paris Agreement, which could cost

1 \$819–\$1,890 billion annually by 2030 while delivering only \$0.11 in climate
2 benefits per dollar spent, underscoring the inefficiency of such regulations and
3 fees that burden private property owners and individual rights.

4 (16) Lomborg’s analyses show that optimal, realistic climate policies,
5 such as modest carbon taxes, could reduce global temperature rise from 4.1°C
6 to 3.75°C by 2100 at a cost of \$18 trillion, with benefits twice the costs, while
7 pursuing unrealistic targets like 2°C would leave the world over \$250 trillion
8 worse off, supporting a moratorium on costly Vermont regulations to avoid
9 undue economic harm and protect individual freedoms in energy choices.

10 (17) Lomborg advocates for investing in research and development for
11 cheaper green energy alternatives rather than subsidies and mandates that drive
12 up energy prices, as current climate policies have spent trillions, including
13 \$4 trillion globally, without making renewables competitive, emphasizing
14 smarter approaches that respect private property rights and reduce fees on
15 Vermonters.

16 (b) The purpose of this act is to impose an eight-year moratorium on the
17 implementation and enforcement of 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 59, 2024 Acts
18 and Resolves No. 181, the Global Warming Solutions Act, the Renewable
19 Energy Standard, and the Clean Heat Standard to provide relief on
20 affordability issues, protect private property rights and individual rights, and to
21 study potential reforms based on the latest scientific data.

* * * Act 59 * * *

Sec. 2. MORATORIUM

Effective upon passage, an eight-year moratorium is imposed on the implementation, enforcement, and any new regulations under 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 59. During this period, no new land use restrictions or planning requirements under this act shall be applied to housing development projects aimed at increasing affordable housing stock, preserving private property rights.

* * * Act 181 * * *

Sec. 3. MORATORIUM

Effective upon passage, an eight-year moratorium is imposed on the implementation, enforcement, and any new regulations under 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, including the development or revision of future land use maps and operations of the Land Use Review Board as they pertain to housing and development. This moratorium shall prioritize maintaining private property rights and individual rights by suspending State-imposed reviews that override owner decisions and local control over land use.

* * * Global Warming Solutions Act * * *

Sec. 4. MORATORIUM

Effective upon passage, an eight-year moratorium is imposed on new mandates, emissions reduction requirements, or enforcement actions under the

1 Global Warming Solutions Act (10 V.S.A. chapter 24) that directly impact
2 housing costs or energy affordability. Existing programs may continue, but no
3 expansions or new compliance costs shall be imposed on residential or
4 commercial sectors during this period, protecting individual rights to
5 affordable energy.

6 * * * Renewable Energy Standard * * *

7 Sec. 5. MORATORIUM

8 Effective upon passage, an eight-year moratorium is imposed on new
9 mandates, increases in renewable procurement targets, or enforcement actions
10 under the Renewable Energy Standard (30 V.S.A. chapter 89) that would
11 impose additional costs on ratepayers. No expansions, new tier requirements,
12 or additional compliance costs shall be imposed on utilities or passed on to
13 consumers during this period, safeguarding private property from economic
14 burdens.

15 * * * Clean Heat Standard * * *

16 Sec. 6. MORATORIUM

17 Effective upon passage, an eight-year moratorium is imposed on the
18 implementation, enforcement, and any new regulations under the Clean Heat
19 Standard. This includes pausing any carbon credit systems, fuel surcharges, or
20 transition requirements that could increase heating costs for Vermonters,
21 respecting individual rights in energy choices.

* * * Study * * *

Sec. 7. STUDY AND REPORT

(a) The Agency of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Public Utility Commission, shall conduct a comprehensive study on the impacts of the moratoria under this act.

(b) The study shall include:

(1) an analysis of effects on housing availability, energy costs, and overall affordability;

(2) recommendations for alternative policies that achieve environmental goals without undue economic burden or infringement on private property rights and individual rights;

(3) consideration of competition with other bills, such as S.127, regarding land use and energy reforms;

(4) an evaluation of the implementation and effects of the Governor's Executive Order 06-25 on housing construction, rehabilitation, and affordability, including how it interacts with the moratoria proposed in this act;

(5) a specific assessment of the Renewable Energy Standard's impacts on electricity rates, ratepayer costs, and energy affordability, including potential alternatives for renewable procurement;

1 (6) an evaluation of CO2's beneficial effects on plant growth, greening,
2 and agriculture, using data from the CO2 Coalition, Happer, Clack analyses,
3 and Electroverse to assess if reduction targets overlook economic gains and
4 violate individual rights;

5 (7) an assessment of natural climate influences, including the Hunga
6 Tonga eruption's cooling effects and ice core evidence of CO2-temperature
7 lags, using data from recent studies, the CO2 Coalition, Happer, Clack
8 analyses, and Electroverse to evaluate if mandates infringe on private property
9 rights without scientific justification;

10 (8) an analysis of how paused regulations protect private property rights
11 and individual rights, quantifying economic gains, such as reduced
12 development costs by four to six percent per the 2025 Vermont Economic
13 Action Plan, from restored owner autonomy; and

14 (9) a review of Bjorn Lomborg's cost-benefit research on climate
15 policies, including the moderate costs of untreated climate change, including a
16 3.6 percent gross domestic product reduction, versus the inefficiency of
17 regulations like the Paris Agreement, such as a \$0.11 benefit per dollar, to
18 recommend cost-effective alternatives that minimize fees and respect private
19 property rights.

20 (c) A report shall be submitted to the General Assembly on or before
21 January 15, 2034.

1 Sec. 8. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

2 (a) The Joint Fiscal Office, in consultation with the Public Utility
3 Commission and relevant agencies, has analyzed the potential fiscal impacts of
4 this act based on available data and estimates.

5 (b) Estimated savings.

6 (1) Moratorium on the Clean Heat Standard. Avoidance of up to \$956
7 million in program-related costs, with fuel surcharges estimated at \$0.08 per
8 gallon in the first year, 2026, and increasing to \$0.58 per gallon thereafter.

9 (2) Moratorium on the Global Warming Solutions Act. Potential
10 reduction in State and resident expenditures for emissions reduction programs,
11 though specific costs since 2011 are not fully quantified; however, related
12 climate action plans identify billions of dollars in implementation costs by
13 2050, with avoided climate damage costs estimated at \$6 billion if targets are
14 met.

15 (3) Moratorium on the Renewable Energy Standard. Avoidance of
16 escalating program costs, which have risen from approximately \$5 million in
17 2017 to about \$32 million recently, with potential rate increases of five percent
18 annually leading to over 25 percent by 2030 for retail electricity; changes
19 could add \$150 million to \$450 million in ratepayer costs between 2025 and
20 2035.

1 (4) Moratorium on 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 59. Minimal direct
2 savings but potential preservation of property tax revenues by pausing land
3 conservation efforts that could remove land from tax rolls or shift burdens,
4 with impacts varying by town and including possible lower tax bills in areas
5 with more conserved lands, while protecting private property rights.

6 (5) Moratorium on 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181. Limited fiscal
7 impact, primarily savings in administrative costs for the Land Use Review
8 Board and related planning, with application fees such as \$295.00 for Tier 1A
9 areas and overall fee collections for similar programs historically in the range
10 of hundreds of thousands annually. The gains here are in preserved private
11 property rights.

12 (c) Estimated costs. The comprehensive study required under Sec. 7 of this
13 act is projected to cost approximately \$200,000.00, covering agency
14 consultations, data analysis, and reporting.

15 (d) Overall, this act is anticipated to result in net positive fiscal impacts
16 through significant cost avoidance, outweighing the minor expenses of the
17 study, while providing economic relief to Vermonters and upholding private
18 property rights and individual rights.

19 * * * Effective Date * * *

20 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on passage.