



Common Sense Solutions for a Changing Vermont

Dear VNRC Members, Activists and Friends,

Things are busy here at VNRC and they are busy under the Golden Dome as well.

First, a recent decision of the Vermont Environmental Court regarding Omya's calcium carbonate processing facility in Florence will likely have implications for the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. In short, as VNRC has asserted and as we read the law: VY is violating the public trust provisions of a groundwater protection law passed in 2008. This decision could have serious implications for the future of the nuclear plant. Read more about this decision [here](#).

Under the Golden Dome

At the State House, lawmakers face the midway point of the session, which means that House bills will soon need to 'crossover' into the Senate and vice versa. In short, it means things are happening. Here's a quick update...

The Big Energy Bill — H.56

Last Friday, the House Committee on Natural Resources and Energy passed their version of H.56 — the Energy Act of 2011 — out of committee on a 9-2 vote. The final version is much leaner and less ambitious than previous versions, but still includes several provisions to expand clean energy opportunities in Vermont, including expanding group net-metering and finding a funding source for the Clean Energy Development Fund. Click [here](#) to read more about the bill or read the bill as passed by the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee.

A Fix for the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program — H.155

The promising PACE program is designed to allow Vermonters business owners to make much-needed energy renovations to their homes or businesses and pay for the investment through the energy bill savings that are generated over time. H.155 is designed to make strategic fixes to Vermont's existing legislation to overcome the hurdles federal mortgage backers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have created for the program and to create safety nets for towns that want to make this program available for interested residents. The bill passed unanimously out of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee a couple weeks back and now has landed in the House Ways & Means Committee where, it's hoped, lawmakers will prioritize this bill and advance it to the Senate. Please contact your [legislators](#) and let them know you hope they will move H.155 — and the PACE program — forward. Read much more about PACE and the provisions under consideration [here](#).

Complete Streets — H.198

"Complete Streets" provide safe, accessible ways to get around and help young and old be physically active, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save gas. H.198, the Complete Streets bill, would change transportation policy to ensure that the needs of all users — pedestrians of all ages and abilities, bicyclists, transit riders, and older drivers — are considered and accommodated in state and local transportation projects. The Complete Streets bill is now under consideration in the House Transportation Committee. If you believe in Complete Streets, let your [House member](#) know you support H.198 and hope they will too. For more info about Complete Streets click [here](#) or read the bill [here](#).

Citizen Participation in Environmental Enforcement

VNRC has testified in favor of an enforcement bill — H.258 — that would give Vermont citizens more information about environmental enforcement actions taken by the Agency of Natural Resources against polluters and allow citizens to request a hearing before a judge on proposed enforcement agreements. This measure is a modest step, but is very much in the Vermont tradition of citizen participation and good environmental stewardship.

Protecting Water Quality — H.26

There is a bill, H.26, that would help keep unnecessary fertilizer-related phosphorous from washing into our waterways, including Lake Champlain, by restricting their use. With VNRC's support, the bill has passed the House and awaits action in the Senate.

There is *lots* more happening at the State House and a lot happening on the ground in communities across Vermont. Please do get in touch if you would like more information or if you want to get involved. Thanks for all you do to help protect Vermont's environment and develop a clean energy future.

Sincerely,
The VNRC Team

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