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Spring is finally here -- or so we thought! Snow or shine, as we near the end of the legislative session, we're busy at the State House, wrapping up our work on several bills. While we've been disappointed by some recent legislative news, including Governor Scott's veto of S.103 (see below), we've been uplifted by other developments. And we've continued working with members, activists, and local leaders to make big impacts directly in their communities.

We have some exciting announcements and upcoming events to share. We hope you'll read on, and as always, we welcome your feedback and support.

VNRC NEWS

Announcing the Winners of Small Grants for Smart Growth



We're excited to announce the first-ever winners of the [Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) program. We launched the program earlier this year, knowing that a little money can go a long way to help people working at the local level to shape the future of their communities. Congratulations to the inaugural recipients and their projects!

The [Rich Earth Institute](#) in Brattleboro, working with the Windham Regional Commission, will use its \$1,500 small grant for a pilot project that implements a Nutrient Reclamation Project, the nation's first community-scale urine recycling program, transforming waste into legally-approved fertilizer for agricultural use.

The [South Hero Land Trust](#), working with the South Hero Trails Committee and other local partners, will use its grant of \$1,500 to plan the creation of a non-motorized, multi-use trail network to connect important community resources and natural areas in the core of South Hero. The [Lewis Creek Association](#) in Hinesburg used its \$250 grant to promote village land use strategies to avoid pollution of local streams and burdens on community services.

Successful Town Energy Committee Annual Lobby Day



On April 26, VNRC assembled citizen representatives from energy committees statewide for an opportunity to speak directly with their legislators. Our dynamic group of local leaders spent time with House Speaker Mitzi Johnson, Senate President Pro Tem Tim Ashe, Senator Chris Bray, Chair of Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee, and Lt. Governor David Zuckerman, urging them to continue to make

meaningful progress on clean energy and climate action. VNRC is committed to facilitating community involvement at the State House, and we're thankful to all of our wonderful participants for making their voices heard on these important issues.

VCV Update: Vermont House Upholds Governor Scott's Veto of Toxics Bill



In April, Governor Scott vetoed S.103, a bill that would make it easier to list and restrict toxic chemicals in children's products and require testing for contaminants in new drinking water wells. The Senate voted to override the Governor's veto with a strong 22-8 vote (see how your Senators voted [here](#)), but last week, the House fell short on

overriding the veto by 4 votes (see how your Reps voted [here](#)). We were deeply disappointed by the results of the vote, but are hopeful that we'll find new opportunities to move these policies forward.

Catch [VNRC executive director Brian Shupe](#) weighing in on the the Governor's veto of S.103 on WAMC Northeast Public Radio (he comes in at 2:20). Also, tune into VPR's coverage of the override vote.

VNRC Boosts Local Engagement on Act 171 With Webinar Series



In collaboration with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, VNRC developed a series of webinars to educate municipalities on how communities can implement Act 171. The act requires municipalities and regions to identify areas that are

important as “forest blocks” and “habitat connectors” and plan for development there to minimize forest fragmentation. We've held four webinars so far, to great success. Thank you to the hundreds of planners and town officials who have tuned in! If you are someone involved in planning for your town's future and want to know more, please contact VNRC's Forest and Wildlife Program Director Jamey Fidel at jfidel@vnrc.org or Kate McCarthy, Sustainable Communities Program Director, at kmccarthy@vnrc.org.

VNRC Welcomes Stephanie Gomory, Communications Director



We're excited to welcome Stephanie Gomory to the VNRC team as our new Communications Director. Stephanie brings with her a background in public relations, and has worked with various nonprofits to help them tell their story to the press and to the public. She lives in Montpelier.

VERMONT NEWS

Action Over Inaction: The Financial Case to Protect Vermont's Water



(*VTDigger*) In an [op-ed published today](#), Vermont State Treasurer Beth Pearce makes the financial case for remedying what she calls a crisis: the degradation of Vermont's waterways at the hands of phosphorus and other pollutants. "The message is clear – the longer we defer action, the greater risk we face of decreased tourism

revenue, property values, and further environmental damage." [Read more.](#)

Hearings Wrap Up in Morrisville Dam Relicensing Trial



(*Seven Days*) A ruling expected this summer by Superior Court Judge Thomas Walsh will determine how much water Morrisville Water & Light will be permitted to flow under a dam on the Green River in Hyde Park in order to avoid negative impact on aquatic life. VNRC policy and water

program director Jon Groveman is [quoted here](#) on the importance of protecting water quality and fisheries when dams have their licenses renewed.

After Nearly 30 Years in the House, David Deen Won't Seek Re-Election



(Photo credit: VPR)

(VPR) Representative David Deen, current Chair of the House Committee on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources, announced his retirement this week. Deen was an exceptional advocate for Vermont's environment over his three decades in service, and he'll be missed. [Read more about Deen's legacy at VPR](#) and find our statements [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 24: Act 250 Conference



Come join us and influence the next 50 years of Act 250, Vermont's signature land development regulation. This event will highlight early heroics, describe our challenges

and opportunities for improvement, offer inspiration from other states, and provide time for discussing key issues. The conference will take place at Vermont Law School in South Royalton. [Click here to register](#).

May 23: Vermont Clean Cities Hosts Electric Vehicle Showcase Event



Calling all fleets and workplaces interested in electric vehicles (EVs)! Vermont Clean Cities is hosting a free EV showcase and ride-and-drive the morning of May 23rd in Burlington. This event will also include breakfast, informational sessions on incorporating EVs into fleet operations, financing opportunities, gift certificate giveaways for ride-and-drive participants, and more! Registration is now open. Sign up [here](#)!

NATIONAL NEWS

#BootPruit gains steam, and National Wildlife Federation signs on



For only the third time in its 82-year history, the National Wildlife Federation is calling for a cabinet official to be fired. The organization suggests the dismissal of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt "not for his conservation actions (which have been terrible in themselves), but for his alarming ethical breaches that are causing the public to lose faith in the EPA." [Read more by Collin O'Mara at The Hill](#) and check out the hashtag

[#BootPruit](#) to see what others are thinking.

Carbon pollution taxes can be fair and effective, MIT study shows



A new study out of MIT shows that a tax on carbon-based fuels "would go a long way toward curbing global climate change, and could be designed so that it doesn't hurt the poorest households." [Read more here](#) about these promising finds.

Protecting Vermont's natural resources and communities since 1963.

For more than fifty years, VNRC has been Vermont's leader in protecting our natural resources and communities. Through research, education, collaboration, and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character, and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities. From the State House to your town hall, VNRC keeps Vermonters informed on the environmental issues that you and your family care about most. [Support from VNRC's members is critical to our work – join today.](#)

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