

January 9, 2023 Climate & Energy 2023 Legislative Landscape Webinar Chat

12:02:50 From Matthew LeFluer (He/Him) to Everyone:

Hello Greetings Everyone From Alburgh Vermont

12:07:48 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Lauren, any chance you can share the names and appointments of the new committee chairs or new committees formed as a follow up email?

12:08:51 From Greta Hasler (she/her) to Everyone:

Laurie- we can certainly share that information as a follow up. Senate here:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Vermont-Senate-Committee-Assignments-2023-2024.pdf>

12:08:58 From Greta Hasler (she/her) to Everyone:

House here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/2023-2024-Committee-Assignments.pdf>

12:15:18 From Greta Hasler (she/her) to Everyone:

You can find a draft of S.5, the Affordable Heat Act here:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/BILLS/S-0005/S-0005%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

12:17:14 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Can you detail the resource breakdown of the Affordable Heat Act?

12:17:48 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Will we have access to a recording of everything presented?

12:18:01 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Re: Clean Heat Standard:

12:18:17 From Greta Hasler (she/her) to Everyone:

Mark - yes, we'll be sharing a recording, all slides and resources provided in a follow up email after today's webinar.

12:20:12 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA, Westminster to Everyone:

Meaning 50%+ from Hydro-Quebec?

12:21:05 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Re: Clean Heat Standard: 1. Does wood heat fall in this category? If so, what wood heat qualifies? 2. If wood heat is considered "clean" and "renewable," any incentives to help people afford efficient wood heating systems? (Thinking of our neighbors with smoky output who say they cannot afford a better wood stove and must heat by wood b/c they cannot afford fossil fuel heat, which is good, except for the smoke!).

12:25:03 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Questions for Ben, and anyone else: Is rooftop/private landowner solar still considered positive, where conditions are appropriate vs. or in addition to large scale solar? How about battery back up? What incentives to promote solar on private lands/homes?

12:25:51 From Robi Artman-Hodge to Everyone:

Is VT looking into the small nuclear units that are very safe, long time tested, use spent fuel cells and each unit often provides electricity up to about 300,000 homes?

12:26:47 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA, Westminster to Everyone:

How would tax credits versus tax pre-bates slow the economic development and cashflow in VT?

12:26:54 From Linda Gray to Everyone:

is the 100% renewable goal for 2035? (the slide reads "2030")

12:27:15 From Beth Zigmund to Everyone:

When will there be guidance from the State on how money from the IRA will be used?

12:27:17 From Kay Hopper to Everyone:

Does the group feel that small nuclear power is on the table in Vermont?

12:29:58 From Richard Butz/Bristol Energy to Everyone:

That was great work!

12:30:57 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Which legislative proposals directly affect the RES or RES review and how do they do so?

12:30:59 From Phil Hadley to Everyone:

With the widespread electricity outages over Christmas fresh in everyone's mind, Q1 of 2023 might be a great opportunity to expand our the use of battery backup systems in conjunction with on-site renewables. Are there any legal initiatives to push for this at the state level?

12:33:06 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Phil question is on point. The RES doesn't address storage or demand side management as resources. It also ignores baseload requirements.

12:33:26 From Kimberly Hornung-Marcy to Everyone:

I am hearing concern about how biofuels are treated in Clean Heat Standard —what are your thought. PUC is a huge problem—how do we address them allowing clean energy and not allowing piping methane long distances and calling it renewable...

12:35:03 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Green Transportation equity efforts includes the MilageSmart program for low income Vermonters.

12:35:52 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Considering resource use overall for private vehicles (batteries, roads, bridges, etc.), I think moving us toward shared transit/public transit and walking, bicycling, and a combination of public transit/walking/bicycling is essential. How often many of us on the Champlain Islands wish the passenger train still remained or could be reinstated; short of that, a bus that could service the GI ferry and the Island towns. Hundreds of cars pass through the Islands daily, most often for appointments in Burlington and commuting to/fr Burlington, Montpelier, etc.

12:39:39 From Robb Kidd/VT SIERRA CLUB/He,Hime to Everyone:

Sierra Club transportation Survey:

12:39:41 From Robb Kidd/VT SIERRA CLUB/He,Hime to Everyone:

<https://forms.gle/yg9r8mKQ6k9Qq5pP7>

12:39:54 From Sandy Thibault (CATMA) to Everyone:

Vanpools could be an option to help in Grand Isle area.

12:39:58 From Sandy Thibault (CATMA) to Everyone:

<https://www.connectingcommuters.org/information-and-schedules/ridesharing/commuterco-opvt/>

12:43:02 From Kay Hopper to Everyone:

Is there a push for living wages in Vermont, which would also assist low and mid income Vermonters pay for heat?

12:43:05 From Bob Farnham to Everyone:

I recorded a presentation by Debbie New for the Energy Action Network about the Networked Geothermal Solutions and sharing it here. https://youtu.be/W-jl_1dXO9s?t=1567

12:45:04 From Robi Artman-Hodge to Everyone:

Should there be some sort of requirements of folks getting the benefit have to upgrade insulation, lights, etc. of the home? Likely grants would need to be provided as well--but it would reduce power usage overall--reducing usage amounts plus carbon footprints.

12:46:27 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Ground source heat is effective and reliable. It is also prohibitively expensive to install and repair. How do you propose to fund its implementation?

12:47:20 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Have rate case studies been done?

12:47:44 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Most low income Vermonter who are eligible for and apply for LIHEAP - are referred to Community Action Agencies & their Weatherization programs, including NETO in the NEK.

12:47:49 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Or ROI studies?

12:50:43 From Fran Putnam to Everyone:

Is VGS really on board with this? Or is the no gas expansion provision a poison pill from their point of view?

12:50:50 From Kimberly Hornung-Marcy to Everyone:

How much federal funding is there for neighborhood geothermal is it enough for what Vermont would like to install?

12:51:40 From Sarah Bruce - Hartland EC to Everyone:

Can you post a link to the draft Ratepayer Protection etc. bill?

12:51:51 From Fran Putnam to Everyone:

Is the bill Jim and Debbie are talking about being considered by the Legislature yet? If so, in what committee?

12:52:29 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

How is USDA Renewable Energy System Program a fit for the Geothermal solutions?

12:52:32 From James Dumont to Everyone:

Fran, yes. It is sponsored by Rep. Cordes, Rep. Elder, Rep. McGill, Senator Bray and Senator Ram Hinsdale.

12:52:32 From Tad Montgomery, Lebanon NH to Everyone:

There is a lot of bedrock close to the surface in VT, would that not make the cost of community geothermal projects prohibitive?

12:52:34 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

High implementation will also create a substantial electric load increase. Has that effect been examined?

12:52:43 From Rachel Smolker to Everyone:

Will this networked geoT provide enough heat for Vermont winters? Or would it be needed to have additional heat sources (as per with heat pumps)

12:53:04 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

How would a neighborhood go about installing a geothermal system? Seems to me it's tricky to organize neighbors in a semi-rural area, like South Hero, which does have some concentrated "neighborhoods," like ours at the end of South St. Would be easier if someone approached the neighbors with a plan to install neighborhood geo.

12:53:57 From Beth Zigmund to Everyone:

Thermal energy networks: Would a very large employer like UVM/UVM med center be eligible to become one?

12:54:39 From Debbie New to Everyone:

More info on thermal energy networks at <https://www.vcga.net/> (and more coming soon)

12:55:06 From Debbie New to Everyone:

To discuss the Ratepayer Protection and Thermal Energy Networks Act:
debblenew2@gmail.com

12:58:08 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Would efficient wood heating systems be defined? What qualifies as "efficient"?

12:58:38 From James Dumont to Everyone:

Beth, the utility model involves multiple customers/ratepayers being served by an entity that is subject to PUC supervision including approval of rates. Like your electric company. UVM could be a large user, like it is now a large user of electric. But UVM would not be the utility -- unless UVM chose to be a utility and serve itself and neighbors, which I feasible. A key to successful district thermal s diversity of users. Waste heat from UVM's hockey rink would be a great source of wintertime heat for its neighbors, for example

12:59:07 From Carol Vassar to Everyone:

can low income house owners get home efficiency assessment covered so they know what they should be doing?

13:00:09 From Kimberly Hornung-Marcy to Everyone:

Every county has CAP agencies that offer free energy audit and weatherization for low income people. Burlington area and beyond is CVOEO

13:01:16 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

Carol Vassar - The CAA or CAPs in VT have Energy Audit programs for free to low income VT'ers <https://sevca.org/weatherization/no-cost-homes-wx>

13:01:41 From Bob Atchinson to Everyone:

There is a need to train more wx installers, as these agencies typically have 12-18 month backlog, just to get to audit stage.

13:02:10 From James Dumont to Everyone:

Rachel, 1) ground source heat pumps are much more efficient than air source heat pumps, because the medium is a fluid rather than air; and 2) the heat source stays at about 55 degrees, unlike the atmosphere which we all know can go way below that. From what I've read, there is no need for backup heating so long as your ground source is functioning. A different question is whether backup is needed in the event of electric failure, since the system uses electricity.

13:02:11 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Carol, eligible low income Vermonters use Community Action Agency services to apply for building energy audits - Capstone in Central VT, BROCC in Bennington, SEVCA in the south east, and CVOEO in Chittenden area - including NETO in the NEK with NECKA.

13:02:14 From Carol Vassar to Everyone:

what renewables are encouraged that involve combustion? 'Renewables' suggests wood being included

13:03:08 From Bob Atchinson to Everyone:

We need to stop burning everything, including wood!

13:03:12 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

Can you speak to the VT utility Co's SLOWING solar by charging \$ to private home producing solar arrays!?!? Thank you Ben!

13:03:20 From Edward Cremo to Everyone:

to Mark Kennedy et al: Maine Energy Systems manufacturers an Austrian wood pellet boiler. The name of the Austrian company is Okofen. It's an amazing system, not remotely reminiscent of the old Franklin stove! State of the art. A group of which I was a part had it installed in an old building in northeastern PA in 2012. I am now in VT, but the system has and continues to perform very well.

13:04:23 From James Dumont to Everyone:

Fran, in response to your question about VGS's position. we have met with VGS on multiple occasions to share ideas and information about district thermal. They support that. Whether they will support the bill as a whole, so long as it includes the prohibition on transmission line expansion, we have yet to discuss with them.

13:04:48 From Bob Atchinson to Everyone:

The trees are better left standing, instead of being processed into pellets.

13:06:11 From Debbie New to Everyone:

@Tad: Thanks for your question. Vermont's bedrock makes networked systems that can share energy between buildings even more interesting than single home geothermal. The great thing about thermal energy networks is that they can use geo where it makes sense and make use of other thermal sources and sinks. The Network Action Team is focused on questions like this re: VT's geology, and the VGS feasibility study due this month will tell us a lot more.

13:06:18 From Melinda Scott to Everyone:

Do we have any idea of the timeline for rollout of IRA prebates?

13:07:10 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Is Lake Champlain a possible resource for geothermal?

13:07:26 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Ben, than you - Tax credit is not an equity solution for low income Vermonters.

13:08:47 From Bob Atchinson to Everyone:

Any entity which does not pay taxes needs a special case incentive to have it benefit.

13:08:48 From Debbie New to Everyone:

@Mark: You're right that it's challenging to organize neighbors re: a thermal network system. We expect that existing businesses & organizations will be the ones to initiate the idea and approach community members.

13:09:16 From James Dumont to Everyone:

Mark, great question about how to get a district started. The NY model relies entirely on existing utilities to do this by becoming a thermal network utility for a particular area. The VT bill expands the universe of who can do this for Vermont, by authorizing the PUC to recognize any qualified entity to get into this business and function as a district thermal network utility. It could be a nonprofit that already exists or is created for this purpose. It could be an existing for profit business or one that is created for this purpose. It could be a municipality. Does this answer your question?

13:09:51 From Carol Vassar to Everyone:

are the funds for the IRA at risk if the national debt is not increased

13:09:59 From Debbie New to Everyone:

@Mark: Yes, any body of water can be a good source of thermal energy, but the issues are more complex when considering what would need to be an open loop thermal system. Something to investigate for sure.

13:10:05 From Sam Lash (she/hers), CVRPC to Everyone:

+1 to earlier question regarding the importance of integrating storage and complementary renewables in order to build resilient energy and energy infrastructure (in addition to affordable and clean)- does integrated DER planning fit in to RES proposal?

13:11:16 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

Any capital that is available up front is the best way to create more regional renewable energy production. Pre-bates distributed to contractors is an awesome economic driver! hopefully that will increase... Thanks Ben :)

13:11:45 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Storage, demand management and distribution grid efficiency improvements should be able to satisfy the RES.

13:12:25 From Kay Hopper to Everyone:

Are there plans to address aviation?

13:13:16 From Debbie New to Everyone:

@Laurie: Yes, the USDA Renewable Energy System Program could be a fit for thermal networked solutions. The Network Action Team is looking into that. Thank you for mentioning it.

13:13:43 From Greta Hasler (she/her), VNRC to Everyone:

Mileage Smart: <https://www.mileagesmartvt.org/>

13:14:11 From Greta Hasler (she/her), VNRC to Everyone:

Replace Your Ride: <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/incentives/vermont-state-incentives#ryr>

13:14:13 From Sarah Bruce - Hartland EC to Everyone:

Did I hear the Sierra Club speaker correctly that all new vehicles in VT will be electric by 2025? If so, is this really possible? I am trying to replace a 20-yr old CRV with a small PHEV. The latter are either not available at all in 2023 (Subaru Crosstrek PHEV) or there is a 4-6 mos wait (Ford Escape PHEV) up to a 1-2 yr wait for a RAV4-Prime PHEV. Also the IRA has made several of the EVs/PHEV not eligible for federal tax rebate, e.g. the RAV4-PHEV.

13:14:18 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

<https://www.greensavingsmart.org/> <https://sevca.org/economic-development/financial-energy-coaching> contact Kevin O'Brien kobrien@sevca.org

13:15:06 From Ben Edgerly Walsh to Everyone:

Two great resources on the Inflation Reduction Act: explainer on its key climate provisions - <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/policy/inflation-reduction-act> and a calculator to get a sense of what you may personally be able to take advantage of (though note that it includes the direct grants I mentioned which aren't rolled out yet):

<https://www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator>

13:15:20 From Robi Artman-Hodge to Everyone:

A lot of opponents to greater electrification (transportation/thermal/etc.) have issues with the pollution resulting from the creation of the batteries and their disposal as well as the increased costs of electric transportation/etc. Other than the Ford study that recently came out, are there other studies that one can reference showing the ROI of doing such and the pollution mitigations to come about?

13:16:57 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

GreenSavingsSmart is a program at all 5 CAPs and works with low income VT'ers to help increase education and access to all the things that have been discussed today at the state level!

13:17:09 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Financial & Energy coaching with pilot program through the Community Action Agencies is one way we are hoping to raise the bar on equity for low and moderate income Vermonters. Green Saving Smart

13:17:37 From Kimberly Hornung-Marcy to Everyone:

Most of the CAP agencies have financial consultants so if low income person seeks help with fuel bill they get advised to use the weatherization program where appropriate. Yes there is back log. Currently CVOEO has better benefits and similar salary to private contractors so they are trying to attract more workers.

13:18:57 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

How do we find out if a current wood heating source (wood stove) would be best replaced, or fine to continue using?

13:19:06 From Melinda Scott to Everyone:

Vermont Adult Learning has launched the Energy Works program, which is a weatherization/green energy training program.

13:19:06 From Laurie Veatch to Everyone:

some rural households may be thinking of installing a pond. Pond installers could pair up with putting in geothermal infrastructure

13:19:10 From Greta Hasler (she/her), VNRC to Everyone:

You can check out and sign up for the Climate Dispatch here- <https://vnrc.org/category/news-stories/climate-dispatch/>

13:19:31 From John Dasaro to Everyone:

Are there concerns with supplies and work force and the aggressive dates purposed in these agendas. We have a solar and battery projects in the works, however due to supply issues our timeline keeps creeping out. Also is there support in legislation for projects, again we are putting in a solar project and battery but need to apply for an act 250 for each, however they are on the same property is there a way to streamline some of these projects - usually a year just for regulations to put a shovel in the ground

13:19:58 From Erika Faulkner to Everyone:

To register for the climate dispatch follow this link:

<https://secure.everyaction.com/EnYNLheBYEuDRs1diY9jJQ2>

13:20:04 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

SEVCA Weatherized over 100 homes last year! Leading the Nation! Good stuff! Go VT!
Love this State!

13:20:11 From Sam Lash (she/hers), CVRPC to Everyone:

Great place to start for resources on Wood Heating here
<https://www.revermont.org/go-renewable/heating-cooling/advancedwoodheating/>

13:20:30 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Glad go hear Wind mentioned - as the technology has changed dramatically and the turbines are quieter than most HVAC systems in commercial buildings.

13:20:53 From Kimberly Hornung-Marcy to Everyone:

My understanding from American Lung Association staff is that wood is very bad for lungs and the testing was done so unreliably at the Federal Level there is no way to know if a new wood stove is really better in terms of the pollution that effects human lungs poorly. They recommend not burning wood at all. Our Indigenous groups recommend not burning wood because of impact on forests especially if this starts scaling up.

13:20:57 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Will Sierra Club survey continue to be available if we haven't been able to complete while listening?

13:20:59 From Laurie Veatch to Everyone:

trees are not renewable, and we need trees for wildlife as well as oxygen, etc.

13:22:41 From Bob Farnham to Everyone:

REMEMBER TO SAVE THE CHAT

13:22:59 From Laurie Veatch to Everyone:

how does one save the chat?

13:23:24 From Justin Marsh | VCV | they/them to Everyone:

VCV's Democracy Dispatch Podcast just launched today!
<https://vermontconservationvoters.com/democracy-dispatch/>

13:23:44 From Debbie New to Everyone:

Sign up to stay in the thermal networks loop: <https://www.vcga.net/the-network>

13:24:02 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

BOTTOM RT CORNER THREE DOTS

13:24:07 From Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco to Everyone:

Thanks, Robb. You're right. No silver bullet. We need gold buckshot.

13:24:09 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

"SAVE CHAT"

13:24:39 From Bob Atchinson to Everyone:

Look for the 3 dots in the lower right, click and save, and the chat will end up in your Documents In a Zoom folder

13:25:03 From Greta Hasler (she/her), VNRC to Everyone:

We'll be sharing the chat in a follow up email, but you can save it for yourself as well!

13:26:18 From Kay Hopper to Everyone:

The efficiency of the grid is quite low. Is there programs to address this loss of usable power?

13:26:39 From Mark Kennedy to Everyone:

Thank you everyone!

13:26:42 From Phil Hadley to Everyone:

THANK YOU!

13:26:50 From Laurie Kozar to Everyone:

Thanks!

13:26:56 From Emmett Dunbar/ SEVCA to Everyone:

Thank you Lauren!

13:27:00 From Vince O'Connell to Everyone:

Thanks!