

# RATEPAYER PROTECTION AND THERMAL ENERGY NETWORKS ACT

The Ratepayer Protection and Thermal Energy Networks Act employs proven ways to help us meet our climate goals equitably and effectively by:

- Revising electric rates to protect low and moderate income Vermonters from the costs of using more electricity and help them be able to choose cleaner, healthier electric options.
- Authorizing VGS and other utilities as well as co-operatives, nonprofits, and other community-based organizations to implement geothermal and other thermal energy networks to replace gas, propane, oil, and electric heating and cooling.
- Prohibiting any natural gas utility from expanding into new service territories.

## ELECTRIC RATEPAYER PROTECTION: Tiered Discount Program

As we move toward using more electricity, low and moderate income Vermonters who already spend a disproportionately large share of their income on energy need protections like those offered in other states.

A Tiered Discount Program:

- Distributes benefits more equitably by tailoring discounts to several levels of income.
- As a statewide program, serves many more households with little impact on other electric customers.

We can help all Vermonters transition to cleaner electricity and enjoy the benefits of safer, healthier energy.

## THERMAL ENERGY NETWORKS: Community-scale Heating and Cooling

Thermal energy networks are proven to reduce emissions and lower costs significantly. Operational from Toronto to Texas, networked geothermal (and other thermal) energy is affordable, safe, reliable, and resilient.

Water-filled pipes in underground loops can both heat and cool an entire street or town center. The more buildings are connected, the more affordable and efficient it gets.

Other states have authorized utilities to implement these systems. In New York, gas companies have committed to transition to thermal networks with 38 projects in process.

In Vermont, we can bring thermal energy networks to more communities by allowing electric utilities, co-ops, nonprofits, and businesses to own and operate these systems. Affordable housing can be prioritized, and current fossil fuel workers can use comparable skills to build the interconnecting thermal systems.

## PROVEN SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE EQUITABLE, SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION

The more we shift from using fossil fuels to electricity in our buildings and for transportation, the more we need to help our communities—and, in particular, our more vulnerable Vermonters—access affordable, efficient clean energy.

- To ensure that everyone can choose cleaner electric options, we need to help those already struggling with monthly costs by using a statewide Tiered Discount program.
- We can implement thermal energy networks as a heating and cooling solution that also reduces demand on the electric grid, shares temperature between buildings, and stores energy underground.

**Please share this handout and support the Ratepayer Protection and Thermal Energy Networks Act.**