



## **VECAN 2020 Workshop Descriptions**

### ***Community Energy and Climate Action Conference***

**Monday, December 7th, 2020 \* 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm**

**[Virtual on Hopin](#)**

#### **The State of Solar in Vermont**

The once bustling job-creating solar sector in Vermont has quieted dramatically. In this workshop, get an update on what's happening in the solar sector in Vermont, what's not and why. Also hear about some creative strategies to bring solar to more vulnerable, lower income-earning Vermonters, as well as approaches to realize multiple benefits by advancing pollinator-friendly solar opportunities.

- *Olivia Campbell Andersen, Renewable Energy Vermont*
- *Alex Depillis, Vermont Agency of Agriculture*
- *Jim Merriam, Norwich Solar Technologies*

#### **The Legislative Look Forward and Opportunities in the Global Warming Solutions Act**

In this workshop, get an overview of the potential landscape for climate and clean energy progress in the upcoming 2021-2022 legislative biennium and how new, challenging realities might influence what's possible -- and when. Also, hear from a newly appointed Vermont Climate Council member about the overarching climate action framework of the Global Warming Solutions Act -- and ways you might be able to get involved.

- *Ben Edgerly Walsh, VPIRG*
- *Representative Sarah Copeland-Hanzas, Chair, Government Operations & Co-Chair of the Legislative Climate Caucus*
- *Senator Chris Pearson, member of the Senate Agriculture and Finance committees & Co-Chair of the Legislative Climate Caucus*
- *Lauren Oates, The Nature Conservancy and Vermont Climate Council Member*

#### **Local Levers to Transform Transportation**

Whether you look at greenhouse gas emissions, relative energy use, or household spending on energy, the transportation sector poses among the biggest challenges for Vermont. It can be hard to know where to start to address this issue, especially at the community level. This workshop will allow participants to learn about some of the challenges, significant opportunities and inspiring examples of solutions for transforming Vermont's transportation system to meet our climate goals. Get an update on state and regional initiatives and hear about specific ways that local communities can be involved in this work.

- *Linda McGinnis, Energy Action Network Senior Fellow*
- *Dave Roberts, Drive Electric Vermont*
- *Jenn Wood, Green Mountain Transit*
- *Sandy Bender, Local Motion*

### **Investing in Efficiency and Weatherization Work**

Weatherization and efficiency investments save money, reduce energy burdens, benefit public health and put people to work in well-paying jobs. There are dollars to do this work, though understanding the funding sources available in Vermont for weatherization, energy efficiency, and transportation can be confusing and frustrating. In this workshop, hear from experts about existing funding sources, how they are generated, regulated, implemented and how you might access them. Also, hear potential ideas for expanding these investments to support local efforts and make more, much-needed climate progress.

- *Michele Boomhower, Vermont Agency of Transportation*
- *Costa Pappis, Vermont Agency of Transportation*
- *Daniel Reilly, VEIC/Efficiency Vermont*
- *Julia Leopold, Vermont Public Power Authority*

### **Tools, Tips and Strategies for Community Organizing and Effective Communications - Virtually and Beyond**

This workshop will provide an overview of tools and approaches to engage your community, both virtually during this pandemic and beyond. We will also discuss strategies for organizing in communities, informed by recent experiences with volunteer mutual aid networks. Then, hear examples of effective online communication around climate and strategies for reaching beyond the choir in your communications. Finally, experts will help you identify clear action opportunities for consistent messaging in the coming year, and offer ideas about how to utilize the unique power of storytelling to advance critical climate work in your community.

- *Jon Copans, Vermont Council on Rural Development*
- *Rebecca Sanborn Stone, Community Works*
- *Michael Shank, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance*