

# VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE  
ACTION NETWORK

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## Late May 2021 E-News

Dear Local Energy Leaders,

This week we are celebrating the historic investment the Vermont Legislature just made in climate action!

In the recently passed [state budget](#), the Legislature committed \$250 million in funding for critical climate programs over the next few years. This investment is targeted toward essential, equitable pollution reduction and money-saving initiatives for Vermonters, including low- and moderate-income weatherization programs, low-income renewable energy projects, and implementation of the ensuing Climate Action Plan. ([Find out more in this week's Climate Dispatch too!](#)) As these funds become available and programs come online, we will certainly keep you in the loop about how your local energy committee or community might plug in!

Find more information below about the following events, exciting new releases and opportunities to engage in climate action:

### EVENTS

- **Participate in Upcoming Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) Regional Forums** - Help inform the update of the CEP by joining the Department of Public Service for a virtual regional forum in June focused on energy planning efforts by Regional Planning Commissions and municipalities. [Learn more here](#) and below.
- **Wait, Wait, Please Tell Me: A Post-Session Round-up with REV - June 3** - Do you want to know more about what happened (and what didn't) in Montpelier this legislative session? Join Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) for a post-session round up. The event is free for REV members and \$20 for non-members. [Register here](#) to receive the Zoom link and find more event details below.
- **Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI): Emissions Reductions, Equity Opportunities, and Lessons from Massachusetts and Rhode Island - June 4** - Join VBSR June 4th at noon for a webinar to hear from two lead policy experts about why MA and RI joined TCI; a regional cap-and-invest program designed to reduce transportation-related climate pollution. [Register here](#) and find more information below.
- **21st Century Uses for a Traditional Tool: Biochar and the Agricultural Environment? - June 9** - Join the Vermont Sierra Club for a presentation about modern and emerging uses of biochar. [Click here to register](#) and find more information below.

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## Get involved

[Events](#)

[Join or Start an Energy Committee](#)

## Share

We are always looking for great stories of local action for our blog, social media and as helpful resources for our network. Please consider sending along anything you or others have accomplished or are working on by responding to this email or emailing [rkuster@vnrc.org](mailto:rkuster@vnrc.org)

## About Us

VECAN is a network of statewide Vermont organizations helping communities across the Green Mountain State to reduce energy costs and climate impacts through conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable energy sources.

VECAN's mission is to start, support and strengthen town energy committees.

## Committee Changes?

Help us keep our network up to

## NEWS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

date! Email changes in committee leadership or contact info to [rkuster@vnrc.org](mailto:rkuster@vnrc.org)

- Opportunity to Participate in VECAN Communications Collaborative!** - Interested in working with fellow energy committee members and VECAN partners to help develop a toolkit to support and guide community engagement and communications efforts of energy committees and coordinators? [Fill out this brief form](#) to indicate your interest by June 1st. Find more information about this opportunity below.
- Energy Action Network (EAN) Releases 2020/2021 Annual Progress Report for Vermont** - EAN has released its 2020/2021 Annual Progress Report for Vermont on Emissions, Energy, Equity, and the Economy, which provides an in-depth analysis of where Vermont stands relative to its climate commitments and energy goals. [Find the full report here](#) and more information below.
- Register for 2021 VEEP Summer Institute: Local Connections to Energy and Climate!** - The Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) is inviting all Vermont and New Hampshire educators to join the 2021 VEEP Summer Institute, which will explore local connections to energy & climate. The virtual program will take place August 9, 10, and 12. [Register here by July 26](#) and find more details below.
- View Recording of Climate Science Webinar** - Earlier this week, the Vermont Climate Coalition hosted a webinar on understanding and communicating about climate science featuring Vermont State Climatologist and University of Vermont Professor Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux and Dr. Janel Hanrahan, an Atmospheric Sciences Professor at Northern Vermont University. [Click here](#) to watch a recording of the webinar.
- New Data Shows Vermont is Halfway to Paris but More Work is Needed** - Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation has released its newest [Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Forecast](#), which shows that Vermont is halfway to meeting its 2025 emissions reduction requirement. [Read more about what this new data means for Vermont here](#) and below.
- New Swanton Energy Committee Joins Network of 120+ Energy Committees Across the State** - "The goal of the Swanton Energy Committee is to help the Swanton residents improve their greenhouse gas footprint," co-chair Jen Cortez said. "The best people to be a part of this committee are the end users...it's about understanding and knowing that you as an individual can make an impact on your community." [Read more about why Swanton Village chose to form an energy committee here.](#)

## OP-EDS OF NOTE

- Sandra Levine Says the Climate Council Can Help Turn Opportunities Into Reality** - "I may be jaded, but in my experience, individual actions alone, however gratifying, will be insufficient to get where we need to go. To combat climate change in Vermont, as globally, we need real policy changes — and now," Sandra Levine writes. [Read her full commentary in VTDigger.](#)
- What One Vermont Doctor Tells Her Patients in a Warming World** - "The climate crisis is one of the biggest public health threats of our time," says Dr. Megan Malgeri, MD. [Read this important commentary](#) about how weather patterns can affect our health, from ticks to hypertension to COVID-19.

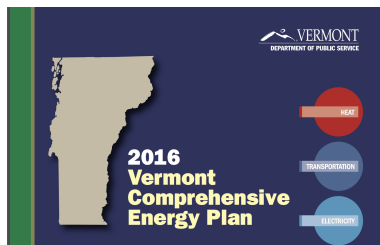
As always, thanks for all that you do.

Best,

Bekah Kuster, Community Energy Coordinator, AmeriCorps Member, VECAN  
802-223-2328 ext. 116 - [rkuster@vnrc.org](mailto:rkuster@vnrc.org)

## EVENTS

### Public Forums Coming Up to Discuss Update of Comprehensive Energy Plan



This year, the Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) began the review and update of the Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) with a new plan due January 2022. Local leaders were deeply involved in the crafting of the two most recent CEPs, and we want to ensure that your voices are part of the process this time as well.

The PSD is hosting four *virtual* regional forums in June focused on energy planning efforts by Regional Planning Commissions and municipalities. Please consider attending your regional forum if you are involved in energy planning efforts at the local level and would like to engage on the key energy issues, elements, challenges, and considerations unique to your area of Vermont.

Southeastern Forum: June 1, 4:00 to 6:00 PM ([Join meeting here](#))

Northern Forum: June 2, 4:00 to 6:00 PM ([Join meeting here](#))

Southwestern Forum: June 8, 4:00 to 6:00 PM ([Join meeting here](#))

Central Forum: June 28, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM ([Join meeting here](#))

[Find more information here](#), including how you can continue to engage in the process.

### Wait, Wait, Please Tell Me: A Post-Session Round-up - June 3 at 11:30 AM



The Vermont State Legislature adjourned last Friday after completing the state budget with several important climate and renewable energy initiatives. Other big policy questions remain open: notably American Rescue Plan spending and the future of Standard Offer, one of the state's most effective renewable energy policies. There's a lot still on the

table.

Do you want to know more about what happened (and what didn't) in Montpelier? Join Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) for a post-session round up June 3rd, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm.

You'll get to hear from:

- Senator Christopher Pearson
- Olivia Campbell Andersen, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Vermont
- Adam Necrason of the Necrason Group

They'll cover a wide range of climate-related topics that were at play this year including: energy storage, transportation, taxes, weatherization, funding for low-income community solar, workforce development, and the future of the standard offer program.

The event is free for REV members and \$20 for non-members.

[Register here!](#)

## Transportation & Climate Initiative: Emissions Reductions, Equity Opportunities, and Lessons from MA and RI - June 4 at 12 PM



Vermont Businesses  
for Social Responsibility

The governors of our neighboring New England states – Massachusetts and Rhode Island – have joined the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI); a regional cap-and-invest program designed to reduce

transportation-related climate pollution.

Join VBSR at noon Friday, June 4th to hear from two lead policy experts working in MA and RI to learn more about why their states joined the TCI, what benefits and effects they anticipate from program participation and, critically, how they are working in coalition and in the policy making arena to ensure far greater equity outcomes.

[Register to attend here!](#)

## 21st Century Uses of Biochar with the Vermont Sierra Club - June 9 at 7:00 PM



**SIERRA CLUB**  
VERMONT CHAPTER

The use of charcoal made from plant material – biochar – as a soil amendment in agriculture has a documented history over millennia.

Join the Sierra Club Vermont Chapter for a presentation on the modern and emerging uses of biochar, including improving the health of livestock, managing manure, enriching soil, retaining moisture, and increasing nutrients. Robert Lehmert of Carbon Negativity, LLC and Marshall Webb, Carbon Drawdown Coordinator at Shelburne Farms, will describe how it is being tried out at Shelburne Farms and explore the potential for this approach in Vermont.

[Register here!](#)

## NEWS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

### Opportunity to Participate in VECAN Communications Collaborative!



**VECAN**  
VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE  
ACTION NETWORK

We've got an exciting opportunity to share! **We are looking for volunteers from Vermont energy committees to test and improve a toolkit** to help take your education and outreach efforts to the next level!

VECAN/VNRC, VCRD (Vermont Council on Rural Development), and Vital Communities have put together a first draft of a toolkit to help support and guide community engagement and communications efforts of energy committees and coordinators. The toolkit includes templates to inventory your local communications resources and develop a plan, and short guides for effective use of various communications tools.

We want your help to review and test out these tools to ensure that they are as helpful as possible to community energy leaders! **Our plan is to assemble a group of 6-10 people** working on climate and energy issues on your own or as part of a committee, from all corners of the state and with all levels of experience.

The **time commitment** would include about four one-hour online work sessions this summer, plus some time between meetings to play with the resources and help with next steps we identify as a group. In September, we hope you'll help us present the toolkit to the full VECAN network as part of a webinar. All sessions will take place over the lunch hour.

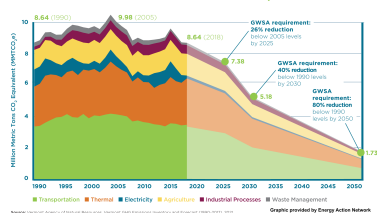
**Meeting dates:**

- Session 1 - Tuesday, June 29 at Noon
- Session 2 - Tuesday, July 13 at Noon
- Session 3 - Tuesday, July 27 at Noon
- Session 4 - Tuesday, August 10 at Noon

If you are interested in participating in this exciting collaboration, [please fill out this brief form](#) by June 1.

## Energy Action Network (EAN) Releases 2020/2021 Annual Progress Report for Vermont

Vermont's historical GHG emissions and future requirements



EAN's 2020/2021 Annual Progress Report for Vermont on Emissions, Energy, Equity, and the Economy is now live on their website!

Each year, the EAN team crunch the numbers to provide the most up-to-date analysis of where Vermont stands relative to its climate commitments and energy goals. New in this report is a summary of the EAN

Emission Reduction Pathways Model, which lays out the scale and pace of change likely needed to meet our 2025 and 2030 pollution reduction requirements.

Their analysis found that moving away from fossil-fueled transportation and heating, which currently contributes over 70% of Vermont's GHG emissions, will provide a major opportunity to strengthen the Vermont economy, create good-paying jobs, and save Vermonters money, and improve equity.

EAN will also be hosting two webinars in June to provide an overview of the report and give you a chance to ask your questions. [Sign up here](#) for a noon-1pm webinar on either Friday, June 11, or Thursday, June 17.

At our last VECAN Lunch and Learn on May 17, Jared Duval, executive director of EAN, gave us a sneak preview and an initial overview of the report. [Click here to view a recording of the event.](#)

## 2021 VEEP Summer Institute: Local Connections to Energy and Climate!



The Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) invites all Vermont and New Hampshire educators to the *2021 VEEP Summer Institute: Local Connections to Energy and Climate!*

This year's program explores local connections to energy & climate. The virtual program will take place August 9, 10, and 12 with each day's online session lasting no more than 3 hours.

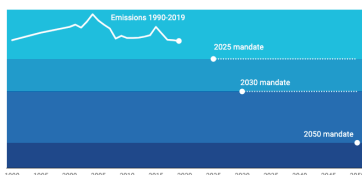
Participants may expect some asynchronous work prior to and between virtual sessions. After the conclusion of the synchronous program, participants may then collaborate with VEEP educators to bring to fruition custom curricula.

Through the program participants earn PD hours and may also enroll for 1 graduate credit. The registration deadline is July 26. Scholarship funds are available if cost is a barrier.

Contact Nial Rele, [Nial@veep.org](mailto:Nial@veep.org) with questions.

[Click here to learn more and register!](#)

## New Data Shows Vermont is Halfway to Paris but More Work is Needed



New data released by the state reveals that Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions declined by an estimated 5.6% from 2016 to 2019, reversing several years of rising emissions.

But experts say there's still a long road ahead. To meet its 2025 target, the state will need to cut emissions by another 14% from 2019 levels. Jared Duval, executive director of the Energy Action Network, says, "That does not mean that business as usual will get us there."

A significant focus will need to be put on reducing emissions from the transportation and heating sectors, which combined account for over 70% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike our electricity sector, which has been regulated under Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard since 2017, the transportation and heating sectors lack such robust policy.

[Read more about what this data means for Vermont in this VTDigger article.](#)

## Donate

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