



# VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE  
ACTION NETWORK  
MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

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Dear {{Salutation or 'Local Energy Leaders'}},

We hope everyone is enjoying the snow! As February comes to a close, we wanted to put several events and opportunities on your radar, as well as share some updates and news. We look forward to continuing to partner and engage with you in this important work. Thanks for all you do!

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## **EVENTS**

*All events can be found on the VECAN Events Calendar at <http://vecan.net/events>*

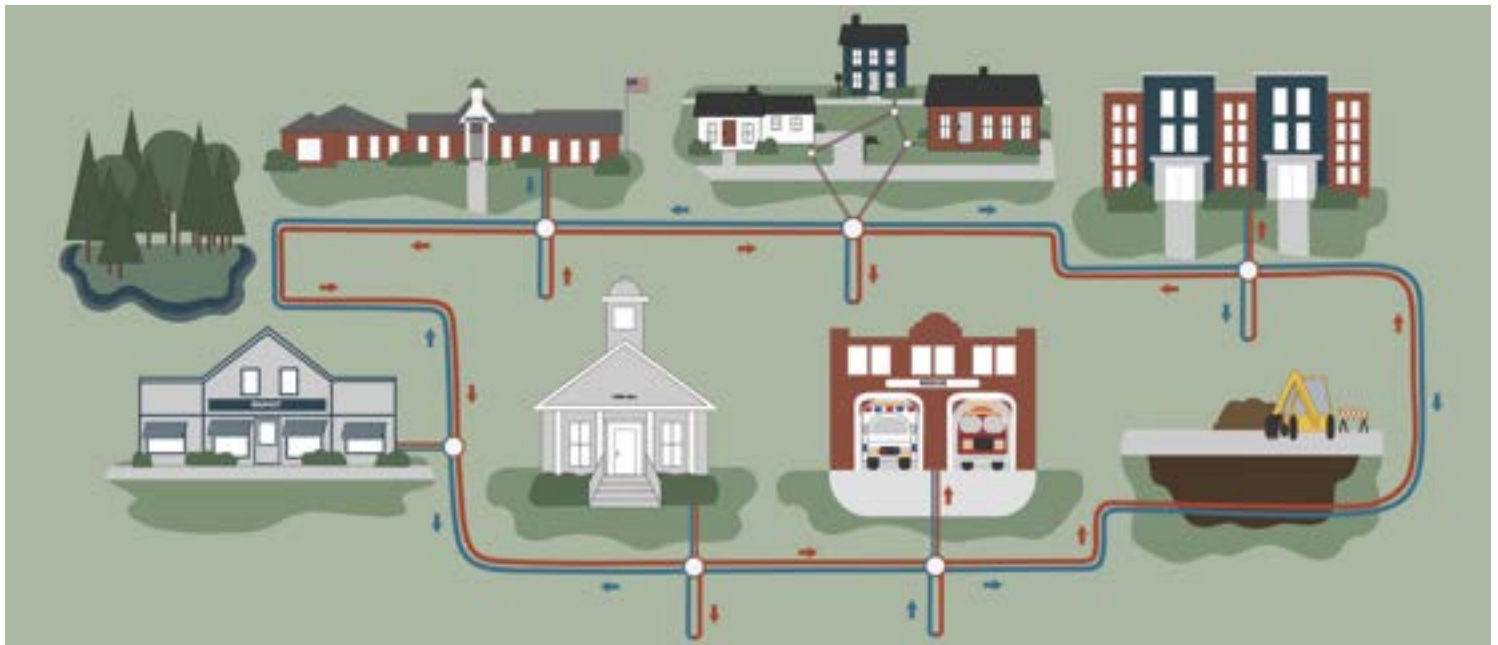


VECAN [Winter Workshop Series](#): *Keeping Vermonters Warm... and Cool: The Potential of Thermal Energy Networks* - March 1st at 12:00 PM - Beginning with the basics and benefits of networked geothermal systems, this workshop opens up the possibilities for harnessing and exchanging thermal energy. We'll hear from two companies with innovative, proven technologies who will explain how they maximize heating and cooling. [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)

*This workshop is the first in a series of lunchtime webinars organized by the Vermont Community Geothermal Alliance. Tune into the following workshops below:*

**Vermont Community Geothermal Alliance Webinar Series: Thermal Energy Networks for Vermont** - Tune into the [Thermal Energy Networks for Vermont](#) series to learn from leaders in the rapidly growing world of thermal energy exchange on the opportunities and benefits of adding thermal energy networks to our clean energy solutions.

- **Keeping Vermonters Warm and Cool: The Potential of Thermal Energy Networks** - Wednesday, March 1st at noon. Hosted by VECAN - [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)
- **Putting Thermal Networks to Work: Achieving Climate Goals and Policy Solutions** - Monday, March 20th at noon. Hosted by Energy Action Network - [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)
- **The Benefits and Business of Thermal Energy Networks** - Tuesday, April 4th at noon. Hosted by Renewable Energy Vermont - [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)



**Public Service Department Electricity Webinars: *Parking Lot Session*** - Join Vermont's Public Service Department in the final two sessions of their webinar series aimed at sharing information and answering questions about Vermont's current electric system on March 13th from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM, and March 15th from 12:00 PM -1:30 PM. [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)

**Free Film Screening: *Watson*, Followed by Live Q&A with Captain Paul Watson - Saturday, February 25th at 6:00 PM.** - Join Sustainable Woodstock for a live Q&A with Captain Paul Watson, marine wildlife conservation and environmental activist. This Q&A follows a free screening of the film "Watson," which features Paul Watson and his lifelong dedication to sailing the globe and keeping our oceans and oceanic inhabitants safe. In 2022, Captain Paul Watson continues his fight for marine wildlife conservation with the new Captain Paul Watson Foundation, which carries on Captain Paul Watson's effective agenda to defend life in the sea through a unique strategy of aggressive non-violence and intervention against illegal operations exploiting life in the sea. [Register to attend here.](#)



## UPDATES & OPPORTUNITIES

**Congressional Directed Spending Requests Open** - Senator Sanders is kicking off this year's Congressionally Directed Funding application process! This process allows Vermonters and local organizations to apply for federal funding for projects that strengthen Vermont communities and improve lives across our state. Past projects have had a significant impact across a wide range of issues. Do you have a project idea? Perhaps an affordable housing, infrastructure, education, health care, or community engagement project? If you would like your project to be considered for federal funding, please fill out an appropriations request application [here](#) by March 10, 2023. [Learn more here.](#)

**USDA Forest Service Accepting Grant Applications for Wood Innovations Projects, Community Wood Energy Facilities** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service today announced it will offer \$41 million through the 2023 Wood Innovations Grant and 2023 Community Wood Grant programs to spark innovation and create new markets for wood products and renewable wood energy. [Learn more here.](#)

**\$4.5 Million Energy CLASS Prize is Now Open for Submissions** - The Energy Champions Leading the Advancement of Sustainable Schools (CLASS) Prize will provide training and cash prizes to school districts working to make energy management a sustainable feature of their communities. The Prize is designed to position Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to make meaningful infrastructure improvements that will reduce utility costs, improve indoor air quality, and improve learning environments long-term. [Learn more here.](#)





**Applications Open: Health Equity and Community Design Technical Assistance (TA) Pilot** - From safer, walkable, universally accessible streets to more green spaces, the Vermont Department of Health, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, has announced the launch of a technical assistance pilot to support community-led design, placemaking, and health equity projects across Vermont. [Learn more here.](#)

**AARP VT Accepting 2023 Community Challenge Grant Applications -**

The annual program aims to make communities in Vermont more livable for people of all ages. AARP invites local eligible organizations and governments across the state to apply for the 2023 AARP Community Challenge grant program, now through March 15 at 5:00 p.m. Grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable in the long-term by improving public spaces, transportation, housing, civic engagement, diversity and inclusion. [Learn more and apply here.](#)



**S.5, the Affordable Heat Act (AHA) - Resources** - The status quo – Vermont’s heavy reliance on 100% imported fossil fuels – is bad for the planet, bad for the economy, straining people’s budgets and an incredibly vulnerable place to be, tied to a global commodity market over which we have no control. The Affordable Heat Act is designed help mitigate against these and other damaging consequences, including the unsustainable – and uncontrollable – nearly \$2.00 per gallon spike in #2 fuel oil over the past two years. Instead, this performance standard is designed to ramp, over time, the availability of cleaner heat to help Vermonters stay warm with lower-cost, less price-volatile, and less polluting fossil heating fuels. If you think it’s important to break this cycle – and, finally, start to truly do our part on climate, please [sign our petition](#) to let your legislators know you support S.5. Also, you can find out more about the AHA [here](#), and get your questions answered by checking out [Energy Action Network’s FAQ](#).

**Inflation Reduction Act Resources** - The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) offers unparalleled financial opportunities through grants and incentives to reduce costly reliance on fossil fuels. Find out more on the [VECAN IRA resource webpage](#), which will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

**VNRC's Climate Dispatch** - Stay updated on what's happening this legislative session on equitable climate action and Vermont's transition to a clean energy economy by tuning into [VNRC's weekly Climate Dispatch video](#).



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## NEWS & OP-EDS OF NOTE

***Vermont Public: Maine's cold snap didn't knock out heat pumps. But can they withstand fossil fuel industry pressure?*** - The Energy and Policy Institute has “uncovered thousands of records from federally sanctioned trade associations called the Propane Research and Education Council as well as the National Oilheat Research Alliance, which are running a concerted effort to misinform consumers that heat pumps are not effective in cold climates... which is far from the truth.” Michael Stoddard of Efficiency Maine shares that, “in certain homes where we’ve been watching very closely the effects of switching the entire home to heat pumps and removing the old central heating system, we checked in with each of those homeowners individually to see how it was going... and they all reported that the heat pumps continued to work, and kept them comfortable in the home.” [Read the full article here.](#)

***Vermont Standard: Barnard offering generous home weatherization incentives*** - With the help of Geoff Martin, a former member of the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), the Barnard Energy Committee was able to successfully petition the town’s Select Board to allocate some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to a weatherization campaign. “If you are

wondering how to participate or want to learn more, there will be an informational meeting and ‘Campaign Kick-off’ on Wednesday, March 1, at 7 p.m. at the Barnard Town Hall.” [Read the full article here.](#)

**Vermont Biz: Linda McGinnis: It’s time for the AHA** – “As an economist who works on issues of energy affordability, I pay close attention to price volatility and its impact on average Vermonters. For the average household heating their home last year with propane or fuel oil, their costs were 60-80% higher than those heating with heat pumps or wood pellets. Our state spends well over \$700 million/year on fossil fuels for heating, and more than 65% of those dollars leave the state, doing little to support our local economy. By contrast, when we heat with electricity or wood pellets, 70-80% of those dollars stay in state, creating jobs, strengthening our local economy, and creating a multiplier effect.” [Read the full article here.](#)

**VT Digger: Brian Shupe: Why is Vermont’s administration backpedaling on the climate crisis?** - “Taking action now to implement smart growth policies and help Vermonters access cleaner and more affordable heating options, cleaner transportation, and healthy and intact forests, wetlands, river corridors, and riparian areas — as called for by the Climate Action Plan — holds tremendous implications for the future resilience of Vermont, and should be a top priority for the Legislature. Anything less is negligence.” [Read the full article here.](#)



### **About Us**

VECAN is a network of statewide Vermont organizations helping communities statewide 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.

### **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 emailing [sbayer@vnrc.org](mailto:sbayer@vnrc.org).

### **Event to Share?**

If you have an upcoming climate action opportunity, update or event you want others to know about, you can submit it to be included in the calendar. [Check it out here!](#)

**Committee Changes?**

Help us keep our network up to date! Email changes in committee leadership or contact info to [sbayer@vnrc.org](mailto:sbayer@vnrc.org).

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{{Disclaimer}}

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