

## **Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **1. What is the Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act and what would it do?**

The Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act is a bill currently being considered by the Legislature to address the climate crisis. It would turn Vermont's current goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into requirements and set deadlines for action to cut dangerous climate pollution. The bill also requires action to increase the climate resilience of our communities and utilize our natural and working lands to capture and store carbon.

#### **2. We have carbon pollution targets in place. Why do we need this?**

The goals we have in place do not require action to reduce carbon pollution. As a result, Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions increased 13 percent since 1990 when they should have been going down. We need stronger requirements and clear direction to make sure we get the job done.

#### **3. How will this work in practice?**

The law would set specific greenhouse gas reduction requirements. It would also establish a Climate Council to develop and adopt a climate action plan by 2021 with specific recommendations to cut climate pollution and build the climate resilience of our communities. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources must adopt regulations that implement the plan and achieve the needed reductions. The bill does not dictate specific actions but will ensure accountability and that the reductions occur. New regulations will be required to reduce emissions 26 percent by 2025, 40 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050, along with recommendations to get to net zero emissions by 2050.

#### **4. Vermonters are already feeling the impacts of climate change. How will this help?**

The bill requires action to put in place adaptation measures that ensure that Vermont's communities, infrastructure, and economy are better prepared for and resilient to the current and future impacts of climate change. The bill also would require action to support the use of natural and working lands to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect against severe weather events.

Climate solutions will also bring economic, public health, and environmental benefits to Vermont. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will help grow our economy, create new jobs, improve public health and save money on health care costs, and protect and improve the quality of our natural and working lands.

#### **5. Does the bill affect every sector of the economy?**

The bill focuses on reducing emissions across all sectors, promoting practices that sequester and store carbon, reducing energy burdens for rural and marginalized

communities, and building our climate resilience. This will make sure emissions reductions provide broad benefits for all Vermonters. We will tackle the places where the most polluting fossil fuel is used and where there are effective and cleaner energy sources available. These include transportation, electricity, and building sectors. With low cost and available clean energy, electric vehicles, public transportation, and heat pumps, moving away from fossil fuels will include everyone in the clean energy transformation of our economy.

**6. How will we know we're on track?**

Beginning on January 15, 2021, the Climate Council will report to the Vermont Legislature on the progress that has been made.

**7. Will this be good or bad for our economy?**

This bill will make our economy more resilient and ready for the future. Instead of spending over \$2 billion every year on fossil fuels that pollute our air and cause climate catastrophe, we will be building a clean, low-cost, local, resilient and sustainable economy.

**8. Vermont is such a small state. How will our action make a difference in global climate change?**

Vermont must do our part to address the global climate crisis. Vermont has already joined the U.S. Climate Alliance, a group of 24 other states that have committed to meeting the Paris climate goals in the absence of federal action. Together, the greenhouse gas emissions of U.S. Climate Alliance are equivalent to the sixth largest emitter. As part of this coalition, Vermont can make a difference and help tackle global climate change.

**9. How will this bill protect rural and low-income communities?**

The bill specifically requires climate solutions that reduce energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities and includes requirements to ensure that carbon reduction pathways are equitable. The Climate Council is also tasked with developing best practices to address the pressures climate change will have on rural transportation, electricity, housing, and communications infrastructure.

This bill will also give more Vermonters access to clean, affordable transportation, heating, and electricity. Putting in place climate solutions would also support the fastest growing sectors of our economy, grow clean energy jobs in Vermont, reduce pollution, and stop our hard-earned dollars from being sent out-of-state to pay for dirty oil and pipelines.

Leading on climate change leaves a healthy Vermont for us and our children while we help avoid future climate catastrophes from floods, wildfires, and drought.

**10. Other states like California and Massachusetts have already enacted legislation like this. Is it working? Is it helping or hurting their economy?**

Other states, including California and Massachusetts, have enacted similar legislation. In those states climate pollution is decreasing and the economy is growing. Tackling climate pollution really is a recipe for success. We breathe easier, live better, build stronger communities, and leave a clean and healthy legacy for all.