

Introduction and Background

Vermont's Act 153(2020) – the Global Warming Solutions Act, or GWSA – establishes an ambitious timeframe and scope of for the Vermont Climate Council ('the Council') that culminates with the adoption of the Vermont Climate Action Plan ('the Plan') on or before December 1, 2021. The Plan will identify specific initiatives, programs and strategies necessary to achieve the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction requirements. In order to achieve the outcomes proscribed by Act 153, the Council needs to implement a deliberative process that supports the development of the Plan, including work by Subcommittees tasked with assisting in preparation of the Plan and an approach for engaging Vermonters in robust public participation around plan development.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources ('the Agency') is requesting formal written proposals and qualifications from consultants to provide facilitation services and process support to the Agency, the Vermont Climate Council and its Subcommittees in the work necessary to develop the Vermont Climate Action Plan, as required by the Global Warming Solutions Act.

The Global Warming Solutions Act

The Global Warming Solutions Act was enacted by the Vermont Legislature in September 2020. Core elements of the GWSA include:

- Codifying Vermont's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions goals as statutory requirements, and provides an explicit cause of action should the State fail to adopt sufficient measures to achieve the statutory requirements. The requirements are:
 - Not less than 26% from 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2025;
 - Not less than 40% from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2030; and,
 - Not less than 80% from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2050.
- Establishing the Vermont Climate Council.

The Vermont Climate Council

The Vermont Climate Council (VCC) is comprised of 23 members – including eight members of the Administration, eight members appointed by the Speaker of the House, and seven members appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees. The GWSA charges the VCC with the following responsibilities:

- Developing strategies and programs to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions requirements and adopting them in the Vermont Climate Action Plan by December 1, 2021;
- Identifying the current and plausible range of climate change impacts and evaluating strategies and programs that build resilience and the capacity of individuals, communities, and natural and built systems to withstand and recover from the current and anticipated effects of climate change;
- Identifying means to measure the State's progress towards meeting the greenhouse gas emissions requirements; and,
- Providing guidance to the Vermont General Assembly and the Secretary of Natural Resources on legislative and regulatory changes necessary to implement the Plan.

In addition to preparing and updating the Climate Action Plan every four years thereafter, the Council is tasked with preparing an annual written report to the General Assembly, documenting the work of the Council and the State's progress toward meeting the GWSA's greenhouse gas emissions requirements.

The Vermont Climate Action Plan

The Vermont Climate Action Plan ('the Plan') must be adopted by the VCC by December 1, 2021, and is required to be updated by July 1 every four years thereafter. The Plan is required to identify the specific initiatives, programs and strategies to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions requirements of the GWSA. This is anticipated to include a range of regulatory, legislative, educational, and incentive-based approaches. Specifically, the Plan is to include specific initiatives, programs and strategies that will:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation, building, regulated utility, industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors;
- Encourage smart growth, improve efficiency and related strategies;
- Achieve long-term sequestration and storage of carbon and promote best management practices to achieve climate mitigation, adaption, and resilience on natural working lands;
- Achieve net zero emissions by 2050 across all sectors;
- Reduce energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities;
- Limit the use of chemicals, substances, or products that change atmospheric chemistry and otherwise contribute to climate change; and
- Build and encourage climate adaptation and resilience of Vermont communities and natural systems.

General Specifications

The State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is requesting proposals for the technical analyses needed to support the Agency, the Vermont Climate Council, in the work necessary to develop the Vermont Climate Action Plan. It is envisioned that this work will occur largely between now and the end of the 2021 calendar year. A more detailed description of the range of services being sought is provided in the 'Scope of Services' section below.

The contract form will be the State of Vermont Standard Contract for Personal Services, with attachments. Appendix A contains the customary State contract provisions. Please refrain from bidding if the contract and provisions are not acceptable to your organization. The State will not negotiate changes in the contract or in these provisions.

Contact

All communications concerning this Request for Proposals (RFP) are to be submitted in writing, via email, to Jane Lazorchak at the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (jane.lazorchak@vermont.gov).

The total State funding anticipated for the requested services is approximately **INSERT**. The Agency intends to sign contracts for one year from date of acceptance.

Commented [LJ1]: Not sure how to handle this. Do we need to put a cost?

Scope of Services

The contractor will support the Council, including the VCC Steering Committee and VCC Subcommittees, in developing the Vermont Climate Action Plan that achieves the mandates of the GWSA. The contractor will report to the GWSA Director but will work closely with the Science and Data Subcommittee. This will include bi-monthly meetings with this Subcommittee to develop the workplan needed to meet the milestones of the Climate Action Plan. Input from this Subcommittee will be considered in the development of methodologies for the work contracted. In addition, the contractor will also coordinate with the Cross-Sector Mitigation and Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittees where necessary. This may include additional meetings with these Subcommittees.

For the technical analyses, we are prioritizing near-term requirements (2025) that have the greatest need for specificity and confidence; medium-term requirements (2030) with a need for strategic insight; and long-term requirements (2050) with a vision for success. Specifically, the contractor will:

- 1) Review VT's current GHG Inventory methodology, in comparison to other comparable jurisdictions and methodologies, and relative to IPCC protocol and EPA guidance, and, in a memo (and short presentation), recommend any suggested improvements or changes to current methodology, including but not limited to the following questions:
 - a. Review of current Inventory inputs and methodological choices for appropriateness and accuracy, including:
 - Emissions factors utilized for each source of emissions;
 - The choice of GWP value (i.e. GWP20; GWP100); and
 - Emissions modeling techniques used for each sector.
 - b. Development of a "carbon budget" that would define and track net emissions (i.e. emissions sinks, not just gross emissions from emitting sources).
 - c. Assessment of the feasibility and appropriateness of supplementing our in-boundary/sector-based inventory methodology with a consumption-based emissions inventory approach (as OR and MN have done) and/or other ways that Vermont could appropriately incorporate lifecycle emissions factors into our existing Inventory.
- 2) Conduct analysis of identified emissions reduction pathways (sectoral targets related to efficiency, technology, and behavioral measures) including:
 - a. Cost Effectiveness:
 - Review and suggest improvements to the Public Service Department's "Cost of Carbon" model, including consideration of a GHG mitigation "supply curve" identifying the measure cost and potential in Vermont for reductions;
 - Analysis of economic considerations beyond direct costs (social and environmental costs and benefits, including health benefits); and
 - Summarize the literature and frame up a choice for VT of an appropriate Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) value (including the key choice of discount rate) that can be used to inform cost effectiveness analysis based on a marginal damage and marginal abatement approach.

b. Economic Impact Analysis in comparison to a business as usual base case (to be developed by the Public Service Department's Comprehensive Energy Plan modeling using LEAP), including:

- Impact on VT consumers (savings and costs and other metrics such as real disposable income) of modeled sectoral pathways & identified measures including any differential impacts across Vermont's geography and demographic groups (including by income and race);
- Impact on VT macro economy of modeled sectoral pathways & identified measures, including:
 - VT Gross State Product (including in and out of state dollar flows);
 - Direct, Indirect, and Induced jobs impacts; and
 - Net changes to State revenue (personal income tax, gasoline tax, etc.);
- Net effects on public health of modeled sectoral pathways & identified measures (including costs and benefits); and
- Secondary environmental impacts, such as waterway acidification.

3) Review and comprehensively identify strategies for reducing GHG emissions, consistent with the requirements of Act 153, and specifically along the lines of the modeled sectoral pathways identified by SEI/NESCAUM in the LEAP modeling exercise for the CEP. This includes a range of approaches including potential regulatory and policy actions as well as programmatic and implementation activities:

- Rules and regulations
- Codes and standards
- Conservation/ efficiency programs
- Market transformation incentives
- Subsidies and/or incentives
- Market mechanisms

These policy mechanisms may be modeled exogenously as to their costs and impact on technology adoption rates, with outputs available in a format that can inform broader sectoral models as completed with LEAP modeling.

4) Develop a suite of policies, drawing on task (3), which identifies and assesses:

- a. Short term—Must have policies and/or actions that will be useful regardless of what future choices may appear and are sufficient to achieve 2025 emissions requirement.
- b. Interim strategy —Measures necessary to achieve 2030 emissions requirement.
- c. Note: vision for 2050 will come in a future iteration of the Climate Action Plan.

Commented [CD2]: As originally written, the list below seems to not be "like" items. Quite a grab bag of important topics, but I am not sure why they are grouped in this way and what exactly the outcome would look like that you are asking for. I tried doing some editing to see if I was teasing out what you are trying to say. In my way of thinking, I consider what technology or pathway am I trying to achieve and at what scale to meet a certain portion of the overall reductions target. Then given that technology or pathway, what programs, policies, financing, funding, and implementation capacity need to be in place to achieve the desired reductions? AND then what codes, standards, rules, and/or regulations would need to be in place or to change to enable that level of implementation and achievement of reductions to happen?
Conservation/efficiency/weatherization programs will be presumably be part of the portfolio but so will a lot of other renewable energy, housing, workforce development and other programs.

Commented [J3R2]: Thanks Christine. This is one of the areas I just copied and pasted from ANR's initial RFI...

Commented [LJ4R2]: I am leaving this for a discussion at the subcommittee level

- 5) Propose an emissions tracking and reporting framework for actions, both current and prospective, included in the preferred emissions control scenario that integrate with Vermont's existing (or as updated) emissions inventory methodology.

Performance Requirements

The performance requirements for this contract are the successful analyses needed to develop the Vermont Climate Action Plan, including meeting the necessary milestones to deliver a Climate Action Plan by December 1, 2021.

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Proposal Format

All response to this RFP shall include the following elements:

1. **Qualifications of the Project Team:** Identity qualifications of the persons who will be available for work under this contract ("project team") and who will be the single point of contact. For each member of the project team, please include the following information:
 - Name and title
 - Project team role
 - Representative project experience (no more than 5 projects)
2. **Experience supporting development of climate action work:** Please describe familiarity and past-involvement with climate action work at a state or province level, highlighting any specific experience related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies, and including the roles performed by Project Team members, within the last five (5) years. If no such experience, please indicate so.
3. **Experience with Low Emissions Analysis Platform (LEAP) model developed by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI):** The LEAP model is being utilized by the Vermont Public Service Department as part of the bi-decadal update to Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) and will inform the Vermont Climate Action Plan. Also speak to the extent that you propose using modeling tools and their transparency, accessibility, and long-term usefulness to the State of Vermont for ongoing analysis (i.e. no "black boxes" that have hidden assumptions or that can't be used by the State going forward).
4. **Capacity to accomplish the work:** Please describe the extent and proposed methods with which many diverse opinions and interests will be addressed through the stakeholder process, and how such will occur. Include relevant examples from previous work experience, including one or more samples of writing similar reports. Please comment on the availability of project members as well as the ease of scheduling and coordinating based on existing relationships.
5. **Cost proposal:** Please provide an estimated budget for the Scope of Services detailed above. The estimated budget must include cost breakdown by major task and budget categories (i.e., personnel, materials and supplies, travel etc.), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible. In addition, please show the following:
 - Personnel: include projected hours, by individual, by task with billing rates, for each task identified in the Scope of Services;
 - Materials and supplies: estimate cost, by task, for all materials, supplies or other incidentals that will be required to fulfill the Scope of Services;

- Travel: estimate costs for travel, if any, and per diem (meals and lodging) that may be incurred under this contract, including the number of on-site days, weekly/monthly trips, over-night stays, mileage, etc.
6. **Certificate of Compliance** (Appendix A) A complete proposal shall include a signed Certificate of Compliance. This form must be completed in its entirety and submitted as part of the response for the proposal to be considered valid, and indicates the applicant agrees to required contract terms for the State including tax, insurance, and all other applicable contract terms.

Selection Criteria:

All proposals will be evaluated for completeness, including all elements identified in the Scope of Services. Incomplete proposals will not be evaluated. In the event an insufficient number of proposals are considered complete, bidders may be given extra time to submit addendums.

Complete proposals will be judged by the following weighted criteria:

- Qualifications of the Project Team – 25%.
- Experience supporting development of climate action work at a state level, including both greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies and efforts to build resilience – 15%
- Experience with LEAP model – 25%
- Capacity to accomplish the work – 10%
- Cost – 25%

The State may conduct interviews with the finalists at its discretion.

Deadline for Questions:

Potential respondents may submit questions regarding this RFP. Questions must be submitted in writing, via e-mail, to Jane Lazorchak (jane.lazorchak@vermont.gov) and must be received by 4:00PM April 19, 2021. Responses to any questions received will be published on the Vermont Climate Council website (<https://aoa.vermont.gov/content/vermont-climate-council>) on a rolling basis, with all responses posted by 2:00PM on April 21, 2021.

RFP Response Submission:

The closing date for the receipt of RFP responses is 4:00PM Eastern Time on April 23, 2021. Responses must be delivered via e-mail to jane.lazorchak@vermont.gov prior to that time. Responses should be labeled, "Response to RFP – Vermont Climate Council Technical Services" The responses received by ANR will be reviewed by ANR staff and members the Vermont Climate Council.

Contractor Selection Schedule:

It is anticipated that the contract award will be issued by May 1, 2021, and bidders no longer being considered will be notified by mail or email.

Appendix A. Certificate of Compliance