

Context (language from the Global Warming Solutions Act): Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee.
This subcommittee shall focus on the role Vermont's natural and working lands play in carbon sequestration and storage, climate adaptation, and ecosystem and community resilience. This subcommittee will seek to understand current initiatives in the agricultural and forestry sectors and the businesses that depend on them and to develop actions and policies that restore wetlands; increase carbon stored on agricultural and forest land and in forest products; and support healthy agricultural soils and local food systems.

1. Carbon Budget: Develop a current carbon budget for the State of Vermont that quantifies existing carbon storage in soils and biomass and carbon fluxes (emissions and sequestration) associated with natural and working lands, including biomass growth, management and utilization, and natural processes, in support of the GWSA requirement to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 across all sectors.
2. Emissions reductions: Identify and develop initiatives, programs and strategies that reduce gross and net annual greenhouse gas emissions from Vermont's natural and working lands, including land-use conversion. This includes strategies to maintain or increase carbon sequestration in Vermont's natural and working lands.
3. Assessment of co-benefits and impacts: As emission reduction initiatives, programs and strategies are identified and developed, assess their co-benefits for such factors as water quality, soil health, quality of life, food security, and impacts on economic and ecological resilience and sustainability.
4. Nature-based solutions for Adaptation/Resilience: Identify and develop initiatives, programs and strategies to improve adaptation and build resilience in Vermont's natural and working lands. This work should also consider nature-based solutions – and human impediments to those solutions – that build resilience in Vermont's communities. 'Resilience' means the capacity of individuals, communities, and natural and built systems to withstand and recover from climatic events, trends, and disruptions.
5. Food and forest systems/security: Identify and develop climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives, programs and strategies that promote Vermont's local agricultural and forest economy, improve healthy soils, create greater access to healthy, local foods for all Vermonters, and improve water quality.
6. Land use planning: Advise other subcommittees on land use issues and opportunities, including nature-based solutions to reduce vulnerability to our built environment and siting of new renewable energy generation.