**Vermont Climate Action Plan - Working Together for a Thriving Vermont**

**OVERVIEW**

**How is climate change affecting Vermont?**

The effects of climate change are starting to feel closer every year. From hotter days to more intense storms, Vermont’s climate patterns are clearly shifting and impacting our beautiful state. If action isn’t taken soon, we’ll see even bigger changes to the places we love, including our waterways, forests and farms. Climate change doesn’t only impact natural systems, Vermont’s infrastructure and the health of our communities are threatened by extreme heat and severe storms. While climate change affects everyone, some people face greater risks due to race, ethnicity, income, disability, health, age and occupation.

The good news is that solutions are available. If we act now to cut climate pollution, we can significantly reduce these risks. That’s why the State of Vermont is developing a Climate Action Plan to make sure that all of our communities can overcome the challenges of a changing climate and thrive into the future.

**What is the Vermont Climate Action Plan?**

The Vermont Climate Action Plan aims to dramatically reduce harmful climate pollution and to prepare Vermont for a warming climate that threatens our communities, livelihoods and landscapes. Addressing climate change presents opportunities for new industries and jobs in clean energy and in preparing our communities for extreme weather. Advancing solutions that address the needs of Vermonters facing the greatest risk is key for a resilient and equitable Vermont.

**How is it connected to the Global Warming Solution Act?**

Vermont’s Global Warming Solutions Act requires the state to cut climate pollution to net zero. This means that by 2050, we have to get rid of all of the climate pollution we can and balance what can’t be cut with actions that remove carbon emissions such as planting trees. The Global Warming Solutions Act calls for a Vermont Climate Action Plan by December 1, 2021. The Act requires the transportation, building, utility, industrial, commercial and agriculture sectors to cut emissions and that energy burdens are reduced for rural and marginalized communities. Encouraging smart growth and limiting the use of products and chemicals that contribute to climate change is also in the Act. Finally, preparing for a changing climate is addressed with requirements to store carbon, cut emissions and promote adaptation and resilience on natural working lands and to build and encourage climate resilience of Vermont communities and natural systems.

 **Who is leading the effort?**

The Vermont Climate Council has been set up to involve a broad range of stakeholders in creating the plan, working through five sub-committees: Rural Resilience and Adaptation, Agriculture and Ecosystems, Cross Sector Mitigation, Just Transitions and Science and Data. Each subcommittee has inventoried existing programs to meet the requirements of the Act and identify and evaluate new strategies needed. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is leading this process to coordinate the work of the Climate Council and gathering input from Vermonters to help prioritize climate action pathways.

**What’s being considered?**

1. More resilient agriculture and ecosystems
2. More efficient transportation systems and vehicles
3. Improved access to clean, reliable energy
4. Better buildings
5. Climate action in waste, industry and agriculture
6. Stronger rural communities

 **This is exciting! How can I get involved?**

* Share your concerns about climate change and ideas for solutions in a confidential survey that will help inform the Climate Action Plan [survey link]
* Join the conversation on social media [links]
* Participate in an upcoming public event [link to events page]
* Host your own event. Bring together your neighbors, colleagues and friends to discuss the Vermont Climate Action Plan. Contact us to learn more about opportunities to partner with us (info@climateaccess.org)