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**Vermont Climate Action Commission**

**Education Subcommittee**

*Wednesday, October 25, 2017; 1 – 3 pm*

*The Catamount Room/ National Life building / Montpelier*

*Committee Members Present:*

*Harrison Bushnell*

*Johanna Miller*

*Tom Rogers (facilitator)*

*Terisa Thomas (facilitator)*

**Introduction:**

The subcommittee began by reviewing the notes from the 10/12/17 meeting. The following comments were generally noted:

* We should be investing in the capacity of local resources and partners, i.e. energy committees (now over 100 all-volunteer groups), Regional Planning Commissions. They have a limited budget and if there were more capacity to suppose those committees, it could have benefits at the local level.
* There is a concern that if the solutions presented from the Climate Action Commission are “low hanging fruit”, they will be passed and give the impression of taking action but will still leave the more difficult tasks untouched.
* There was an overall discussion of short term goals and solutions vs. long term goals. The feeling was that goals need to be commensurate with the need.
* We should work into the matrix of solutions the “how” something gets done. This includes exploring the financing available and funding needs.
* We should consider what are the barriers to success for the recommendations we offer.

**Proposal #1: Total energy education package and portal for consumers and industry**

* We should explore the expansion of Efficiency Vermont’s mandate to deal with all energy needs. They’re currently solely an electric efficiency utility. There’s a small budget to work on heating. We need an energy utility to deal with other sectors such as heating, transportation, etc.
* Build off existing resources rather than re-inventing the wheel such as Efficiency Vermont, existing utilities, Regional Planning Commissions, and energy committees. This would require an inventory of existing resources. Could be completed with minimal cost by a third party partner.
* Identify how to build from existing resources/energy clearinghouses etc to create one portal, or an integrated portal, to make it easier for people to explore comprehensive energy solutions.

**Proposal #2: Green job development**

* Focus on developing and expanding clean energy job opportunities in the tech center arena. Green technical centers could provide an opportunity to those who seek out good paying jobs without a huge education investment, and gives the state a professional, well-trained workforce. This fits a wide variety of individuals.
* The focus should be on building from the existing work at tech centers and existing state academic institutions but deepening the focus on green programs are more hands-on. This would likely support other initiatives from the CAC.
* This could help retain and attract a younger workforce to the state with well-paying jobs.
* Another goal of this subcommittee could be to do a marketing campaign aimed at promoting those who work in the trades; remove the stigma of “tech jobs”. Promote green tech jobs as well paying and needed jobs to help the economy as well as clean energy goals.
* These programs could focus on women and low income constituencies building off existing programs working with other partners such as Vermont Works for Women and Community Action Agencies.
* Many of these workforce education requirements are premised on having solid clean energy policies. If public policy is stabilized, the market will stabilize behind that.
* We should request a comprehensive inventory of who is doing what to support the green energy education sector. This could include identifying schools, community colleges, universities, technical centers, Department of Labor, and other workforce training programs that support a clean energy workforce. It would also include an analysis of our existing clean energy job sector. The goal of this inventory would be to identify the gap between existing programs and green workforce needs and opportunities. It would also attempt to locate workforce development funds or other state resources that could be reallocated for green job training purposes. For example, if there are Department of Labor funds that are untapped. If the inventory can provide a level of awareness of the needs, it could free up capital with provisions to take action to re-deploy existing resources or allocate additional funds to take action as needed. There should be a target of “X # of green jobs created” or “$XM in reallocation of funds to support clean energy sector”. (The inventory would be low cost, could be pulled from existing resources. It would likely require a legislative mandate or executive request for prioritization). Including a measurable action requirement may require realigning funding/finding new.
* Do something that models the Clean Water Fund Act 64 Treasurer’s Report to identify what’s existing using a stakeholder process and what potential need for workforce development exists.
* Allocate funds within Agency of Natural Resources, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, or other state agencies to create new, dedicated staff capacity (XX # Full-Time Positions) to find synergies between workforce development, clean energy deployment, and greenhouse gas emission reduction. This would enable full time staff to solely focus on green energy workforce and climate education/action needs. This staff member could connect these issues who works on internal state issues and also with external groups to turn climate change into the economic opportunity that it is. A permanent staff member wouldn’t change with political administrations and could potentially effect more change.

**Proposal #3: Broad based education on climate issues from K-12**

* Vermont Energy Education Program: build off their work; inserting these classes into school curriculum and making it mandatory.
* NEED TO EXPAND ON THIS.