

## BCRC Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2022

Attendees: Dixie Zens, Mary Rogers, Nancy Faesy, Ellen Maloney, Jim Hand, Stephanie Moffett-Hynds, Jim Hand, Audrey Kolloff, Jed Rubin, Rob Costantino, Bill Christian, Jeff Dexter, Bill Laberge, Bruce Lierman, Madison Kremer, Andrew McKeever

BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Callie Fishburn

### **Discussion of Draft Comprehensive Energy Plan & Climate Action Plan**

Jed Rubin asked if the plan includes an update on how close Bennington County is to meeting energy goals. Jim Sullivan said the plan doesn't include specific data at the regional level, but there is information available from the Energy Action Network.

Jim Hand said that the plan does not adequately address the renewable power supply and the need for in-state renewable energy generation. The Committee discussed the GHG emissions of certain renewable energy generation, and the possibilities of wind power. GMP is largely driving the conversation in the region and is focused on batteries, storage, and resiliency programs. Mention was also made of the governor's budget which includes millions of dollars for climate & energy initiatives, including a state climate change office, and money for weatherization, EVs, and land use planning. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also includes money for grid modernization.

Dixie Zens asked if the state has a plan to make up for lost gasoline tax revenue. The state is considering a pilot program that assesses a fee on EVs based on annual miles traveled. Bill Christian added that the gas tax is not the major contributor to the transportation fund. Jim Sullivan reported that both the CEP and the CAP have a heavy focus on EVs and don't mention alternative transportation methods in much detail.

The committee discussed the workforce development opportunities in the fields of EV maintenance, weatherization, and renewable energy that could arise from the plan. Workforce training programs and widespread information about where to get training in these areas is needed.

The committee also discussed the lack of strong recommendation in the Climate Action Plan and the emphasis on short-term GHG emissions, and equity considerations.

### **Legislative Overview**

Jim Sullivan gave an overview of H.518 which would create a municipal fuel switching grant program with up to \$40 million available to municipalities to conduct energy audits and implement efficiency improvements. The bill currently does not include mention of renewable energy.

Callie Fishburn gave an overview of S.232 which would increase the amount of total renewable energy needed to be compliant with the Renewable Energy Standard and S.233 which would create a Clean Heat Standard. The CHS would mandate fuel suppliers to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted from their heating fuel. Suppliers would be able to meet the required amounts of clean heat using tradeable clean heat credits, paying compliance fees for going over the allowed amounts, reducing

its sales of fossil fuels, engaging in clean heat transformation projects, or a combination of said credits and projects.

The committee discussed the effectiveness of heat pumps and the possibility of transitioning municipal buildings to heat pumps while their boilers are still operating.

The meeting adjourned at 5:13PM.