

Week of 3/7/2022

This week is crossover week when policy bills make it out of committee to go to funding committees before being sent out for a vote on the senate or house floor, then go over to the other chamber. The bills that don't make it out of committee don't move forward (though can sometimes be attached as amendments to other bills that are.)

Here's what we're focus on and who to contact:

- **S. 148/H. 651 - Environmental Justice** is now in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Please ask the Committee to properly fund the Community Members' Advisory group.

- Sen. Jane Kitchel, Chair
- Sen. Alice W. Nitka, Vice Chair
- Sen. Dick Sears Jr.
- Sen. Robert Starr
- Sen. Richard Westman
- Sen. Philip Baruth, Clerk
- Sen. Becca Balint

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- **H. 715 - Clean Heat Standards** bill is now in the House Appropriations Committee. Representative Briglin is presenting it on Wednesday at 9am. We are asking that this bill be changed by removing biofuels, renewable natural gas, and biomass a sources of clean heat, the removal of the utilities on the Technical Advisory Council, and that it not allow obligated parties (i.e. fossil fuel companies) to act as the default provide. (One pager and talking points about our position coming soon)

- Rep. Mary S. Hooper, Chair
- Rep. Peter J. Fagan, Vice Chair
- Rep. Kimberly Jessup, Ranking Member
- Rep. Martha Feltus
- Rep. James Harrison
- Rep. Robert Helm
- Rep. Robin Scheu
- Rep. Trevor Squirrel
- Rep. Tristan Toleno
- Rep. Maida Townsend, Clerk
- Rep. David Yacovone

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- **H. 273 Land Access and Opportunity Act** - Advocates will be in state house Thursday and Friday to educate legislators about the bill. The bill is currently in House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs. Call this committee to ask them to take up the bill.

- Rep. Thomas Stevens, Chair
- Rep. Joseph "Chip" Troiano, Vice Chair
- Rep. Barbara Murphy, Ranking Member
- Rep. Matthew Birong
- Rep. Tiffany Bluemle
- Rep. Lisa Hango
- Rep. Mary E. Howard, Clerk

- Rep. John Killacky
- Rep. John Palasik
- Rep. Joseph Parsons
- Rep. Tommy Walz

- **Transportation Bill** - We need to call the Transportation Committee for funding for micro transit and for electric school buses, in particular, *this week*. Here's an [Op Ed](#) by Becky Jones of 350VT Brattleboro.

- Rep. Diane Lanpher, Chair
- Rep. Charles "Butch" Shaw, Vice Chair
- Rep. Timothy R. Corcoran II, Ranking Member
- Rep. John L. Bartholomew
- Rep. Mollie S. Burke
- Rep. Curt McCormack
- Rep. Patricia McCoy
- Rep. Brian Smith
- Rep. Gabrielle Stebbins
- Rep. Matt Walker

- **Weatherization** - The Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee is setting up a task force to study weatherization. Testimony is set for [Wed. March 9th at 8:30am as well as Friday](#). Email Kim Hornung-Marcy khmarcy@comcast.net or Scot Zens Michael.S.Zens@dartmouth.edu to get involved in weatherization policy. There is significant funding being appropriated for existing programs this session. We need to do more down the road.
- **On Green Justice Zones** - March 23rd 6 to 7:30pm – Join Rights & Democracy Institute, Vermont Renews coalition partners, and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) for an evening of visioning how Vermont communities can become Green Justice Zones.
 - Green Justice Zones are an initiative that uses data mapping, community design and a participatory budgeting process to support community revitalization in places that have been most harmed by the current climate crisis.
 - Together, we will learn from regional partners about existing examples of Green Justice Zones in places including Providence, and work towards a shared understanding of what this exciting approach to environmental justice could look like in Vermont.
 - Come learn more, get your questions answered, and share your ideas for the future! RSVP to join: <https://www.mobilize.us/rightsdemocracy/event/444210/>

Week of 2/28/2022

This week, our Legislators are taking a break from committee deliberations and are in their districts. It is a great and essential time to contact your direct House Representatives and Senators to ask them if they received and read our [Climate SOS Legislative Asks Valentines](#) and where they stand on these. **Doing so will inform what they do for the rest of the session!** (Note that many legislators will be attending districts/town events this week so keep an eye out for those. Those are great places to ask questions.)

You can find how to contact them by visiting: [Find Your Legislator](#)

In short, we're asking them to:

- Support the funding and passing of the Environmental Justice Bill ([S. 148](#)) and the Land Access Bill ([H.273](#))
- Oppose false energy solutions the Clean Heat Standards bill ([H. 715](#)) and the Renewable Energy Standard Bill ([S. 232](#))
- Fund more public transportation and electric buses in this year's Transportation bill

Here's more detail:

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BILL (S. 148)

The Environmental Justice Bill (S. 148) has been voted 5-0 out of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee! Now we need to make sure it's funded and makes it all the way through the rest of the legislative session

- Please take a minute to thank the Committee members for moving this groundbreaking legislation forward.
 - [Senator Christopher Bray, Chair \(Addison District\)](#)
 - [Senator Richard Westman, Vice Chair \(Lamoille District\)](#)
 - [Senator Mark MacDonald \(Orange District\)](#)
 - [Senator Brian Campion \(Bennington District\)](#)
 - [Senator Dick McCormack \(Windsor District\)](#)
- THEN ask your Senators to vote for it, and let your Representatives in the House know you support it.

You can read 350VT Central Vermont volunteer Marisa Keller's Op Ed [Who's Carrying the Backpack](#).

CLEAN HEAT STANDARD BILL (H. 715)

We have serious concerns about the Clean Heat Standard bill (H. 715) that was voted out of the House Energy and Technology Committee at the end of the week. The Bill now goes to Appropriations. 350VT will not be supporting this bill unless significant changes are made to it in the Senate. The bill as currently drafted supports greening our heat sources through false solutions that would have dramatic ecological and social impacts at a large scale. A better path for heating our homes is by deeply weatherizing them to significantly reduce the need to heat them and meet the rest of the need through heat pump technology powered by renewable electricity.

To learn more about how the current bill would catalyze the growth of damaging new heating fuel, read this [constituent letter](#) and [the letter sent to the House Energy & Technology](#)

[Committee](#) signed by close to 200 constituents. You can also read 350VT Middlebury volunteer Roger White's [Op Ed about Renewable Energy Credits and Clean Heat Standards](#).

TRANSPORTATION BILL AND TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION ACT

We're calling for more public transportation in this year's Transportation bill as well as the electrification of public transit and school buses away from diesel. Please [read Becky Jones' Op Ed that states 350VT's position on the Transportation bill](#). You can also watch 350VT Campaign Team member Divya Gudur speak to the need for public transportation [here](#). She starts at 40:52.

- Currently the Governor's Transportation bill is being measured against the "Transportation Innovation Act" ("An act relating to transportation initiatives to reduce carbon emission" - [H.552 https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552).. This Act is not meant to be passed but to be a model for the kind of bill the sponsors of the bill would like the Governor's Transportation Bill to reflect.
- The bill is still very heavily focused on EVs.
- We are asking for more public transportation and the electrification of buses.
 - money for electrifying school or transit buses
 - fare free transit
 - developing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - transportation demand management.

LAND ACCESS BILL (H. 273) - An act relating to promoting racial and social equity in land access and property ownership

We support the passage of this bill currently in the House General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee. Please contact members of this committee to ask them to move the bill forward

- Rep. [Thomas Stevens](#), Chair
- Rep. [Joseph "Chip" Troiano](#), Vice Chair
- Rep. [Barbara Murphy](#), Ranking Member
- Rep. [Matthew Birong](#)
- Rep. [Tiffany Bluemle](#)
- Rep. [Lisa Hango](#)
- Rep. [Mary E. Howard](#), Clerk
- Rep. [John Killacky](#)
- Rep. [John Palasik](#)
- Rep. [Joseph Parsons](#)
- Rep. [Tommy Walz](#)

Renewable Energy Standards (S. 232 and S. 264)

We strongly opposed S.. 232 which would allow utilities to continue greenwashing our sources of electricity. Currently Green Mountain Power sells the solar energy produced in Vermont at a profit to other states in the form of Renewable Energy Credits, then turns around and buys dirty energy to replace it. Hydro-Quebec electricity and Renewable Natural Gas produce methane gas and have social justice impacts. S. 232 would increase these sources to make up 100% of our electricity supply. We need a Renewable Energy Standard that would rely on emissions-free renewable energy that is produced in state as much as possible, not false solutions.

S. 264, also relating to Renewable Energy Standards, is a bill submitted by Senator Becca Balint that starts laying out an alternative to S. 232. It aims to increase in state renewable energy production and decrease our reliance on hydro-quebec, renewable natural gas, and false solutions. The work involved to develop this bill for passage this session is substantial and thus, it is unlikely that it will advance at this stage in the legislative calendar. This is something 350VT is interested in building political will for the 2023 session.

You can read 350VT Middlebury volunteer Roger White's [Op Ed about Renewable Energy Credits and Clean Heat Standards](#).

February 14, 2022 Update

- **Continue out to the Senate Natural Resources Committee about**
 - **S. 148, the Environmental Justice Bill. Support but ask for the following to be included in order to make it a strong bill:**
 - Keep the original demographic definition of Environmental Justice communities in the bill
 - Ensure that the Environmental Justice Advisory Council has real decision-making power so EJ communities are listened to and involved in decision-making
 - Ensure the Environmental Justice Advisory Council has a reliable and recurrent and substantial source of funding so it can fulfill its role effectively.

To learn more about why we are asking for this and about the specifics, read Marisa Keller's [blog post](#).

- **Oppose S. 232 – Renewable Energy Standards and share that S. 264 is a better pathway. (see more info about this in last week's update, below)**
- **Call for strong weatherization – S. 284 (Weatherization)**
 - 350VT is calling for the funding of a mass weatherization program that prioritizes low-income households, including rentals. Slashing Vermont's emissions depends on the most robust weatherization program we can have to reduce our heating needs - one of the top sources of "clean heat"

- Landlords need to be held accountable for weatherizing their rental units

- **Secure many more signatures for the letter opposing the current version of the House Clean Heat Bill** and call or send individual emails to the House Energy & Technology Committee members. It is likely that this bill will go to Ways & Means next and we can start reaching out to members of that Committee as well via email or phone call.
 - Letter (including emails for House Energy & Technology Members) https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDWCV7n_-blgH2L8kQzcf5nv12Ki0s3O5xBEpE21EpdHlg2g/viewform?usp=sf_link
 - We can start emailing House Ways & Means members with our asks for Clean Heat Standards. HW&M's committee member contact info can be found here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2022/21>
- We can start reaching out to the House Transportation Committee with our asks. (You can see Transportation asks on our website.
 - Currently the Governor's Transportation bill is being measured against the "Transportation Innovation Act" ("An act relating to transportation initiatives to reduce carbon emission" - [H.552](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552) <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552>.. This Act is not meant to be passed but to be a model for the kind of bill the sponsors of the bill would like the Governor's Transportation Bill to reflect.
 - The bill is still very heavily focused on EVs.
 - We are asking for more public transportation and the electrification of buses.
 - money for electrifying school or transit buses
 - fare free transit
 - developing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - transportation demand management.

You can watch 350VT Campaign Team member Divya Gudur speak to the need for public transportation [here](#). She starts at 40:52.

What we're doing:

- 350VT Addison Co node is working to set up a meeting with the House Transportation Committee Chair (Diane Lanpher)
- We need to set up meetings with other committee members if possible
- We'll be calling/emailing members of that committee
- We're seeing how the Governor's bill compares with the Transportation Innovation Act
- We're putting the issue in the public eye
 - Becky Jones statewide publication op-ed
 - Brian Forrest Burlington area op-ed

Volunteer Point people: Brian Forrest

February 10, 2022 Update

Instructions for using this update sheet:

Under each hyper-linked section, you will find:

- what we are asking for
- the latest on the status of the bill
- what our actions are around this bill/issue
- who the 350VT volunteer point people are.

Please click on the hyperlink to go to the issue you are interested in:

[Environmental Justice Bill \(S.148\)](#)

[Clean Heat Standards \(22-0398 - An act relating to Clean Heat Standard\)](#)

[Renewable Energy Standards \(S. 232 and S. 264\)](#)

[Land Access \(H. 273\)](#)

[Weatherization \(S. 109 and S. 284\)](#)

[Transportation](#)

You can read about best practices for calls or emails to your legislators [here](#).

This week's action (also included in the email blast to our whole network that went out earlier today):

- We ***all*** need to be contacting the Senate Natural Resources Committee to ask them to pass the get the strongest Environmental Justice Bill possible out of committee.
- While you're at it, let them know we don't support the Renewable Energy Standards (RES) H. 232 bill.
- And that weatherization is extremely important.

If you are the constituent of committees working on other bills, we'll send you an email asking you to call and include instructions.

Environmental Justice Bill (S.148)

The committee is considering **the Environmental Justice bill (S. 148)** in the next few days. We need it to be the strongest EJ bill possible. Word on the street is that it is being watered down by the administration. Please contact the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee by the end of the week to ask them to:

- i. Keep the original demographic definition of Environmental Justice communities in the bill

- ii. Ensure that the Environmental Justice Advisory Council has real decision-making power so EJ communities are listened to and involved in decision-making
- iii. Ensure the Environmental Justice Advisory Council has a reliable and recurrent and substantial source of funding so it can fulfill its role effectively.

To learn more about why we are asking for this and about the specifics, read Marisa Keller's [blog post](#).

What were doing:

- Put the call to contact Sen. Nat Resources & Energy Committee in our email blast
- Addison County and South Royalson groups are contacting their respective reps (Addison - Bray; Orange - McDonald)
- Marisa Keller (Center VT node) has written a blog post/op ed which you can read [Who's Carrying the Backpack](#).

Point volunteers on this bill: Marisa Keller and Ned Swanberg (350VT Central VT node)

[Clean Heat Standards \(22-0398 - An act relating to Clean Heat Standard\)](#)

The House Energy and Technology Committee is still taking testimony and discussing clean heat standards during the week of February 6th. We are still developing 350VT's position on the bill that was put together by the House Energy and Technology Committee but we know that we are asking the Legislature to:

- *Source our clean heat through mass-weatherization, starting with low-income housing, and electricity based heating technology (heat pumps)*
- *Reject false solutions like biofuels from out of state and clear cutting of forests and renewable natural gas. These would continue to emit greenhouse gasses and have detrimental environmental and social impacts, particularly on low-income and BIPOC communities - whether they be in Vermont or beyond.*
- *And develop a mechanism to make sure increased fuels costs do not get passed down to low-income and BIPOC individuals.*
- *Fuel dealers need to be mandated to make transparent the greenhouse gas emissions and social justice impacts associated with the heat that they provide. The state needs to develop a transparent accounting system.*

What we're doing:

- We are asking direct constituents of the House Committee on Energy and Technology to contact their legislators to share these asks.
- The Strafford/Thetford group which has been studying this in detail is putting out a statement to the committee. The 350VT Just Transition Campaign Team will decide whether this is our official position after consulting with node leaders.

Volunteer point people: Stuart Blood, Susan Hodges, and other members of the Stafford/Thetford Group, and Steve Crowley (350VT Campaign Team)

We are opposing S. 233 - the Clean Heat Standards bill in the Senate. (Currently in Senate Finance Committee.)

Renewable Energy Standards (S. 232 and S. 264)

We strongly opposed S. 232 which would allow utilities to continue greenwashing our sources of electricity. Currently Green Mountain Power sells the solar energy produced in Vermont at a profit to other states in the form of Renewable Energy Credits, then turns around and buys dirty energy to replace it. Hydro-Quebec electricity and Renewable Natural Gas produce methane gas and have social justice impacts. S. 232 would increase these sources to make up 100% of our electricity supply. We need a Renewable Energy Standard that would rely on emissions-free renewable energy that is produced in state as much as possible, not false solutions.

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What we're doing:

- Made the ask to call Sen Nat Res and Energy Committee in 2/10 email blast
- Addison County and South Royalson groups are contacting their respective reps (Addison - Bray; Orange - McDonald)
- Roger White (Addison Co. node) is working on an Op Ed

Volunteer point people: Stuart Blood (Strafford/Thetford Group), Steve Crowley (350VT Campaign Team)

Land Access: Promoting racial and social equity in land access and property ownership (H. 273)

What we are doing:

- Asking constituents of Housing & Military committee to ask Committee to take up this bill

Volunteer point people: Annie D'Olivo (350VT Manchester Node)

Weatherization (S. 109 and S. 284)

350VT is calling for the funding of a mass weatherization program that prioritizes low-income households, including rentals. Slashing Vermont's emissions depends on the most robust weatherization program we can have to reduce our heating needs - a real source of "clean heat"

Through the review of S.109, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources the committee has received testimony from state agencies and the non-profits who do weatherization and on various aspects of "how to scale up" to actually weatherize 120,000 homes by 2031. Vermont weatherizes about 2,000 homes a year (less when Covid was raging) and have done about 30,000 homes so far.

Key learnings are that: we need more workers, we need more training options, we need to retain workers on crews better, workers need affordable housing, better wages, better tracking of what training is required. The legislators will need to figure out how to access ARPA funds appropriately and find further funding to accomplish the big goal of 120,000 homes.

What we're doing:

- Stay tuned for next steps on our asks but please communicate the importance of low-income and mass weatherization to the Senate Natural Resources Committee if you interact with them.

Volunteer point people: Kim Hornung-Marcy and Sandy Henneberger (Burlington/Chittenden Co node); Susan Mills and Richard Butz (Addison Co node); Scot Zens (Upper Valley)

Transportation

- Currently the Governor's Transportation bill is being measured against the "Transportation Innovation Act" ("An act relating to transportation initiatives to reduce carbon emission" - [H.552 https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.552).. This Act is not meant to be passed but to be a model for the kind of bill the sponsors of the bill would like the Governor's Transportation Bill to reflect.
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