

H.688

An act relating to addressing climate change

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Title and Findings * * *

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

This act may be cited as the Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act of 2020.

Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the climate crisis is both caused and exacerbated by greenhouse gas emissions that result from human activity. The IPCC has determined that industrialized countries must cut their emissions to net zero by 2050, which is necessary to achieve the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C. A climate emergency threatens our communities, State, and region and poses a significant threat to human health and safety, infrastructure, biodiversity, our common environment, and our economy.

(2) The State of Vermont is part of the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of 25 states that have committed to reducing greenhouse

gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Working in parallel with other members of the U.S. Climate Alliance, the State of Vermont will help accelerate solutions that address the climate crisis in the absence of federal action. By implementing climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies, Vermont will also position its economy to benefit and thrive from the global transition to carbon neutrality and national and international efforts to address the crisis.

(3) According to the IPCC and the World Bank, a failure to substantially reduce emissions over the next ten years will require even more substantial reductions later and will increase the costs of decarbonization. Delaying necessary policy action to address the climate crisis risks significant economic damage to Vermont.

(4) According to the IPCC and the State of Vermont, adaptation and resilience measures are necessary to address climate risks.

(5) According to the IPCC, the climate crisis disproportionately impacts rural and marginalized, disenfranchised, and disinvested communities, which already bear significant public health, environmental, socioeconomic, and other burdens. Mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies must prioritize the allocation of investment of public resources to these communities and minimize, to the greatest extent practicable, potential regressive impacts.

(6) According to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the adverse impacts of climate change in Vermont include an increase in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events, a rise in vector-borne diseases including Lyme disease, more frequent cyanobacteria blooms, adverse impacts to forest and agricultural soils, forest and crop damage, shorter and irregular sugaring seasons, a reduction in seasonal snow cover, and variable and rising average temperatures that result in uncertain and less snowfall.

(7) According to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the conservation and restoration of Vermont forests, floodplains, and wetlands and the promotion of forest management and farming practices that sequester and store carbon are critical to achieving climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience and support a host of co-benefits, such as improving air and water quality, economic vitality, ecosystem functions, local food systems, and creating more climate resilient communities and landscapes.

(8) The credit rating industry is now analyzing the adaptation and resilience strategies of issuers of state and municipal bonds and may apply a negative credit factor for issuers with insufficient strategies. Establishing robust adaptation and resilience strategies for Vermont will help protect the State from a climate crisis-related credit downgrade.

* * * Greenhouse Gas Reduction Requirements * * *

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 578 is amended to read:

§ 578. GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION ~~GOALS~~ REQUIREMENTS

(a) ~~General goal of greenhouse~~ Greenhouse gas reduction requirements. ~~It is the goal of the State to~~ Vermont shall reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from within the geographical boundaries of the State and those emissions outside the boundaries of the State that are caused by the use of energy in Vermont ~~in order to make an appropriate contribution to achieving the regional goals of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from the 1990 baseline, as measured and inventoried pursuant to section 582 of this title, by:~~

(1) ~~25~~ not less than 26 percent from 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, ~~2012~~ 2025 pursuant to the State's membership in the United States Climate Alliance and commitment to implement policies to achieve the objectives of the 2016 Paris Agreement;

(2) ~~50~~ not less than 40 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, ~~2028~~ 2030 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan; and

(3) ~~if practicable using reasonable efforts, 75~~ not less than 80 percent from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by January 1, 2050 pursuant to the State's 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan.

* * *

(c) Implementation of State programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to facilitate the State's compliance with the goals established in this section, all State agencies shall consider, ~~whenever practicable,~~ any increase or decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in their decision-making procedures with respect to the purchase and use of equipment and goods; the siting, construction, and maintenance of buildings; the assignment of personnel; and the planning, design, and operation of programs, services, and infrastructure.

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* * * Vermont Climate Council and Vermont Climate Action Plan * * *

Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. chapter 24 is added to read:

CHAPTER 24. VERMONT CLIMATE COUNCIL AND
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

§ 590. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Adaptation” means reducing vulnerability and advancing resilience through planned and implemented enhancements to, or avoiding degradation of, natural and built systems and structures.

(2) “Council” shall mean the Vermont Climate Council established under section 591 of this chapter.

(3) “Greenhouse gas” has the same meaning as in section 552 of this title.

(4) “Mitigation” means reduction of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and preservation and enhancement of natural systems to sequester and store carbon, in order to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

(5) “Plan” means the Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted pursuant to section 592 of this chapter.

(6) “Resilience” means the capacity of individuals, communities, and natural and built systems to withstand and recover from climatic events, trends, and disruptions.

§ 591. VERMONT CLIMATE COUNCIL

(a) There is created the Vermont Climate Council . The Council shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Secretary of Administration, who shall serve as the Chair of the Council;

(2) the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee;

(3) the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets or designee;

(4) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee;

(5) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

(6) the Secretary of Transportation or designee;

(7) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

(8) the Commissioner of Public Service or designee;

(b) The Council shall be supported by an advisory board that shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the following members who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the

House:

(A) one member with expertise and professional experience in the design and implementation of programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

(B) one member to represent rural communities;

(C) one member to represent the municipal governments;

(D) one member to represent distribution utilities;

(E) one member to represent a statewide environmental organization;

(F) one member to represent the fuel sector; and

(G) one member with expertise in climate change **science**.

(2) the following members who shall be appointed by the Committee on

Committees:

(A) one member with expertise in the design and implementation of programs to increase resilience to and respond to natural disasters resulting from climate change;

(B) one member to represent the clean energy sector;

(C) one member to represent the small business community;

(D) one member to represent the Vermont Community Action Partnership;

(E) one member to represent the farm and forest sector;

(F) one youth member; and

(G) one member of a Vermont-based organization with expertise in energy and data analysis.

(b) Purpose of the Council. It is the purpose of the Council to perform the following:

(1) Adopt the Plan and periodically update the Plan as required by this section;

(2) Recommend to the Secretary of Administration the appropriate allocation of funds for the purposes of developing the State budget required to be submitted to the General Assembly under 32. V.S.A. §306. All recommendations from the Council should be intended to achieve the greatest mitigation and resilience benefits for the investment. The recommendations of

the Council shall be open to inspection and copying under the Public Records Act, and the Council shall submit to the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Finance, on Agriculture, on Transportation, and on Natural Resources and Energy and the House Committees on Appropriations, on Ways and Means, on Energy and Technology, on Transportation, on Agriculture and Forestry, and on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife a copy of any recommendations provided to the Governor;

(3) Periodically review implementation of the Plan to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach by the Agencies in State government;

(4) Review measurements and models of the State's progress towards meeting the requirements established under section 578 of this chapter;

(5) Provide resources to municipalities and state agencies with respect to voluntary efforts that enhance resiliency, adaptation, or promote achieving the requirements; and

(6) Recommend adjustments to programs adopted under the Plan to facilitate achieving the requirements of section 578 of this chapter.

(c) Subcommittees. The Council may create the subcommittees listed in this subsection and may also create other subcommittees to advise the Council, assist in preparing the Plan, and carry out other duties. The Council may

appoint members of the Council to serve as members of subcommittees and may also appoint individuals who are not members of the Council to serve as members of subcommittees.

(1) Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee. The Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee shall focus on the pressures that climate change adaptation will impose on rural transportation, electricity, housing, emergency services, and communications infrastructure, and the difficulty of rural communities in meeting the needs of its citizens. The Subcommittee shall:

(A) develop a municipal vulnerability index to include factors measuring a municipality's population, average age, employment, and grand list trends; active public and civic organizations; and distance from emergency services and shelter;

(B) develop best practice recommendations specific to rural communities for reducing municipal, school district, and residential fossil fuel consumption; fortifying critical transportation, electricity, and community infrastructure; and creating a distributed, redundant, storage-supported local electrical system;

(C) recommend a means of securely sharing self-identified vulnerable residents' information with State and local emergency responders and utilities;

(D) recommend tools for municipalities to assess their climate emergency preparedness, evaluate their financial capacity to address infrastructure resilience, and prioritize investment in that infrastructure; and

(E) utilize Vermont Emergency Management biennial reports to recommend program, policy, and legislative changes that will enhance municipal resilience to increased hazards presented by climate change.

(2) Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee. This subcommittee shall focus on identifying the most scientifically and technologically feasible strategies and programs that will result in the largest possible greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the most cost-effective manner.

(3) Just Transitions Subcommittee. This subcommittee shall focus on ensuring that strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to build resilience to adapt to the effects of climate change benefit and support all residents of the State fairly and equitably. This subcommittee shall ensure that strategies consider the disproportionate impact of climate change on rural, low income, and marginalized communities and that programs and incentives for building resilience are designed to be accessible to all Vermonters and do not

unfairly burden any groups, communities, geographic locations, or economic sectors. This subcommittee may adopt a measurement tool to assess the equitability of programs and strategies considered by the Council.

(4) 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.

(d) The Council shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Service and may request the assistance of any Executive Branch Agency and Department.

(e) A majority of the sitting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum, and action taken by the Council may be authorized by a majority of the members present and voting at any meeting at which a quorum is present. The Council may permit any or all members to participate in a meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication.

including electronic, telecommunications, and video- or audio-conferencing technology, by which all members participating may simultaneously or sequentially communicate with each other during the meeting. A member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting. The Council may elect officers and adopt any other procedural rules as it shall determine necessary and appropriate to perform its work.

(f) Members of the Council who are not State employees shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for each day spent in the performance of their duties, as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Natural Resources.

(g) The members of the Council appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(8) of this section shall be appointed to initial terms of two years, and members appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(9) of this section shall be appointed to initial terms of three years. Thereafter, each appointed member shall serve a term of three years or until his or her earlier resignation or removal. A vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term. An appointed member shall not serve more than three full consecutive three-year terms.

(h) On or before January 15, 2021 and every January 15 thereafter, the Council shall submit a written report to the General Assembly concerning the Council's activities and the State's progress towards meeting the greenhouse gas reduction requirements pursuant to section 578 of this title. On or before November 1, 2021 and every second November 1 thereafter, the Director of Vermont Emergency Management shall file a report with the Council concerning Vermont's overall municipal resilience to increased hazards presented by climate change that shall include hazard mitigation plans, local emergency management plans, and survey results as deemed appropriate by the Director. Subsequent reports shall include updates to document progress in local resilience. The report shall inform Council recommendations on policies to address gaps in local resilience.

§ 592. THE VERMONT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

(a) On or before December 1, 2021, the Council shall adopt the Plan. The Council shall update the Plan on or before July 1 every four years thereafter. The Council shall update the Plan within 12 months of the publication of the inventory compiled pursuant to section 582 of this chapter showing that the State has failed to meet a greenhouse gas reduction requirement established under section 578 of this chapter. The Chair may require that the plan be updated more frequently than required by this subsection.

(b) The Plan shall include at minimum the following:

(1) Identification of existing sources or classes of sources of greenhouse gas emissions;

(2) An evaluation of existing strategies and program developed to achieve the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction requirements pursuant to section 578 of this chapter and build resiliency to prepare the State's communities, infrastructure, and economy to adapt to the current and anticipated effects of climate change. This analysis shall include:

(A) the effectiveness of that strategy or program in reducing greenhouse gases or promoting resilience or adaptation;

(B) an analysis of whether the strategy or program unfairly burdens a group of persons, community or geographic region;

(C) an assessment of whether the strategy or program furthers the State's planning goals identified in 24 V.S.A. 4302(c);

(D) any co-benefits of the strategy or program in promoting other state goals;

(E) an assessment of whether the strategy or program will result or has resulted in an increase of toxic air contaminants or criteria air pollutants;

(F) the cost-effectiveness of the program; and

(G) a recommendation to modify any existing program.

(i) When making a recommendation to modify any existing program, the Council shall identify whether a state agency currently has the authority to implement the strategy the strategy or program.

(ii) When a state agency does not have existing authority, the Council shall make recommendations to the legislature regarding statutory changes needed to implement the strategy or program.

(3) If the strategies and programs identified in subsection (b)(2) of this section fail to meet the Requirements, prioritized recommendations on new strategies and programs necessary to achieve the Requirements. For each recommendation, the report shall include:

(A) the anticipated effectiveness of that strategy or program in reducing greenhouse gases or promoting resilience or adaptation;

(B) an analysis of whether the strategy or program will unfairly burden a group of persons, community, or geographic region;

(C) an assessment of whether the strategy or program will further the State's planning goals identified in 24 V.S.A. 4302(c);

(D) any anticipated co-benefits of the strategy or program in promoting other state goals;

(E) an assessment of whether the strategy or program will result in an increase of toxic air contaminants of criteria air pollutants;

(F) the anticipated cost-effectiveness of the program; and

(G) whether a state agency currently has the authority to implement the strategy or program.

(i) When a state agency does not have existing authority, the Council shall make recommendations to the legislature regarding statutory changes needed to implement the strategy or program.

(4) A prioritization of strategies and programs contained in the Plan and Plan updates. When prioritizing strategies and programs contained in the Plan and updates to the Plan, the Council shall consider the following objectives:

(A) to prioritize the most cost-effective, technologically feasible, and equitable greenhouse gas emissions reduction pathways and adaptation and preparedness strategies informed by scientific and technical expertise;

(B) to provide for greenhouse gas emission reductions that reflect the relative contribution of each source or category of source of emissions;

(C) to minimize negative impacts of marginalized and rural communities and upon individuals with low and moderate income;

(D) to ensure that all regions of the State benefits from greenhouse gas emissions reductions, including sharing in the resulting economic, quality-of-life, and public health benefits;

(E) to support economic sectors and regions of the State that face the greatest barriers to emissions reductions, especially rural and economically distressed regions and industries;

(F) to support industries, technology, and training that will allow workers and businesses in the State to benefit from greenhouse gas emissions reduction solutions;

(G) to support the use of natural solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resiliency, including the use of working lands to sequester and store carbon, and protect against severe weather events;

(H) to reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals, substances, or products that contribute to climate change; and

(I) to maximize the State's involvement in interstate and regional initiatives and programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build upon state, national, and international partnerships and programs designed to mitigate climate change and its impacts.

(5) Recommendations on programs and methods to accurately measure or model:

(A) the State's greenhouse gas emissions and progress towards meeting the Requirements pursuant to section 582 of this chapter, including publishing emissions inventory data in a timely manner; and

(B) the effectiveness of the specific initiatives, programs, and strategies set forth in the Plan and updates to the Plan in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

(6) An evaluation of the total cost to fully implement the programs identified by the Plan. When evaluating total cost, the Council shall consider staff and fiscal resources needed to develop and implement rules as well as estimated costs to the regulated community for implementations.

(7) An estimate of the funding needed to support the first five years of implementation of programs identified in the Plan, including:

(A) grants to mitigate impacts on a group of persons, community, or geographic region that are disproportionately impacted by the programs identified by the Plan; and

(B) funding programs and incentives that support achieving the Requirements and are consistent with a program or strategy recommended by the Plan.

(8) Guidance to the state agencies concerning rules to be adopted pursuant to section 593 of this chapter.

(9) A municipal vulnerability index to include factors measuring a municipality's population, average age, employment, and grand list trends;

active public and civic organizations; and distance from emergency services and shelter.

(10) Best practice recommendations specific to rural communities for reducing municipal, school district, and residential fossil fuel consumption; fortifying critical transportation, electricity and community infrastructure.

(11) Recommendations for a means to securely share self-identified vulnerable residents' information with State and local emergency responders and utilities.

(12) Recommendations for tools for municipalities to assess their climate emergency preparedness, evaluate their financial capacity to address infrastructure resiliency, and prioritize investment in that infrastructure.

(13) Recommendations for the future composition and role of the Vermont Climate Action Council.

(c) The Plan shall form the basis for the rules adopted by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to section 593 of this chapter. If the Council fails to adopt the Plan or update the Plan as required by this chapter, the Secretary shall proceed with adopting and implementing rules pursuant to subsection 593(j) of this chapter to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to section 578 of this title.

§ 593. IMPLEMENTATION

(a) With respect to the initial Plan adopted by the Council:

(1) Any strategy or program recommended by the Plan where the Council also identifies that the state agency has existing authority to implement the strategy or program, the state agency shall file a proposed rule implementing the strategy or program on or before December 1, 2023.

(2) Any strategy or program that does not require legislative authorization or rulemaking shall be implemented by the appropriate state agency on or before July 1, 2023.

(b) With respect to any Plan update or revision as required by section 592(a) of this chapter:

(1) Any strategy or program recommended by the Plan where the Council also identifies that the state agency has existing authority to implement the strategy or program, the state agency shall file a proposed rule implementing the strategy or program no later than 18 months from the adoption of the Plan.

(2) Any strategy or program that does not require legislative authorization or rulemaking shall be implemented by the appropriate state agency no later than 12 months from the adoption of the Plan.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the existing authority of a State agency, department, or entity to regulate greenhouse gas emissions or establish strategies or promulgate rules to mitigate climate risk and build resilience to climate change.

(l) The General Assembly may repeal, revise, or modify any rule or amendment to any rule, and its action shall not be abridged, enlarged, or modified by subsequent rule.

§ 594. CAUSE OF ACTION

(a) Any person may commence an action based upon the failure of the State to adopt the Plan or update rules pursuant to the deadlines in sections 592 or 593 of this chapter.

(1) The action shall be brought pursuant to Rule 75 of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure in the Civil Division of the Superior Court of Washington County.

(2) The complaint shall be filed within one year after expiration of the time in which the Plan or rules were required to be adopted pursuant to section 592 or 593 of this chapter. However, a person shall not commence an action under this subsection until at least 60 days after providing notice of the alleged violation to the Attorney General.

(3) If the court finds that the State has failed to adopt or update the Plan or rules pursuant to the deadlines in sections 592 or 593 of this chapter, the court shall enter an order directing the State to adopt or update the Plan or rules. If the court finds that the State is taking prompt and effective action to adopt or update the Plan or rules, the court may grant the State a reasonable period of time to do so.

(b) Any person may commence an action alleging that strategies and programs included in the Plan pursuant to section 592 of this chapter have failed to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to section 578(a)(3) of this title.

(1) The action shall be brought in the Civil Division of the Superior Court of Washington County.

(2) The complaint shall be filed within one year after the Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory and Forecast published pursuant to section 582 of this title indicates that the Plan failed to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to section 578(a)(3) of this title. However, a person shall not commence an action under this subsection until at least 60 days after providing notice of the alleged violation to the Attorney General.

(3) If the court finds that the Plan adopted pursuant to section 592 of this chapter is the cause of the State's failure to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to section 578(a)(3) of this title, the court shall enter an order remanding the Plan to the Council to update the Plan to include strategies or programs that achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to section 578(a)(3) of this chapter. If the court finds that the State is taking prompt and effective action to comply, the court may grant the Secretary a reasonable period of time to do so.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the rights, procedures, and remedies available under any law, including the Vermont Administrative Procedure Act pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25.

* * * Rulemaking and Appointment of Council Members * * *

Sec. 5. RULES REQUIRED PURSUANT TO 10 V.S.A. § 593

(a) Any proposed rules and access to the detailed record required pursuant to section 10 V.S.A. § 593 shall be:

(1) provided to the Vermont Climate Council not less than 45 days prior to submitting the proposed rule or rules to the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR);

(2) provided to the members of the House Committees on Energy and Technology, on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife, and on Transportation,

to the Senate Committees on Finance, on Natural Resources and Energy, and on Transportation, and to the Joint Carbon Emissions Reduction Committee not less than 30 days prior to submitting the proposed rule or rules to ICAR; and

(3) filed with ICAR on or before July 1, 2022.

(b) Upon the adoption of the Action Plan (Plan) pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 592, the Joint Fiscal Office of the General Assembly (JFO) shall prepare, or hire a consultant to prepare, an analysis of the economic, budgetary, and fiscal costs and benefits of the Plan. JFO shall submit the analysis to the House Committees on Energy and Technology, on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife, on Appropriations and on Transportation, to the Senate Committees on Finance, on Appropriations, on Natural Resources and Energy, and on Transportation, and to the Joint Carbon Emissions Reduction Committee.

Sec. 6. VERMONT CLIMATE COUNCIL; APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

AND FIRST MEETING

All members of the Vermont Climate Council established pursuant to section 10 V.S.A. § 591 shall be appointed within 60 days of the effective date of this act, and the Chair shall call the first meeting of the Council within 30 days after all members have been appointed.

* * * State Energy Policy and the Comprehensive Energy Plan * * *

Sec. 7. 30 V.S.A. § 202a is amended to read:

§ 202a. STATE ENERGY POLICY

It is the general policy of the State of Vermont:

(1) To ~~assure~~, ensure to the greatest extent practicable, that Vermont can meet its energy service needs in a manner that is adequate, reliable, secure, and sustainable; that ~~assures~~ ensures affordability and encourages the State's economic vitality, the efficient use of energy resources, and cost-effective demand-side management; and that is environmentally sound.

(2) To identify and evaluate, on an ongoing basis, resources that will meet Vermont's energy service needs in accordance with the principles of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and least-cost integrated planning, including efficiency, conservation, and load management alternatives; wise use of renewable resources; and environmentally sound energy supply.

(3) To meet Vermont's energy service needs in a manner that will achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to 10 V.S.A § 578 and is consistent with the Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted and updated pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 592.

Sec. 8. 30 V.S.A. § 202b is amended to read:

§ 202b. STATE COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN

(a) The Department of Public Service, in conjunction with other State agencies designated by the Governor, shall prepare a State Comprehensive Energy Plan covering at least a 20-year period. The Plan shall seek to implement the State energy policy set forth in section 202a of this title, including meeting the State's greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 578, and shall be consistent with the relevant goals of 24 V.S.A. § 4302 and with the Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted and updated pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 592. The State Comprehensive Energy Plan shall include:

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* * * Appropriation and Positions * * *

Sec. 9. APPROPRIATION

The sum of \$972,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources in fiscal year 2021 for the purpose of implementing this Act, including for personal services for the positions created pursuant to Sec. 10; costs associated with providing administrative, technical, and legal support to the Vermont Climate Council; compensation and reimbursement of per diems and expenses for members of the Council; hiring consultants and experts; and for other necessary costs and expenses. The appropriation shall carry forward into fiscal year 2022 as necessary. Estimated amounts are \$586,000 in fiscal year 2021 and \$386,000 in fiscal year 2022.

Sec. 10. AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES; POSITIONS

Three full-time, limited service positions are created in the Agency of Natural Resources for the purpose of implementing this Act.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.