



**VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL
COLLABORATIVE**

**CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PLATFORM**

2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



VERMONT'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Investing in renewable energy helps grow our economy, protects our farm and forest industries, and saves Vermonters money through cheaper electric and heating bills.

- ❖ **Help Vermonters Invest in Home-Based Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency:** Lawmakers should support programs that encourage the use of small-scale renewable energy and improve energy efficiency. Increasing these areas will jump start this growing sector of our economy.
- ❖ **Support Larger Renewable Energy Projects:** Renewable energy projects from farm methane systems to wind farms and biomass cogeneration facilities can meet much of Vermont's electricity demand. These projects are key to keeping Vermont competitive with our regional neighbors and creating Vermont jobs. Lawmakers should pass comprehensive renewable energy legislation that creates a reliable and predictable permitting process and promotes large-scale renewable energy development.
- ❖ **Close Vermont Yankee in 2012:** Vermonters support closing Vermont Yankee on time. Lawmakers should choose an energy future that is right for our environment and our economy by not relicensing the aging plant.

VERMONT'S WORKING LANDSCAPES AND SMART GROWTH VALUES

Investments in both our town centers and working landscapes are proven to boost the farm and forest economy, leverage federal dollars into Vermont, provide housing for working Vermonters and respond to one-time real estate opportunities that can disappear forever.

- ❖ **Adequately Fund the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board:** Working lands—farms, forests and natural areas—are a critical component of our economic infrastructure. Lawmakers should sustain public investments into conservation to protect and build our working land assets.
- ❖ **Support Downtown and Village Center Development:** Lawmakers should review the implementation of the Growth Center Program to ensure it will result in compact, mixed-use development that supports our downtowns and does not encourage sprawl. The program must also ensure the backlog of development and redevelopment projects in our downtowns and village centers move forward by increasing economic investments through the Downtown Programs redevelopment tax incentives.
- ❖ **Protect Vermont's Working Landscapes:** Lawmakers should strengthen regulations to avoid strip development. This linear, automobile-oriented commercial development along our roadways has negative public impacts, including the erosion of economic vitality in our town centers.



VERMONT LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

turning your environmental values into state priorities

TRANSPORTATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Vermont's prosperity depends on clean, effective, and affordable transportation. With unstable gas prices, crumbling bridges, and cars being the biggest source of global warming pollution in Vermont, we need new solutions. Vermont can support a new era of transportation that saves money, creates jobs, supports healthy communities, and reduces pollution.

- ❖ **Clean, Effective, and Modern Transportation Solutions:** Lawmakers should allocate one-third of Vermont's transportation budget to clean solutions — such as maintaining the Ethan Allen passenger rail service — and move dollars away from expensive road expansion projects in an effort to double the current use of public transportation, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian routes.
- ❖ **Fix It First – Keep Vermonters Safe:** Restore Vermont's crumbling roads, bridges, and railways and keep bike paths, sidewalks and bus stops in good shape. Lawmakers should fully fund all needed maintenance and repair projects by doubling Vermont's transportation dollars for annual bridge repair, road maintenance and paving.
- ❖ **Enhance the Safety of Vermont's Bicyclists and Pedestrians:** By improving opportunities to bicycle, run, and walk more often, VTrans projects can help Vermonters reduce carbon emissions, air and water pollution, health care costs, and help alleviate traffic congestion and parking shortages. Unfortunately, six percent of all traffic fatalities involve a bicyclist or a pedestrian, while funding for safety programs is declining. Lawmakers should dedicate 6% of the Agency of Transportation's traffic safety funding to pay for bicycle and pedestrian projects, which will help ensure improved bicycle and pedestrian safety.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Currently in Vermont we generate over 600,000 tons of waste every year, of which less than 1/3 is recovered through recycling and composting programs. Zero waste models around the world are helping communities divert between 50 and 80% of their waste away from landfills and incinerators and back into the market to be reused or reprocessed. Moving toward zero waste in Vermont will create jobs, reduce global warming pollution, and prevent air and water pollution.

- ❖ **Support programs to Increase Recycling and Composting:** Lawmakers should update Vermont's regulations for composting facilities to ensure permitting is consistent, predictable, and effective and support the expansion of Vermont's infrastructure — recycling drop off centers, salvage and reuse stores, and composting facilities — to collect and process discarded materials. The number of state planning entities should be reduced in order to increase economies of scale. Funding and regulations should create incentives for waste reduction, composting, and recycling. Implementing Pay As You Throw statewide with minimum standards and placing responsibility on manufacturers for the end of life costs of their products will go a long way towards achieving these goals.

The following organizations have endorsed this Conservation and Environmental Legislative Platform:

Conservation Law Foundation ♦ Northeast Organic Farming Association ♦ Preservation Trust of Vermont
REP America ♦ Sustainable Energy Resource Group ♦ Sustainable Valley Group
Toxics Action Center Campaigns ♦ Vermont Bike and Pedestrian Coalition
Vermont Conservation Education Fund ♦ Vermont League of Conservation Voters
Vermont Natural Resources Council ♦ Vermont Public Interest Research Group ♦ Vermont Sierra Club
Vermonters for a Clean Environment



VERMONT LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

For more information contact VLCV at 802-224-9090 or tbailey@vlcv.org