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**Report: Vermont Not on Track to Meet 2030 Climate Requirements**

**Montpelier, VT –**A new report from the non-profit Energy Action Network finds thatVermont is not on track to meet its legally mandated emissions reduction requirements under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

“While there is a lot of important information in this comprehensive, 40-page report, a key takeaway is that Vermont is not on track to meet our emissions reduction commitments by 2030,” said Jared Duval, Executive Director of the non-profit Energy Action Network and the member of the Vermont Climate Council appointed to provide expertise in energy data and analysis.  “A big reason why is that Vermont has so far failed to adopt at least one of the policies that have been proven by other states and countries to provide a high degree of confidence in reducing emissions—emissions caps and/or performance standards—for our two most fossil fuel-intensive and climate polluting energy sectors: transportation and heating,” said Duval.

In contrast, for the electricity sector, Vermont has already adopted an emissions cap policy (the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) and a performance standard (the Renewable Energy Standard), which together have helped to drive down emissions from Vermont’s electricity portfolio. However, Vermont’s largely fossil-free electricity portfolio produces only two percent of Vermont’s overall greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, the transportation and thermal sectors together account for nearly three quarters of statewide greenhouse gas emissions.

The report also reinforces that meeting Vermont’s climate commitments is technically possible with existing technology and best practices – and that doing so as modeled by the Vermont Climate Council is forecasted to save Vermonters money. Independent analysis contracted by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources found that Vermont stands to benefit from $6.4 billion in net economic savings and avoided damages between now and 2050 by meeting emissions reduction requirements via the pathways outlined in the Climate Action Plan adopted by the Vermont Climate Council in 2021. However, the two most significant policy pillars of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) that could help ensure those targets are achieved —the Clean Heat Standard and the Transportation and Climate Initiative—have thus far failed to be adopted.

The report comes in the wake of continued international scientific warnings, including from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which stated earlier this year that humanity has “a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a livable future.”

The burning of fossil fuels is the primary cause of the climate challenge. Only 5% of Vermont’s electricity portfolio comes from fossil fuel generation. However, nearly 95% of Vermont’s transportation energy use is fossil fueled (primarily gasoline and diesel) and nearly 75% of Vermont’s thermal energy use is fossil fueled (primarily fuel oil, fossil gas, and propane).

The report notes that fossil fuels create both far more climate pollution and are generally more expensive and price-volatile than electricity in Vermont. Therefore, one of the best ways to simultaneously reduce climate pollution and cut energy costs for Vermonters is to efficiently electrify how we get around and heat our homes.

The report states, “Transitioning away from high-cost, price-volatile fossil fuels that are 100% imported towards lower-cost, price-stable renewable alternatives that keep more of our money local can result in a win-win-win for our climate commitments, consumer protection, and economic resilience.”

After the last year of near-record prices for gasoline, diesel, fuel oil, and propane, many Vermonters have been especially challenged by high energy costs. The report details how moving to electric and/or renewable transportation and heating options can save consumers money on energy. For instance, compared to roughly $4 per gallon for gasoline, the cost of charging an electric vehicle (EV) is the equivalent of about $1 per gallon in most of Vermont—and EVs have lower maintenance costs than fossil fueled vehicles. Additionally, federal, state, and utility incentives often bring the upfront price of EVs down lower than the cost of comparable gas or diesel models. The report shares similar consumer data about heating, with heat pump water heaters, heat pumps, and advanced wood heating systems all enabling sizable fuel cost savings and often costing less up front to install than fossil options, after incentives.

To ensure that all Vermonters can access pollution-reducing, money-saving options, the report also emphasizes that policies and incentives need to be equitably designed, prioritizing lower-income Vermonters for assistance, in particular.

“Energy is a complex and nuanced topic that does not lend itself to simple headlines. If you want to more fully understand Vermont’s energy system and where we stand in relation to our state climate requirements, there is no better place to start and no more accessible and comprehensive overview than EAN’s Annual Progress Report for Vermont. What this year’s report is telling us very clearly is, while we have made progress in terms of renewable electricity, we need additional policy action in the thermal and transportation sectors to reach Vermont’s critical climate commitments,” said Darren Springer, General Manager of Burlington Electric Department.

To read the full report, visit: https://www.eanvt.org/2022-EAN-report

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***Energy Action Network****is a diverse network of over two-hundred non-profits, businesses, utilities, public agencies, and other organizations working together in a collective impact framework and supported by a backbone non-profit organization to further the Network’s mission: to achieve Vermont’s climate and energy commitments in ways that create a more just, thriving, and sustainable future for Vermonters.*