

As seen in the:



The Renewable Energy Movement: A Home for Courageous Optimists

For young generations, clean energy is not an option, it's an expectation. For seniors, health impaired neighbors, and businesses, reliable and affordable electricity is a lifeblood necessity. We've heard scientists' alarms, seen that dangerous planetary warming is underway - happening even faster than predicted - and know time is running out to stop it.

Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) members offer a future where every home, school, and business is powered by 100% renewable energy - which we know is the most resilient, reliable, and cost effective choice. The technology is here, some even invented, engineered, and manufactured by Vermonters. It's a vision that others strongly support, with one of every four Americans living in a town or state that's made a commitment to or already achieved 100% clean energy.

Nearly 500 energy innovators and business leaders gathered last month at REV's 19th annual conference – *REV It Up: Empowering Energy Transformation* in South Burlington. Keynote speaker, Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute shared that state policies, particularly Renewable Portfolio Standards, are the most effective driver of climate pollution reduction.

We need to meet our promises and commitments if we expect other states and countries to meet theirs. We all share a responsibility to achieve meaningful, equitable, and comprehensive climate solutions. Some feel that more has been demanded of Vermont in terms of our fair share of pollution reduction, but the facts show we sadly failed to meet our self-designed, long standing, science-based commitments. Vermonters' don't throw up their hands saying it's too hard when challenged. We are capable of doing more.

When a student performs poorly on an exam, the teacher doesn't make the test easier to pass. Saying we will try to meet climate goals 30 years from now is no longer impressive, noteworthy, or particularly useful. The health of our families, our communities, our environment, and our

economy require much greater urgency. Fortunately, 100% renewable electricity in the near term is eminently doable.

We are grateful for the many legislative allies and government officials who've pledged themselves to climate action. We call on you to work quickly to remove inefficient and costly bureaucratic barriers to local renewables, starting with fixing Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard. As implemented by the Public Utility Commission with support of the Scott Administration, utilities buy out-of-state credits to "offset" reliance on dangerous and dirty nuclear power and fossil fuels, making our electricity appear greener than it is. Nuclear power and fossil fuels are not renewable, not local, not safe, not healthy, not cost effective, and have no place in Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard law.

Further, limiting local renewable electricity to just 10% of our needs ridiculously harms our state by taking choices, money, and energy independence away from Vermonters. We need a more effective and transparent energy law, requiring at least 50% from resilient in-state renewable generation in the next ten years. We need an overall 100% renewable energy standard now. It's the foundation for a more resilient and reliable energy grid necessary to decarbonize our heating and transportation.

Every day that we choose to invest in infrastructure that is not resilient and not renewable, we are wasting money and missing opportunity. Every day that we delay policy changes needed to get us to a stronger renewable powered climate economy, we worsen the debt that our children will inherit.

Climate change often feels overwhelming. What can one person or one state do in the face of mass species extinction, unpredictable weather patterns and destructive storms? Adding to that feeling of helplessness is the traditional environmentalist narrative told as a story of loss followed by finger pointing and blaming, and a time of scarcity where we will just have to make do with a whole lot less. Such a troubling view perpetuates fear and isolation. Instead of working together to implement creative solutions, it's easy to get mired in pessimism and start to believe that our efforts don't really matter.

We won't allow that to be Vermont's legacy. It's simply not who we are. In the face of unprecedented challenge, we roll up our sleeves, harness and share our abundant ingenuity, and do what is needed to get the job done, take care of our families, and help our neighbors. The time for courageous optimism and audacious possibility has once again come. It's time to REV it up! Join us to realize a better future with 100% renewables.

Olivia Campbell Andersen
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Renewable Energy Vermont's members include businesses, non-profits, utilities, and individuals committed to eliminating reliance on fossil fuels by increasing local renewable energy and efficiency. REV propels climate solutions and Vermont's clean energy economy which directly

enables more than 18,800 jobs at 3,612 businesses, representing approximately 6% of Vermont's workforce. Together, we will achieve 100% total renewable energy – electricity, heating/cooling, & transportation – to create resilient communities, vibrant local economy, and combat the climate crisis. www.revermont.org