



Annual Report 2016





Letter from the Director

I'll never forget election night 2016, but not for the reason that it may have been unforgettable to you.

As I was helping to prepare our family dinner that evening, I managed to spill some very hot water on our then-five-year-old son. It was awful.

Though I was burned too, he got the worst of it on his shoulder and arm. My wife did all the right things and we were soon in an ambulance. We spent a couple hours with the fine medical staff at our local hospital, and by 10:30 p.m. we were back home.

With pain medication, our son went right to sleep. And I decided to turn on the TV and watch the returns...

The next morning I woke up thinking I had dreamt the whole thing. But while the wounds were real – and not just for my family – I want you to know how fortunate I felt to be surrounded by our VPIRG 'family' that next day, and every day since.

Despite a huge change within our political landscape, one thing remains constant.

You know well that VPIRG fights to make our shared home a cleaner, safer, more prosperous

place. I want that for my son and for your children and grandchildren too.

It's true that our task didn't get any easier on election night. But the good news is we're a resilient bunch. Our wounds have healed and with your support, our VPIRG team has never been stronger.

Thank you, and let's keep moving forward together.



◀ **Sen. Bernie Sanders addresses Vermonters on the State House lawn on July 1, 2016 as VPIRG canvassers look on. The address was part of a celebration of Vermont's first-in-the-nation GMO labeling law taking effect.**

About VPIRG and VPIREF

Founded in 1972, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) is the largest nonprofit consumer and environmental advocacy organization in the state. As a 501(c)4 nonprofit advocacy group, VPIRG conducts non-partisan public interest advocacy in support of priority public interest issues and campaigns and seeks legislative and policy solutions affecting Vermonters. Donations to VPIRG are not tax deductible.

VPIRG established the Vermont Public Interest Research and Education Fund (VPIREF) in 1975 as its 501(c)3 outreach and education arm in order to conduct independent research and public education on the range of issues on which we work. Donations to VPIREF are tax deductible.

For 44 years, we have brought the voice of Vermont citizens to public policy debates concerning the environment, health care, consumer protection and

democracy. The common mission of VPIRG and VPIREF is to promote and protect the health of Vermont's people, environment and locally based economy by informing and mobilizing citizens statewide. VPIRG advocates and organizers use independent research, policy analysis, public outreach and grassroots mobilization to design and implement effective strategies for each of our campaigns.

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Vermont's Clean Energy Progress:

How Far We've Come, Where We Need to Go.

In 2016, VPIRG and our allies helped enact Act 174 – a law that gives towns significantly greater say in the siting of energy projects, provided they write plans that are in concert with our state's renewable energy goals. This law establishes a framework for energy planning in the years to come that will bring more Vermonters into the process of moving our state toward our clean energy goals.

In some ways, passage of this law represented the culmination

of nearly a decade of clean energy and efficiency progress in Vermont. During that time our state became one of the top 10 in the nation for renewable energy generation, residential solar use, energy savings, electric vehicle adoption, and efficiency standards. Vermont was also named number one in the nation for clean energy jobs.

Despite this tremendous progress, there's still much more to be done if we are to meet Vermont's

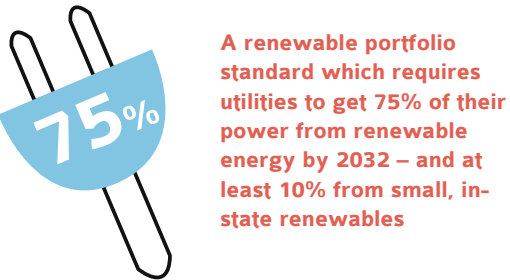
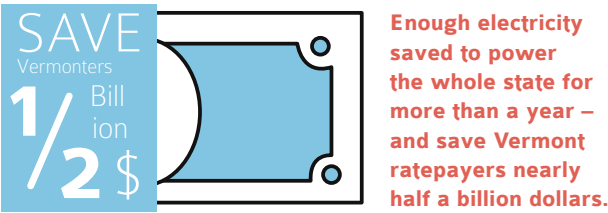
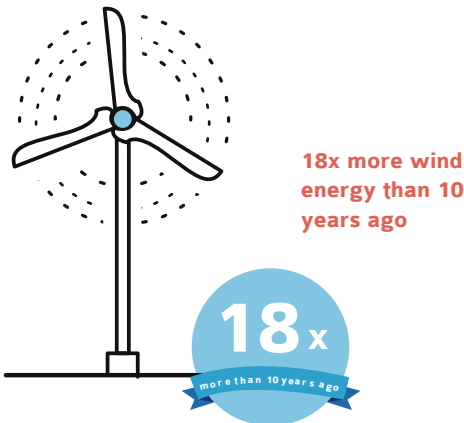
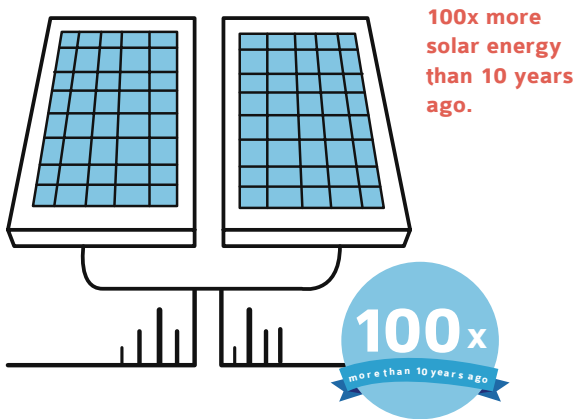
ambitious but necessary goal of getting at least 90% of our energy from renewable resources by the year 2050.

Here's a more detailed look at the clean energy progress we've made and what we still need to do to achieve our goals. (see graphic on page 5)

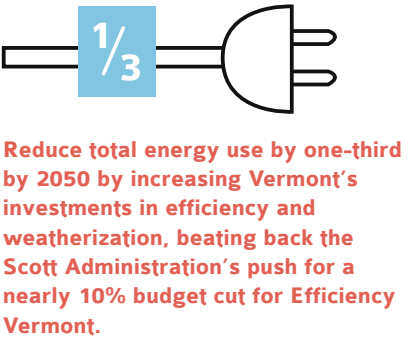
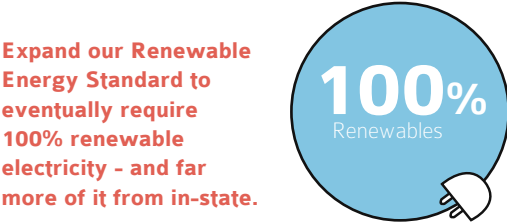
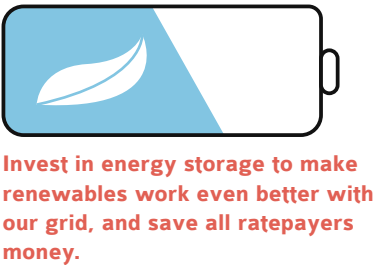
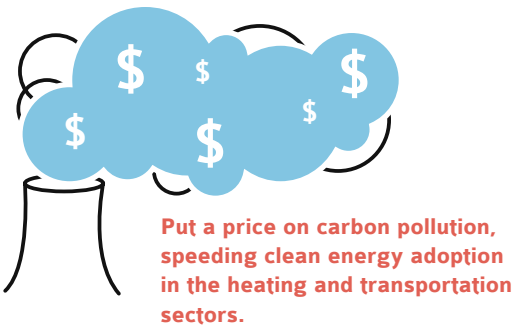
In August 2016, the VPIRG staff toured the Kingdom Community Wind site in Lowell, Vermont. Vermont now has 18 times more wind energy and 100 times more solar energy than just 10 years ago. But we still have a long way to go. Clean energy sources like these displace the dirty fossil fuels that pollute our air and water and contribute to global warming. VPIRG and our members will continue to push for policies that rapidly move Vermont toward these renewable energy solutions.



HOW FAR WE'VE COME:



HOW FAR WE NEED TO GO:



Cut Pollution. Save Money.

VPIRG'S Most Ambitious Campaign Turns Two

More than two years ago, VPIRG joined with allies in the business, environmental and low-income advocacy communities to form Energy Independent Vermont—a coalition dedicated to putting a price on carbon pollution. When we undertook that campaign, we knew success wouldn't come easy.

We knew the fossil fuel industry would pull out all the stops to protect their profits and keep Vermonters tethered to the dirty energy status quo. And in 2016 – they did exactly that.

Energy Independent Vermont responded by bringing new allies into the fold, pushing back on fossil fuel industry misinformation and organizing thousands of Vermonters to call for bold climate action.

We sat down with Energy Independent Vermont Director Tom Hughes to talk about where the campaign stands two years in.

Q. So what did the Energy Independent Vermont campaign do in 2016?

This is one of VPIRG's largest campaigns in its 45 year history,

and we used all of the successful strategies and tactics from past campaigns to shape this one.

More than 100 canvassers knocked on nearly 100,000 doors – talking to Vermonters about our Campaign for a Clean Economy and identifying thousands of new supporters.

Groups of climate activists and VPIRG members in more than 40 towns formed to engage their elected officials in conversations about carbon pollution pricing.

Thousands of Vermonters traveled to Montpelier or called their legislators and urged them to take bold climate action. We saw the results of this pressure when the Vermont Legislature's Climate Solutions Caucus doubled in membership at the beginning of the 2017 session.

Q. So what are Vermonters saying about the need for climate action—specifically putting a price on carbon pollution?

For most Vermonters, the climate debate isn't over whether or not the climate is changing, it's over what to do about it.

Economists across the political spectrum agree that carbon pollution pricing is the most efficient policy to quickly reduce emissions. Most industrial nations

now have a carbon price, and the practice is spreading worldwide because it spurs innovation in the energy industry, creates jobs and strengthens local economies.

Vermont has a carbon price too through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, but it only covers pollution coming from electricity generation. We need to expand this effort to include emissions from our heating and transportation sectors.

Of course, the fossil fuel industry hates this idea. They know it will reduce sales of oil and gas as Vermonters transition away from old, polluting technology to high-tech, high-efficiency – and in many cases, less expensive alternatives.

Q. What do you see in the months and years ahead?

Given the mess in Washington, it's clearer than ever that climate action will have to come from states like Vermont.

There's a huge disconnect between Donald Trump's economic vision

and Vermont's. While he wants to return to bygone days when coal was king, there are no coal jobs in Vermont. Coal is bad for Vermont's economy and environment.

Thankfully, we're moving in the opposite direction. Vermont has the most clean energy jobs (17,000+) per capita than any other state and jobs in efficiency and renewables are growing ten times faster than the workforce as a whole. We should build on this success.

In 2016, VPIRG and our partners in the Energy Independent Vermont coalition mobilized thousands of Vermonters to call for bold climate action from our elected leaders – specifically a price on carbon pollution paid by the fossil fuel companies who import dirty fuels into Vermont. This effort included two different statewide activist trainings, house meetings all across the state, door-to-door visits with thousands of Vermonters and a youth climate rally which drew hundreds of young Vermonters to the State House.





Vermont Votes

As other states roll back voting rights, Vermont emerges as a leader in democratic participation.

◀ **VPIRG leads a voter registration drive outside of the Burlington Ben & Jerry's store on Free Cone Day in 2016. VPIRG supporters have helped to make Vermont a leader in passing pro-voter reforms including Automatic Voter Registration and Election Day Registration laws.**

125 to 1.

That was the final vote count in the Vermont House of Representatives to pass the VPIRG-backed Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) bill. That bill – which also passed the Senate 28-0 – was signed by the governor in 2016, making Vermont the fourth state in the nation to enact such a law.

Under the new law, Vermonters who apply for or renew their driver's license at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and who meet voter eligibility requirements,

will be automatically registered to vote through the Secretary of State's office, unless they opt out of the system.

According to Paul Burns, VPIRG's executive director, it's hard to overstate the importance of passing an automatic registration law with such widespread support.

"Every Democrat, Republican, Independent and Progressive voted for this bill, with just one exception," said Burns. "You don't find that kind of unanimity in most states, especially when it comes to issues like improving access to the ballot."

In fact – the passage of AVR legislation in 2016 capped a flurry of recent pro-democracy victories in Vermont. For instance, Vermont instituted an easy to use online voter registration system, and in 2015, passed a

law allowing voters to register on Election Day.

"These advancements are particularly impressive when you see how voting rights are being restricted in so many other states," Burns said.

He was referring to the slate of voter ID laws and other initiatives passed in recent years by states looking to restrict access to the polls by certain voters.

For instance – in 2011 Wisconsin passed a controversial law requiring photo identification to vote. Some election watchdog groups have noted that this law may ultimately have prevented 200,000 or more eligible voters from participating in the 2016 election. Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in that state by just 22,000 votes.

"Make no mistake—these laws are designed to make it more difficult for eligible voters to participate and they can absolutely affect the outcome of elections." Burns said.

VPIRG was pleased to work closely with Secretary of State Jim Condos on the AVR legislation, and on all of the recent pro-voter initiatives passed in Vermont.

Expanding Voting Rights: Vermont Swims Against The Current

VERMONT: MOVING DEMOCRACY FORWARD

June 2015:

Vermont enacts legislation allowing Vermont citizens to register to vote on Election Day. Estimates are that Election Day registration can increase turnout by 3 to 6 percentage points.

October 2015:

Vermont rolls out online voter registration making voter registration more convenient and accessible. Voters can also check their registration status, change important details like name or address, and request an absentee ballot.

June 2016:

Vermont becomes the fourth state to enact automatic voter registration. State officials estimate it could add 30,000 to 50,000 voters to the state's rolls.

ELSEWHERE: ROLLING BACK VOTING RIGHTS

2011:

Alabama, Kansas, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin all pass voter ID laws. Some of these states and others also add new restrictions to voter registration and cuts to early voting.

2013:

In *Shelby v. Holder*, the Supreme Court strikes down major provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which prevented disenfranchisement laws for nearly 50 years. States that previously needed federal approval to make changes to voting laws, move quickly to curtail voter rights.

2016:

In the first presidential election since the *Shelby v. Holder* decision, election watchdogs estimate that tens of thousands of eligible voters are prohibited from participating because of the recent state laws rolling back voting rights.



Toxics in Our Backyards: PFOA discovered in North Bennington

No one wants to hear that the water in their home is unsafe. After all, that's what they use every day for drinking, cooking, and bathing.

But that was the news that residents of nearly 300 Bennington County homes received after state officials tested their private wells for the presence of PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid in 2016.

PFOA belongs to a family of chemicals used to make household and commercial products. The chemicals are often found in nonstick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, some food packaging and fire-fighting foam.

Vermont's Department of Health says that studies have found a

correlation between levels of PFOA in the blood and high blood pressure, decreased birth weight, some immune system effects, thyroid disease, kidney cancer and testicular cancer.

The discovery of PFOA in private drinking water wells served as a wakeup call concerning the ongoing threat posed by industrial chemicals in our lives. It prompted quick action by Vermont policy-makers, who created a working group to come up with ways to better protect Vermonters from toxic chemicals.

VPIRG Executive Director Paul Burns was appointed to the diverse group, along with other business, environmental and public health leaders. The group identified more than a dozen specific recommendations for lawmakers.

VPIRG championed plans to address toxic chemicals in children's products, encourage manufacturers to reduce their use of toxins, and increase well water testing. These concepts were among those included in legislative proposals for the 2017 session.

"If it wasn't clear before, it sure is now – toxic threats aren't limited to industrial wastelands," said VPIRG's Burns. "Vermont's air and water are at risk too. And we still have far too many consumer products in our homes – including toys – that contain unnecessary toxins."

Companies report initial data thanks to VPIRG-backed chemical disclosure law

VPIRG helped to pass the **Toxic Free Families Act in 2014**, which among other things, requires manufacturers of children's products to report whether they use one or more of 66 named toxic chemicals in their products.

Armed with this data, parents might finally be able to make informed purchasing decisions, and researchers could identify products or companies ripe for change.

After industry foot-dragging led to a delay in the first round of reporting, initial data became available in late 2016. While the disclosures were not made in a "user-friendly" format, we did make some interesting discoveries.

For instance, we learned that the popular 'Elf on the Shelf' holiday toy contained possible human carcinogens and a line of holiday character stand up stockings contained 10 chemicals of high concern to children, including multiple known carcinogens and endocrine disruptors.

The line of stockings included characters from Frozen, Despicable Me minions, Minnie Mouse, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Star Wars, Hello Kitty, Spiderman and Sponge Bob Square Pants.

"As the father of a young child myself, I was alarmed by what we found," said VPIRG Executive Director, Paul Burns. "Toxic chemicals don't belong in toys – period. But they are there, and Vermont's law will now provide the best information in the country about what toxins are contained in which children's products."



Disclosed: Elf on the Shelf

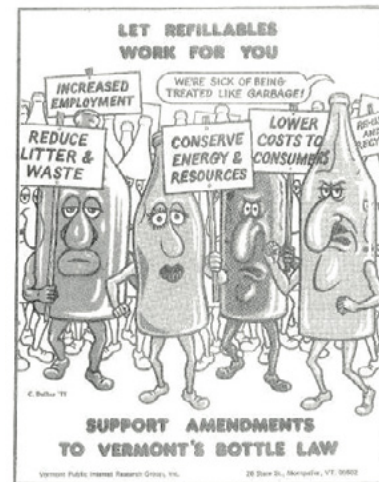


With the first disclosures from the Toxic Free Families Act coming in 2016, we learned that a number of iconic and popular children's products contained potentially hazardous chemicals – perhaps most notably the popular Elf on the Shelf.

- An August 2016 disclosure showed the popular children's holiday toy contained possible human carcinogens.
- The manufacturer did not identify the actual chemical of high concern to children citing confidential business information.
- The manufacturer's response to the revelations included the bizarre claim that the product was "ornamental" and "not for use by children."

VPIRG & the Bottle Bill:

45 Years Defending Vermont's Most Successful Recycling Program



It was 1972.

That year the Godfather set box-office records, Harry Nilsson had a hit with a cover of “Without You,” and five men were arrested for burglarizing the DNC headquarters at the Watergate complex in D.C.

But it was also the birth year of two Vermont institutions that endure to this day—the Bottle Bill and the Vermont Public Interest Research Group.

It’s one of those apocryphal misunderstandings—the kind that is seemingly common in Vermont—that the Bottle Bill was the first law VPIRG helped to pass. The truth is, VPIRG was still in its nascency when Vermont enacted the popular container redemption law.

But the Bottle Bill was under fire from day one—and protecting this popular environmental program from attacks by the beverage industry giants was a task almost perfectly suited to the new public interest organization. Thus began VPIRG’s 45-year history defending and fighting to expand the Bottle Bill.

In fact—as early as the fall of 1972, the beverage industry remained confident that the Bottle

Bill would be repealed before it was ever implemented and had already lined up lobbyists to carry out that task. VPIRG exposed this fact through its Bottle Bill survey—and, as a result, defending the Bottle Bill became an issue in that year’s gubernatorial election.

The public attention caused the Republican candidate Luther Hackett to reverse his stance on the issue (he supported repeal) and say he’d let the law have a chance to prove itself. Meanwhile, Democratic candidate, and eventual winner, Thomas P. Salmon supported the bill.

Throughout the seventies, VPIRG continued to work to strengthen the law and ensure its success. Former VPIRG assistant director Leigh Seddon remembers those early fights:

“It was 1974 when I first started working with VPIRG on the Bottle Bill as a student at UVM. The law was amended in 1975 to prod the beverage industry to reuse, refill, or recycle all bottles and cans. Many of the large brewers, however, worked to skirt the law and their containers were still being dumped in Vermont’s landfills. In 1977, VPIRG returned to the legislature to get

amendments that required bottles to be truly refillable and banned the use of plastic rings to hold cans together. VPIRG has been the watch dog protecting the Bottle Bill and pushing for greater reuse and recycling in Vermont for over four decades.”

That early work allowed the Bottle Bill to gain a hold and, in time, it would grow to become Vermont’s most successful recycling program.

Today, Vermont recycles over 80% of the containers covered by the bill compared to about 36% for non-covered containers.

The bottles and cans recycled through the Bottle Bill in Vermont would fill up more than three Empire State Buildings.

And throughout the growth of the Bottle Bill program, VPIRG was there – to educate Vermonters on the importance of the Bottle Bill, to stand up for it in the State House against beverage industry attacks and to fight to improve the law.

VPIRG was there in 1988, when we successfully advocated to expand the law to include wine cooler containers and liquor bottles.

VPIRG was there in 2011, when we beat back a coordinated campaign by the beverage giants to eliminate bottle deposit return programs across the nation.

And we’ll be there in the years to come, to not only defend the Bottle Bill but to improve and expand the program as well by:

- Expanding the program to cover water bottles, juice and sports drinks.

- Stopping the giveaway of “unclaimed nickels” – the millions of dollars in unclaimed deposits that the state gives to the beverage industry every year – and instead using the money to support recycling and other state priorities.

- Raising the deposit to 10 cents—as Michigan and, most recently, Oregon have done.

So, as VPIRG and the Bottle Bill celebrate 45 years of success in 2017, we note that not everything launched in 1972 has fared as well. The Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, which began operations in 1972, was retired in 2014! But VPIRG and the Bottle Bill will continue on—to a bigger and better future.

◀ **VPIRG has fought to defend and expand Vermont’s Bottle Bill for our entire history. From our early days exposing beverage industry attempts to circumvent the law to more recent efforts to cover more containers and end the giveaway of “unclaimed nickels” – VPIRG has been a staunch advocate for the Bottle Bill for 45 years.**





Our 2016 Accomplishments

It may seem difficult to reflect on 2016 without noting our present situation and the almost daily offensive on the health and well-being of our people and environment coming from Congress and the Trump administration. But 2016 was not without progress or cause for optimism. Together we accomplished a lot to move our state in a positive direction. And in fact, many of these accomplishments—which you helped achieve—put our “Brave Little State” in a unique position to fight back against the attacks coming from Washington D.C. and show the rest of the country that a different way is possible:

Government Reform

Making it easier to vote: Vermont became the 4th state in the nation to adopt Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) when Gov. Peter Shumlin signed H.458 into law. AVR brings voter registration into the modern era by automatically registering Vermont citizens as voters when they apply for or renew their driver’s license at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), unless they decline to register. The new law is expected to help increase voter participation, improve the accuracy of the voter rolls and save the state money. It had unanimous support in the Senate and just one vote against it in the House.

Energy and Climate

Clean Energy Planning Reform: VPIRG helped pass legislation that will empower Vermont’s towns and regions to take on a greater role in Vermont’s clean energy transition and get a greater say in the siting of energy projects provided they write plans that clearly advance our state’s renewable energy and climate goals. The bill also includes a pilot that will get 2.5 MW of renewables built on places that are already developed (rooftops, gravel pits, etc.) or are designated by towns as “preferred.”

Low-Income Weatherization: VPIRG, working with our Energy Independent Vermont coalition partners, provided essential support to help pass an important increase in funding for the state’s low-income weatherization agencies. Despite their obvious success in reducing fossil fuel use and helping struggling Vermonters make ends meet, these programs have not had an increase in their state funding formula for over 20 years. This very modest increase will put people to work weatherizing homes and save Vermonters money on their energy bills.

Carbon Pollution Tax Reform: As expected in an election year, the legislature did not consider either of the carbon pollution tax bills that were drafted in the last biennium. That said, even our most ardent opponents at the climate-denying Ethan Allen Institute had to admit that we “laid some heavy ground work” for reform in 2016. Along with our partners in the Energy Independent Vermont coalition, VPIRG organized two statewide activist trainings to empower Vermonters to make the case for carbon pricing in their communities. We organized dozens of meetings across the state to build local support for the concept. And we helped business leaders and academics make the economic case for shifting taxes off of individuals and businesses and moving them onto activity we’d rather discourage — carbon pollution.

Environmental Health

PFOA Discovery and Response: The discovery of the toxic chemical PFOA in North Bennington made it clearer than ever that more must be done to protect Vermonters from dangerous chemicals. In 2016 VPIRG helped pass legislation that established a committee to make recommendations to the legislature for more comprehensive toxic chemical reform. VPIRG Executive Director Paul Burns served on this committee, which made 13 such recommendations that provided the basis for toxic reform legislation considered in 2017.

Protecting our Pollinators: Seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides have been shown to be harmful to bees and other pollinators, but until now the state did not have the authority to regulate them. Legislation that VPIRG helped pass in 2016 gives the state the authority to take action to protect pollinators and our environment from treated article pesticides such as coated seeds. We also helped pass separate legislation that created a pollinator protection committee to develop recommendations on how we can better protect bees and other pollinators.

Health Care

Expanding the Dental Workforce: After more than three years of work, VPIRG and our allies helped pass legislation that will allow dental therapists to offer care to Vermonters. Dental therapists will have a scope of practice that is greater than a hygienist’s, but smaller than that of a dentist, and will perform common procedures such as cleanings, fillings and routine extractions. These providers have been shown to improve access to first class care, and are already part of the dental team in more than 50 countries around the world, as well as in Minnesota and Alaska.

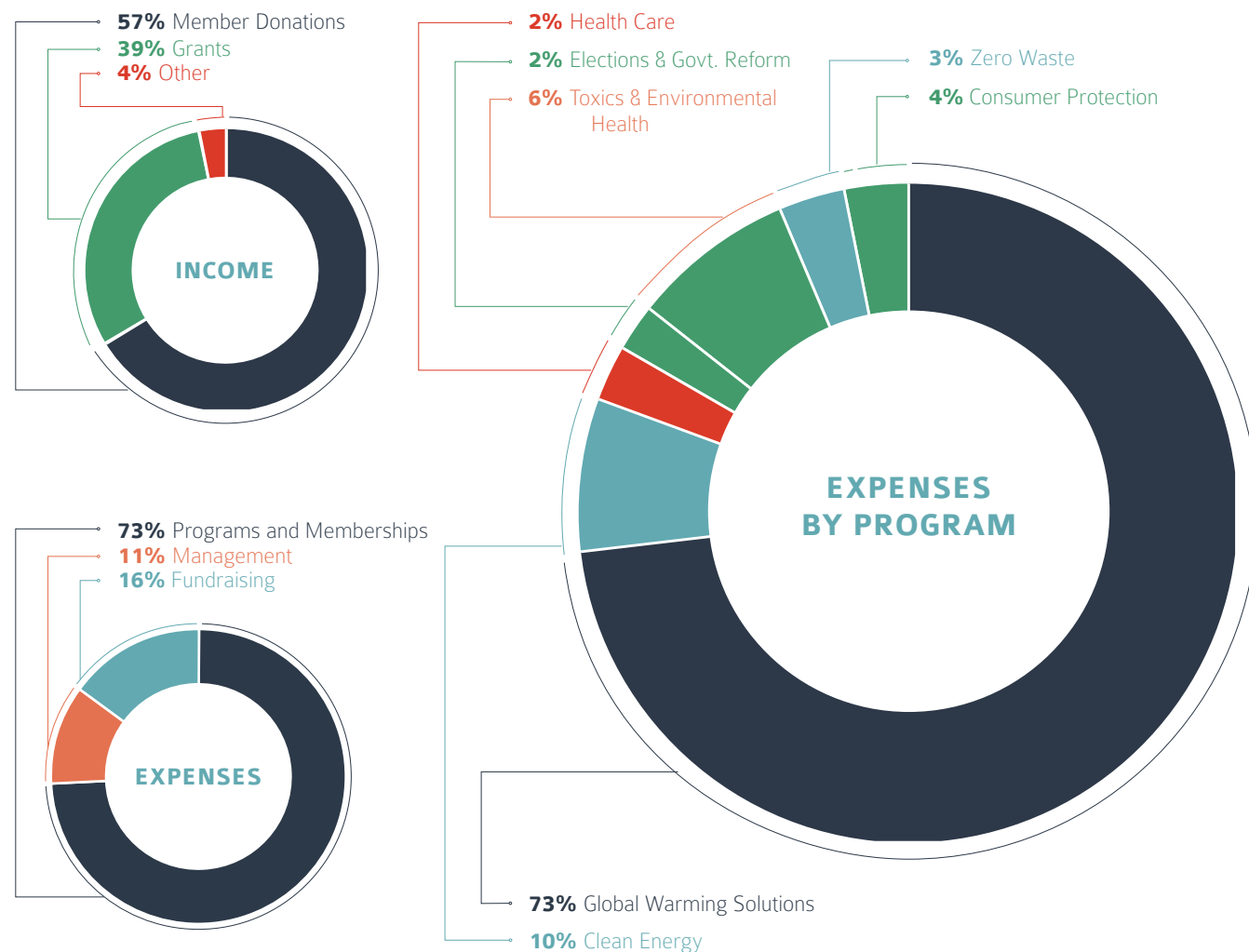
Expanding Contraceptive Access: VPIRG worked closely with our partners at Planned Parenthood to pass legislation that will improve access to birth control for all Vermonters. Because of this law, Vermonters are now guaranteed access to contraceptives beyond what’s included in the Affordable Care Act, including vasectomies. Women will now be able to get up to a full year’s prescription for oral contraceptives, and it will be easier to access long acting reversible contraceptives, which have been shown to dramatically reduce unplanned pregnancies.

Powered by You: Our 2016 Finances by the Numbers

VPIRG experienced another tremendous year of growth, witnessing an increase of 16% in annual revenue. This increased investment has allowed us to advocate more effectively and more efficiently for the issues Vermonters care about than ever before. It's also an indication that there's more need than ever for an organization like VPIRG to protect the public interest in the face of growing challenges – from climate change to money in politics, and more.

VPIRG and VPIREF combined income totaled \$2,615,140 of which more than \$1.55 million came from individual member donations, 37% of that coming from our monthly sustaining members. Combined expenses totaled \$2,303,229. Program expenses and member services accounts for nearly three quarters of our expenses. Our top priority campaign, Global Warming Solutions, accounted for 73% of our program activities, and was complemented by campaigns in six other issue areas.

	VPIRG	VPIREF	TOTAL
Income	\$1,383,574	\$1,231,566	\$2,615,140
Expenses	\$647,506	\$1,655,725	\$2,303,229



People Power: Recognizing Our Supporters

At VPIRG, our members are our strength.

Your support and engagement helps protect the public from well-moneyed special interests and advances policies that make Vermont an even better place to live.

Your financial support and grassroots muscle makes VPIRG effective. Last year alone, VPIRG supporters made more than 50,000 donations

and took more than 35,000 actions (signing petitions, contacting lawmakers, writing letters to the editor, etc.) Together we're able to take on some of the largest and dirtiest industries in the country and win. Thank you for your support.

Check out these profiles of a few of our standout members and see a partial list of our members on the next page.



Jen Kimmich as told by Ben Edgerly Walsh, VPIRG Climate & Energy Program Director

VPIRG's newest board trustee is a tireless advocate for working Vermonters, climate action, and environmental protection. Oh, and she and her husband John make a couple of beers you may have heard of—together, they run the Alchemist Brewery.

When you meet Jen, it's immediately clear she isn't your typical business owner. Like most Vermont entrepreneurs she cares deeply about making a quality product, and about her employees. She's not, however, interested in limiting herself to making the world a better place one beer or one paycheck at a time.

Jen has used her position as the co-owner of one of Vermont's most iconic businesses to passionately campaign for the issues closest to her heart. In 2011, she and John lost their pub in Waterbury to Tropical Storm Irene. Since then, she's worked diligently for serious solutions to the climate crisis as a business leader in the campaign for a price on carbon pollution. Jen has presented at trainings, shot videos, and repeatedly testified at the State House for the Energy Independent Vermont campaign.

Jen also has a keen interest in all issues surrounding working families, inequality, and poverty. She was a key voice in the State House this year on VPIRG-supported bills on paid family and medical leave in Vermont and retirement security for all Vermonters.

On top of all this, she's also the Board Chair for Main Street Alliance, is on the public policy committee for Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) and the State Workforce Development Operating Committee, and is starting a foundation dedicated to helping working Vermonters get the skills they need to thrive in today's economy.

VPIRG is thrilled to have her as a member, and now, a board member.

Ian Stokes as told by Clean Energy Advocate Sarah Wolfe

On the same phone call where I asked Ian to tell me a little more about himself for this profile, I also asked him if he would be willing to submit a letter he'd composed on wind power to a local paper, and he (without hesitation) said yes. That's what makes Ian such an excellent example of the passion and activism found across Vermont.

After a career of engineering and medical research, Ian saw retirement as a huge opportunity to meet new people and develop new skills and interests. His activism on energy related issues stems from a concern over the heavy fossil fuel impact of transportation. A passionate bicycle activist, Ian serves on the Richmond Trails Committee and volunteers for Local Motion and Bike Recycle – even helping fix up some VPIRG bikes for our Summer Canvass!

Ian is an advocate for diverse renewable energy sources, because he understands that along with bikes, our best transportation options for the future are electric vehicles. Combined with electric heating solutions like cold climate heat pumps, he understands that our electric load is going to increase dramatically in the coming years as we seek to reach our renewable energy goals. That's what makes Ian particularly concerned about the recent attacks on wind energy: he knows that it will be much harder to successfully meet our energy needs with renewable energy if that critical resource is taken off the table. And Ian turns that concern into action by speaking out in writing and in person in defense of transforming our energy landscape.

We are truly inspired by Ian's consistent willingness to stand up and work for what he knows we need to do on the most critical issues facing us today.

Mariana Du Brul as told by VPIRG Field Organizer Christina Fornaciari

I've had the wonderful pleasure of working with Mariana Du Brul this past year on the Energy Independent Vermont campaign and have witnessed her exceptional work and activism first hand.

A member of VPIRG since 2012, Mariana's activism has escalated as a response to the urgency of both climate change and the federal administration's growing threats to people and the planet. She organized with her neighbors to meet with several legislators to advocate for a statewide price on carbon pollution, enshrining the state goal of being 90% renewably powered by 2050 into law, building the Climate Solutions Caucus, and more. Mariana has also authored multiple letters-to-the-editor that were published widely in local media.

Mariana spends most of her time chasing around her two young boys, but when she can, she works on hacking back the jungle of her garden where the goal is 90% non-weeds by 2050. It's members like Mariana that make Vermont a better place to live, work and enjoy.



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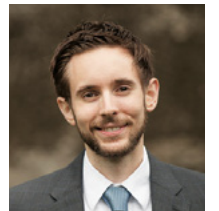
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