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September 9, 2020 (MONTPELIER, VT) – Vermont's House of Representatives passed the Global Warming Solutions Act today with 102 votes. The historic climate bill requires Vermont to reduce its climate-damaging emissions while simultaneously creating jobs, improving community resilience, and reducing energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities.

In January, a coalition of 30 business, low income, youth, public health, faith, environmental, and climate justice organizations identified the Solutions Act as an essential priority for the 2020 legislative session. Several of those groups offer a statement in response to today's vote.

"Vermont's most vulnerable bear a far greater burden than most when it comes to the cost of energy and the consequences of a warming world," said Sue Minter, executive director of Capstone Community Action. "This bill will enable Vermont to create a blueprint to build a more clean, resilient, rural economy while, critically, centering equity and the needs of all Vermonters in climate solutions. It's a long-overdue, critical step forward, and we look forward to partnering in this effort to create more healthy, durable, equitable communities."

"The COVID pandemic has exposed what happens when we fail to plan for an emergency," said Jen Duggan, Vice President and Director of CLF Vermont. "This bill will make sure that we don't make the same mistake when it comes to the urgent threat of the climate crisis. It will also help make our communities stronger and boost our economic recovery from COVID-19. Governor Scott must sign it into law so we can get to work."

"The Global Warming Solutions Act is a huge step in the right direction," said Steve Crowley, Sierra Club Energy Committee Chair. "It lays the groundwork for Vermonters to engage in the response necessary to remain safe and thrive in a changing world. It recognizes that the harshest impacts of climate change will land on the most vulnerable, and it makes that a priority for planning and action. Vermont needs to couple this with action to clean up all of Vermont's energy supply and grow a clean energy economy for all."

"Climate scientists around the world have targeted this decade as a critical moment to make bold moves in our efforts to tackle climate change," said Lauren Oates, Climate & Energy Policy Manager with The Nature Conservancy in Vermont. "With the strong vote from the House today, we are one step closer to listening to the science, building a more resilient future for all Vermonters, and harnessing nature's role in meeting our needs. We are grateful for the strong House vote today and urge the Governor to pass this important piece of legislation."

"We thank the Vermont House for its incredibly strong vote in support of the Global Warming Solutions Act, which recognized the urgency and opportunity to rebuild our economy in ways that reduce climate pollution, while creating jobs, improving our communities' resilience, and helping rural and marginalized

Vermonters transition to more affordable and healthier heating and transportation options,” said Lauren Hierl, Executive Director of Vermont Conservation Voters. “We urge Governor Scott to sign this bill into law and get to work building a better future for Vermont.”

“This bill ensures we finally put a process and plan in place to realize all the job-creating, resilience-building benefits of doing our part to combat the climate crisis,” said Johanna Miller, energy and climate program director at the Vermont Natural Resources Council. “Governor Scott must support it, joining our neighboring states in recognizing the opportunity and obligation to reduce costly, planet-warming pollution.”

“The climate crisis is here, and Vermonters are being hurt not just by its effects, but by the inaction that’s causing us to fall further and further behind our neighbors,” said Ben Edgerly Walsh, climate & energy program director for VPIRG. “Vermonters who are low income, rural communities – they’re the ones who will be left the furthest behind if we keep sitting on our hands while others modernize their economies and infrastructure. The Solutions Act will set us on a path to make sure that doesn’t happen. This bill is good for Vermont, and if Governor Scott is serious about climate action he’ll sign it.”

“Vermont businesses are already experiencing the impacts of climate change and many have learned firsthand the environmental, community, and economic benefits of moving away from fossil fuels and toward energy independence. The Solutions Act creates a framework of accountability, equity, and community input that will allow our state’s leaders to follow suit,” said VBSR Public Policy Manager, Jordan Giaconia. “Today’s strong vote in the House is an acknowledgment that we can no longer afford half measures when it comes to addressing the climate crisis and that only through climate action can we create a thriving post-COVID economy with greater resilience to future economic, social, and environmental crises.”

The Global Warming Solutions Act will ensure Vermont meets its climate goals while helping rural areas, building community resilience, and bolstering economic recovery from COVID-19. Climate change is an urgent public health threat, and the pandemic has shown us that we’re not prepared. The bill will push the state to reduce its climate-damaging emissions and take action to support communities that are already facing the impacts of the climate crisis.

Experts are available for further comment.

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