



Testimony on the Global Warming Solutions Act before the Senate Natural Resources Committee — May 29, 2020

My name Matt Cota. I am the Executive Director of VFDA, a position I have held since 2007.

VFDA is a non-profit trade organization of energy businesses. We provide regulatory assistance while facilitating technical training, safety, and education programs that are required for certification and licensure. I have served on Governor Shumlin's Thermal Efficiency Task Force and Governor Scott's Climate Action Commission. VFDA supported Vermont's ultra low sulfur fuel mandate to reduce emissions and increase efficiency. VFDA supports efforts to increase blends of biodiesel for heating and transportation. VFDA continues to partner with the Agency of Natural Resources to implement Vermont's Aboveground Storage Tank regulations.

We oppose H.688. The Climate Council the legislation creates will come up with a plan that on paper achieves the emission reduction goals. This plan will go through the rule making process, the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules will hold a hearing and it will be enacted by the Agency of Natural Resources. No votes will ever occur on the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives.

This is a problem because there will be solutions in the plan that make sense in the laboratory of the Climate Council, but are not practical or desirable for other reasons.

For instance, the Climate Council could update the stretch codes to eliminate fossil fuel infrastructure and apply this standard to all buildings. There is no question this will reduce emissions but it will also make it more difficult to meet our affordable housing goals. It will also make commercial buildings much more expensive to build or retrofit.

The Climate Council could ban the sale of vehicles with combustion engines. This would limit the mobility of Vermonters that can't afford an electric car, especially those living in rural areas and those in the trades that need an SUV, van or truck.

The Climate Council could ban the use of federal LIHEAP funds for oilheat, kerosene, propane and natural gas. Approximately 20,000 low income Vermont families could be required to use only electric or wood heat to qualify for assistance. Vulnerable Vermonters will go cold in the effort to prevent global warming.

While the Climate Council can not propose a fee or a tax, they can enact emission reduction measures that will limit or restrict fossil fuel combustion. The Legislature

provides the necessary guard rails to prevent the implementation of a plan that may comply with the law, but harm Vermonters in the process. The Legislature should not surrender their authority to block such measures they deem inappropriate.

We ask that you not pass H.688.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Cota



VFDA Executive Director