

From: Coriell, Scott [Scott.Coriell@state.vt.us]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 3:18 PM
To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Weekly OpEd from Gov. Shumlin

Please find below an op-ed from Gov. Peter Shumlin. Let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks,

Scott Coriell
Office of the Governor
(802) 353-1449

Vermont Leads at Climate Summit of Americas

By Governor Peter Shumlin

Last week I traveled to Toronto to attend the Climate Summit of the Americas, which brought together Pan-American governmental, advocacy, energy, and climate change leaders to share ideas on how we can work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capitalize on a cleaner energy economy to grow jobs and opportunity. I was so proud to represent Vermont at this summit because when it comes to combating climate change and finding opportunity in a green energy future, our state is world leader.

We weren't always though. When I took office in January of 2011, Vermont's energy policy was stuck in the 1990s, literally. Our last, and only, major wind energy project was built in 1997. Our last comprehensive energy plan was completed in 1998. And we were relying on a 1998 net metering law that wasn't meeting the needs of the 21st century. That lack of progress on energy meant we were losing out on the opportunity to grow jobs, save Vermonters' money on their energy bills, and help lead the way on combating climate change.

To jumpstart our energy economy, we wasted no time. Immediately in 2011 we completed a Comprehensive Energy Plan that included the goal of reaching 90 percent renewable energy by 2050. Setting this ambitious goal was integral to ensuring we moved quickly to change the way we do energy in Vermont and implement policies to help us get there.

The results are starting to show. We now have more than ten times the amount of solar installed or on the way than when I took office. We have more than doubled our Standard Offer program, expanded net metering more than sevenfold, and helped bring down the cost of solar from 30 cents per kilowatt hour in 2010 to less than 12 cents today. And it's not just harnessing the sun. When I took office we had 6 megawatts of wind installed. Today we have 119 megawatts installed, and another 30 megawatts on the way. All of that activity has contributed to a clean energy economy that supports over 15,000 jobs.

We're not stopping there. What excites me most about Vermont's energy future is legislation we passed this year that will allow Vermont to lead the way in revolutionizing the way energy utilities do business. Thanks to that effort, Vermont will be the first state in America to put our

electric utilities in the business of helping customers use *less* energy, not more. The legislation sets numerical targets for our utilities to reduce customer fossil fuel use through the installation of clean technologies such as cold-climate heat pumps, electric vehicle recharging stations, solar hot water, weatherization, biomass and geothermal heat, and battery storage.

That transformation of the utility business model in Vermont, combined with increased build out of solar, wind, and other renewables, will have positive impacts on Vermont's economy, Vermonters' wallets, and the planet. Over the next 15 years, we'll create 1,000 new jobs, save Vermonters \$390 million on their energy bills, and put us on track to achieve a quarter of the emissions reduction needed for our 2050 climate goal.

In Vermont we are doing our part, and helping lead the way when it comes to fighting climate change and spurring the energy innovation we need. When I think about how much we have gotten done in just the last four and a half years, I am optimistic about the opportunity for our state, our nation, and the global community to change the way we do energy and get it right in time to save a livable planet for our kids and grandkids. And that's the message I brought to Toronto on behalf of Vermont.