

Governor's Commission on Climate Change

December 5, 2005

WHEREAS, the Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers recognizes that “scientific evidence of the destabilizing human influence on global climatic systems is continuing to build, creating a growing momentum for a response;” and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that governments work individually and collectively to address the economic, environmental and societal consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS, Vermont’s goal is to reduce emissions by an amount consistent with the recommendations of the Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Climate Change Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the goals established by the Conference are to reduce region-wide greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 baseline by twenty-five percent by 2012, fifty percent by 2028 and, if practicable using reasonable efforts, seventy-five percent by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the State of Vermont, recognizing that state government activities contribute to climate change, has been proactive in developing ways in which state government can reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 a Climate Neutral Working Group was established by Executive Order to recommend ways by which state government agencies and departments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions from state government buildings and operations; and

WHEREAS, the State of Vermont has implemented many of the recommendations of the Climate Neutral Working Group, including replacing older state-owned automobiles with more fuel-efficient vehicles, including hybrid vehicles, encouraging state employees to use these fuel-efficient vehicles rather than their own vehicles, building more efficient state facilities, purchasing only energy- efficient devices and developing a State Agency Energy Plan to reduce state government’s energy use; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that emissions from cars and other vehicles are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont, the Agency of Natural Resources is implementing new emissions standards that will reduce Vermont’s greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, several entities within state government, including the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Public Service, and the Public Service Board are participating in developing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), under which signatory states would act together to control emissions of carbon dioxide from electricity-generating power plants within those states; and

WHEREAS, it is important that the State of Vermont take the lessons learned from these efforts and develop and implement an effective statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction program; and

WHEREAS, it is important for Vermonters to understand climate change and its economic, environmental and societal consequences, and be provided strategies to take personal responsibility for addressing the problem.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Vermont, I, James H. Douglas, do hereby create the Governor's Commission on Climate Change. The Commission shall consist of no more than six members appointed by the Governor. The Governor shall appoint a Chair. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation shall provide administrative and technical support to the Commission, and the Commission may call upon other state agencies or departments to assist as appropriate in implementing this Order and achieving its purposes.

The Commission shall be advisory to the Governor and shall have the following functions and duties:

1. To examine the real and potential effects of climate change on Vermont, including, but not limited to the impact of climate change on public health, natural resources and the economy; and
2. To produce an inventory of existing and planned actions that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont; and
3. To educate the public about climate change and develop educational tools that will help Vermonters understand how they, as individuals, can play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and
4. To request input from representatives of the business, environmental, forestry, transportation, non-profit, higher education, municipal and other sectors regarding opportunities to reduce emissions and conserve energy; and
5. To develop recommendations to the Governor to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont, consistent with Vermont's need for continued economic growth and energy security. These recommendations, and all other pertinent information, shall be included in a Climate Change Action Plan that shall be submitted to the Governor no later than September 1, 2007. The Commission may also, as it sees fit, make interim recommendations to the Governor prior to issuing a final report.

This Executive Order shall take effect upon signing and shall expire upon the issuance of a final Climate Change Action Plan by the Commission.

Witness my name hereunto subscribed and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont hereunto affixed at Montpelier this 5th day of December, 2005.

James H. Douglas, Governor

By the Governor: Neale F. Lunderville, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

Executive Order No. 07-05