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S.309

Introduced by Senator Miller of Chittenden District and Senator Lyons of
Chittenden District

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Conservation; greenhouse gas reduction; five-percent challenge
program

Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to make more firm the state's
commitment to reducing the generation of greenhouse gases by 75 percent
below 1990 levels by the year 2050. It proposes to establish a short-term goal
of reducing greenhouse gas generation rates by five percent per year. It
proposes to require the administration to establish a greenhouse gas reduction
oversight program to evaluate state agency progress in reducing emissions. It
proposes to require the development of a five-percent challenge program that
would present annual cash awards to various entities and organizations for the
most innovative, the most promising, and the most successful greenhouse gas
emissions reduction method.

18 AN ACT RELATING TO REDUCING THE STATE'S GREENHOUSE
19 GAS EMISSIONS

20 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

1 Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 578 is amended to read:

2 § 578. GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION GOALS

3 (a) General goal of greenhouse gas reduction. It is the goal of the state to
4 reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from within the geographical boundaries
5 of the state and those emissions outside the boundaries of the state that are
6 caused by the use of energy in Vermont in order to make an appropriate
7 contribution to achieving the regional goals of reducing emissions of
8 greenhouse gases from the 1990 baseline by:

9 (1) 25 percent by January 1, 2012;

10 (2) 50 percent by January 1, 2028;

11 (3) ~~if practicable using reasonable efforts,~~ 75 percent by January 1,
12 2050.

13 * * *

14 (c) Implementation of climate change action plan.

15 (1) In order to facilitate the state's compliance with the goals established
16 in this section, all state agencies shall consider, whenever practicable, any
17 increase or decrease in greenhouse gas emissions ~~in~~ and any effects upon the
18 capacity of the ecosystem to store carbon dioxide during their decision-making
19 procedures with respect to the purchase and use of equipment and goods; the
20 siting, construction, and maintenance of buildings; the assignment of
21 personnel; and the planning, design, and operation of programs, services, and

1 infrastructure. The management priorities of this effort are to determine
2 greenhouse gas emissions baselines and to measure progress in emission
3 reduction while exploiting the potential of efficiency measures and procuring
4 energy from renewable sources, and finally, to consider mitigating remaining
5 emissions with carbon credits for creditable projects that comply with
6 international carbon credit standards. To assist in this process, the secretary of
7 administration shall provide to the public and to the general assembly any
8 work product of the carbon neutral working group established by executive
9 order, and shall use that material as a resource in developing an oversight
10 program to evaluate the success or failure of various measures taken in
11 compliance with this subsection. This program shall include ways to:
12 establish appropriate greenhouse gas emission baseline levels due to
13 preexisting structures, equipment, and systems; establish greenhouse gas
14 emission reduction targets; record steps taken to reduce emissions or enhance
15 carbon sequestration; measure or otherwise determine pertinent emission levels
16 before and after the steps were taken; identify anticipated or unanticipated
17 collateral impacts, including any effects related to the destruction of carbon
18 sequestration capabilities; evaluate the effectiveness of alternatives pursued;
19 readjust emission reduction targets, as necessary; communicate to other
20 agencies measures that work and that fail to work as intended. The secretary

1 may require agencies to obtain carbon off-sets of a specified nature, in
2 specified situations.

3 (2) It is a goal of the state to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions
4 by at least five percent per year, commencing in 2008.

5 (3) The secretary of administration, in concert with the commissioner of
6 public service and the secretaries of natural resources, of commerce, and of
7 agriculture, food and markets shall develop a five-percent challenge program,
8 and submit recommendations to the governor and to the general assembly with
9 regard to how best to establish and fund the program. The five-percent
10 challenge program shall be designed to encourage personal and institutional
11 innovation by awarding annual cash awards for the most innovative, the most
12 promising, and the most successful carbon emissions reduction method, with
13 annual awards being given to categories that include the following:
14 manufacturing businesses, both large and small; retail stores; service
15 businesses; transportation providers; agricultural operations; weatherization
16 services providers; organizational operations; and municipal facilities and
17 operations.