



# Catalysts of the Climate Economy Summit

September 6-8, 2017 | UVM, Burlington Vermont

## Summary & Next Steps



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Produced by the **Vermont Council on Rural Development**



# cc:econ Catalysts of the Climate Economy Summit

More than 500 entrepreneurs, business leaders, investors, and innovators from across the country interested in innovating and growing the climate economy came together for the Catalysts of the Climate Economy National Innovation Summit (cc:econ) produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development on September 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> in Burlington Vermont.

## Summit Opening: **IGNITE**

Entrepreneur and environmentalist **Paul Hawken**, opened the Summit with a profound and optimistic appraisal of climate change and the extensive work going forward globally to address it. In line with the action plan in the book, **Drawdown**, which he produced and edited, Hawken selectively overviewed 100 economic and cultural solutions to climate change, with the central idea that we need to not only ‘mitigate’ climate change by reducing emissions, but go further to correct climate change by drawing down carbon in the atmosphere. Paul humorously cited the hubris of the subtitle of Drawdown, “The most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming,” claiming that, unfortunately there really was no more systematic a plan and challenging us all to produce one!

Paul asked the startling question of whether we are “against” climate change, or “for” it! The climate doesn’t care, and the climate alone is not our problem. Rather, climate change is a natural feedback loop, one that echoes a variety of planetary crises—from the dramatic loss of species, to pollution of waterways and agricultural erosion. He made the startling statement that we should be grateful to climate change because it brings all these issues to a dramatic point of broad global consciousness—and its feedback points directly to entrepreneurial opportunities and economic and human development steps that can transform energy systems, renew agriculture and forestry, and expand human health and well-being globally—also empowering us to change the climate in a positive direction! By aiming to draw down and answer the climate challenge rather than just mitigate it, Paul was encouraging everyone to broaden their thinking: “When you expand your goals you unlock your creativity.”

Paul’s thoughts, and the examples from Drawdown of expanding microgrids, educating women and girls, and dramatically increasing carbon sequestration, provided an inspiring and optimistic framework for the conversations that followed on innovation, entrepreneurship and investment in the climate economy over the course of the three day event.



## Day 2: ACCELERATE

The second day featured a series of panels, pitches, and presentations from entrepreneurs, investors, and policy leaders from across the country. The day also included pop-up dialogue sessions facilitated by climate economy leaders where participants were asked to share their perspective on key climate economy challenges and opportunities.

The day opened with a **Business and Policy Fishbowl** on Climate Solutions and the future of the U.S. economy. Led by Stephen Lacey of Greentech Media, panelists included Emily Reichert of Greentown Labs, Jigar Shah of Generate Capital, Danny Kennedy from the California Clean Energy Fund, Paul Hendricks of Patagonia,



and Gary Hirshberg of Stonyfield Farm. This rousing session of visionaries provided a profound infusion of ideas for the day—from Danny Kennedy’s assertion that the climate challenge poses the greatest economic opportunity in world history to Jigar Shah’s idea of investing half a billion dollars in VT to model the wholesale transition to electric vehicles that is on the horizon, but could happen here first!



The stage set on the economic development and job creation opportunity, Summit attendees heard a brief presentation from Ellen Kahler of the VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, Mary Powell, President and CEO of Green Mountain Power, and Neale Lunderville of Burlington Electric Department announcing the founding of **AcceIVT**—a climate economy business accelerator concentrating on new entrepreneurship in the distributed generation sector—a doorway to education, assistance and financing for a cohort of new or next gen businesses in Vermont and across the country!

Afternoon sessions featured exemplary climate economy innovators in transportation, distributed generation, the working landscape, finance, consumer products, community development, and business incubation and development.

The Second Day concluded with the **#FutureFormula Climate Economy Pitch Competition** where five creative entrepreneurs, chosen by participant vote throughout the day, pitched their business ideas to attendees, investors, and judges for a grand prize. A Vermont company, **Packetized Energy**, won the pitch with their software platform for coordinating myriad distributed energy resources including water heaters, electric vehicles and batteries—the sweet spot at the center of smart grid functionality.



## Day 3: EXPLORE

The third day of the Summit brought participants throughout the state to tour emerging Vermont models of climate economy innovation and to share their perspective, input, and advice for the future of Vermont's economy. Tours addressed ways that Vermont was modeling solutions today, and engaged all participants in sharing ideas on next steps in policy, investment, and business development to advance climate economy innovations as the future of the Vermont rural economy.



*From top: Vermont Business Leader Tour on the roof of the Burlington Airport; Carbon and the Soil participants touring a local farm; participants on the Net-Zero Tour behind the scenes at Woodchuck Cider; the breakout session on investment; participants enjoyed music and local food trucks and beverages on the kick-off evening.*



# cc:econ Action Ideas and Follow-Up

So many partnering organizations are engaged in promoting Vermont's Climate Economy Future. **Thanks to each and every participant in the Climate Economy Summit for joining this critical conversation and for sharing your advice on driving this work forward!** Today, VCRD is leading a statewide partnership of individuals, organizations, and businesses to follow the Summit with practical action and pro-active state policies and investments. The partnership is led by the Vermont Climate Economy Action Team (CEAT), which is promoting recommendations from Summit findings for presentation to the Legislature and Governor. In line with input through Summit dialogue sessions, facilitated Vermont Innovation Tour discussions, and the follow up Summit Survey, CEAT will be advancing Vermont's economy and promoting policies that will:

- Dramatically increase capacity for low-to-moderate-income weatherization and residential deep energy retrofits.
- Explore incentives and policies to boost net zero building and code compliance and building a structure for energy efficiency labeling and disclosure in homes sales.
- Establish a Comprehensive Energy Efficiency Utility to advance innovative new efficiency services and initiatives and implement next stage "all fuels" efficiencies in the thermal and transportation sectors in addition to the current electrical efficiency services.
- Develop and implement financing policy and structures such as C-PACE programs, to-the-meter financing, and other strategies to build access to and affordability of distributed generation in the residential and commercial sectors
- Support and expand solar in our built environment by reducing permitting barriers and structuring incentives for solar on rooftops, parking garages, and solar canopies.
- Establish a long-term sustainable funding source for the Clean Energy Development Fund and increase its capacity to seed-fund in business-led research and development and innovative enterprise startups in the climate economy.
- Expand tax structures and incentives to encourage smart growth in Vermont's downtowns and village centers.
- Expand the mission and funding of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative to promote working lands business enterprises efforts in carbon sequestration, ubiquitous farm methane projects, compost development while cleaning VT waterways.
- Invest in transportation systems efficiency and electrification to advance electric vehicle charging infrastructure, transform transportation systems, and facilitate the shift to electric vehicles and make Vermont the cold climate test center for driverless vehicles.
- Expand models for shared vehicles and clean electric public transit. Use VW Settlement Funds for electrification: no money to diesel.
- The Legislature should lead an internal and rational analysis of the costs and benefits of carbon pricing and trading models, identifying those most likely to boost economic development, innovation, and job creation in the state.
- Boost the Climate Economy Business Network and Accelerator Program at the VSJF to grow entrepreneurial opportunities and provide a network for businesses to promote their solutions, products, or services that could lead to collaboration and innovation.

- Support workforce and career development to cultivate a skilled workforce that is ready to fill climate economy jobs and work to build, weatherize, innovate, and engineer towards a climate economy future.

There are places in the world that will lead in providing solutions to climate change, and we affirm that Vermont can make itself one of the most spectacularly attractive places in the country for these businesses—the beckoning country for innovative businesses and mission oriented youth.

In fact, rural renewal and our economic future depend on it...and it's already happening all around us.



## cc:econ Speakers, Presenters, Facilitators

- **Tammy Agard**, EEtility
- **Todd Barker**, Meridian Institute
- **Jay Bellows**, Northern Reliability
- **Tedd Benson**, Bensonwood and Unity Homes
- **Jeff Bernicke**, Native Energy
- **David Blittersdorf**, AllEarth Renewables, Inc.
- **Ted Brady**, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- **Jessica Brown**, Climate Policy Initiative
- **Aaron Carpenter**, TideSmart West
- **Jean Carroon**, Goody Clancy
- **Kyle Clark**, Beta Air LLC and Venture.co
- **Sue E. Coakley**, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
- **Paul Costello**, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- **Marguerite Dibble**, GameTheory
- **Mayor Bob Dixson**, Greensburg Kansas
- **Seyi Fabode**, Asha Labs
- **Scott Fisher**, Greenlots
- **Marie-Claude Francoeur**, Quebec Delegate to New England
- **Andy Frank**, Sealed
- **Bryan Garcia**, Connecticut Green Bank
- **Dan Gray**, Empower
- **Michael Green**, Climate Action Business Association
- **Paul Hawken**, Environmentalist, Entrepreneur, Author
- **Paul Hendricks**, Patagonia
- **Gary Hirshberg**, Stonyfield Farm
- **Kerrick Johnson**, Vermont Electric Power Company
- **Ellen Kahler**, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
- **Danny Kennedy**, CalCEF
- **Alex Keros**, General Motors
- **Scott Kessler**, LO3 Energy
- **Stephen Lacey**, Greentech Media
- **David Levine**, American Sustainable Business Council
- **Noelle Mackay**, City of Burlington Vermont
- **Deb Markowitz**, UVM Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources
- **Linda McGinnis**, Energy Action Network
- **Rob Miller**, VSECU
- **Steve Nicholas**, Institute for Sustainable Communities
- **Ryan Poppo**, Proterra
- **Mary Powell**, Green Mountain Power
- **Josh Prigge**, Fetzer Vineyards
- **Will Raap**, Earth Partners LLC
- **Dan Reicher**, Steyer-Taylor Center for Energy Policy and Finance
- **Emily Reichert**, Greentown Labs
- **John Replogle**, Seventh Generation
- **Michelle Romero**, Green For All
- **Darron Scott**, Kodiak Electric Association
- **Jigar Shah**, Generate Capital
- **Jostein Solheim**, Ben & Jerry's
- **Bob Stevens**, P.E., CNU, LEED, AP, Stevens & Associates
- **Janice St. Onge**, Flexible Capital Fund, L3C
- **Thomas Sullivan**, University of Vermont
- **Navneet Trivedi**, Vrinda Inc.
- **Marilyn Waite**, Energy, Village Capital
- **Mayor Miro Weinberger**, Burlington, Vermont
- **Carol Weston**, Efficiency Vermont
- **Lindsey White**, Ceres
- **Josh Whiton**, TransLoc
- **Alex Wilson**, Resilient Design Institute
- **David Zuckerman**, Lieutenant Governor, Vermont
- **Robert Zulkoski**, Vermont Works



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**Gold** Anonymous | Anonymous | Ben & Jerry's | Burlington Electric Department | Front Porch Forum | National Grid | Northfield Savings Bank | Sugarbush Resort | VELCO | Vermont Economic Development Authority | Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

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### **About the Vermont Council on Rural Development**

From local, citizen-led efforts to policy councils that build collaboration between state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector leaders, VCRD brings Vermonters together across political lines and organizational boundaries to create a better future. Based on its work with communities and in policies to support their future vitality, VCRD has dedicated its efforts to produce the Vermont Climate Economy Initiative in collaboration with hundreds of partnering organizations and individuals.

VCRD produced the “Catalyst of the Climate Economy Summit” with three goals. To:

- Advance the idea of the climate economy as a cornerstone for national leadership and competitiveness;
  - Share promising practices in entrepreneurship, investment, and policy for mutual learning; and
- Showcase Vermont as a branded leader modeling climate economy development in a rural setting to attract entrepreneurs and investors to work with Vermonters.

 Join the **Climate Economy Partnership** to keep in touch, advance ideas, and work together to promote innovation and creative climate economy development in Vermont:

<http://vtrural.org/programs/climate-economy>



The Catalysts of the Climate Economy Summit was produced by:  
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