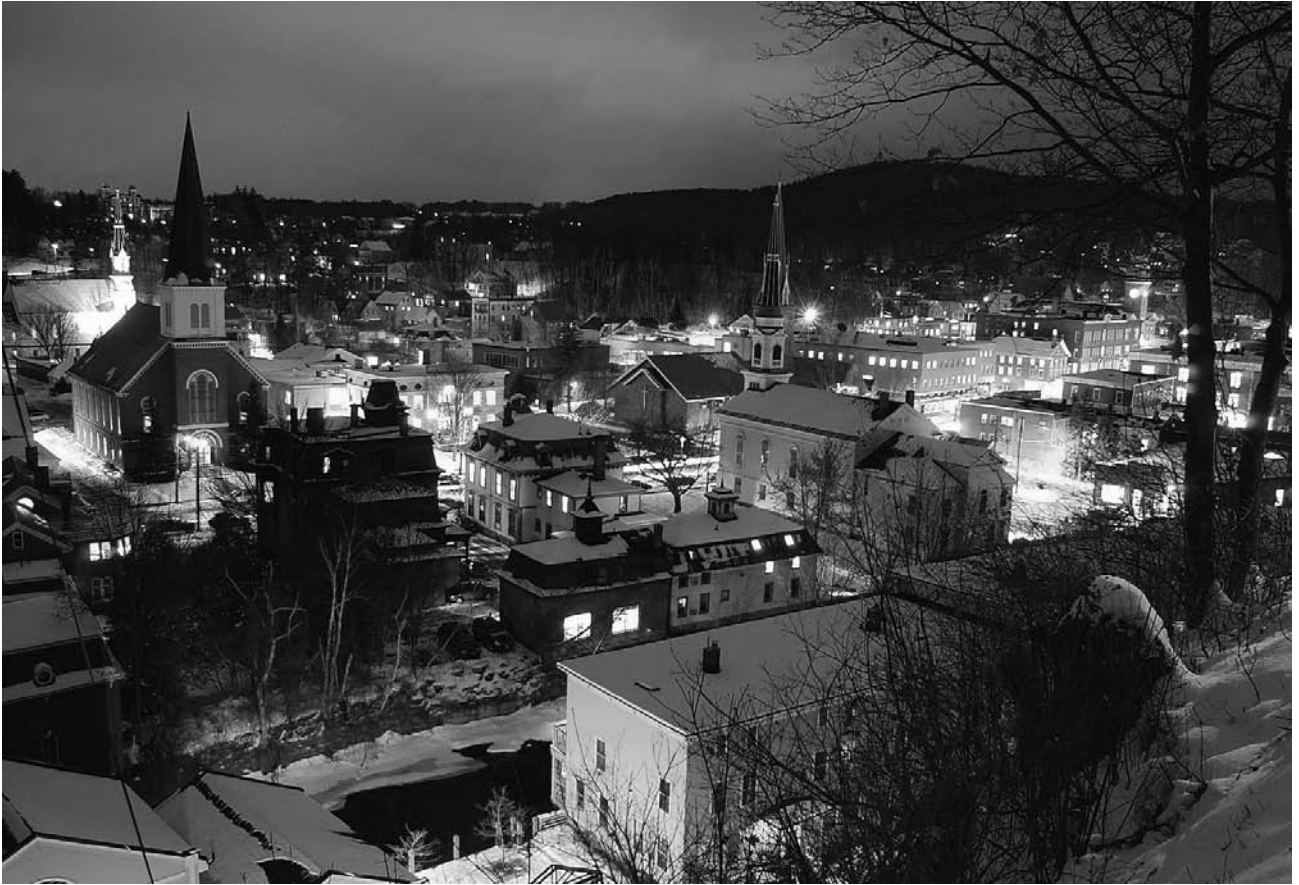


The following chapters are the synthesis of public forum notes and interviews, statistical polling, written comments, trend line research, and the many other contributions from Vermonters described in the Introduction in Part One of *Imagining Vermont*. They reflect, to the best of the Council's ability, the essence of what Vermonters shared. The Council's purpose in these chapters is to reflect what we have gathered about important subjects, whether they are emotional, divisive or matter-of-fact. All of the information was organized into ten key issues areas: *Vermont Culture; Population; Natural Environment; Working Landscape: Agriculture and Forestry; Built Environment: Development and Land Use; Economy; Education; Human Services, Health, and Safety; Infrastructure; and Energy*.

While each chapter encompasses a wide range of research and discussion, a common framework is used. Quotes from Vermonters illustrate specific points or show a range of opinions, and research and polling provide balance to the individual voices, lending authority or illuminating contradictions in the ideas expressed. All references, unless otherwise noted, are from the St. Michael's report *Vermont in Transition: A Summary of Social, Economic and Environmental Trends*, the companion volume to this report. When UVM's Center for Rural Studies web and telephone surveys are referenced, these percentages and data are found in the *Looking Ahead: Vermonters' Values and Concerns* reports.

The Council invites every reader to think about conclusions from the data and what directions it might suggest for Vermont. These chapters summarize what the Council heard; the Council's own conclusions can be found in Part Two of *Imagining Vermont*.





## Energy



Vermonters today are deeply concerned about the state's energy future. They look to the state for leadership in securing power resources that are as clean, green, renewable, and economical as possible, and they are personally conscientious about energy use. Across the state, the Council on the Future of Vermont heard testimony from Vermonters who wanted to maximize the energy independence of the state and to do what is within their capacity to produce more, consume less, and advance sustainable and affordable long-term energy security.

National and global prices, market volatility, regional electricity needs and sources, and concerns about carbon emissions from fossil fuel use all factor into the long list of challenges that the Council heard on energy. In general, energy can be thought of as the fuels that power a person's daily life – from the

gasoline that is burned in a car engine, to the electricity that lights a house, to the wood, oil, or natural gas used to heat a home. In Vermont, energy use is divided into the categories of transportation, heating, electricity, and business processing, although for most people it is the end services that they focus on.

Vermonters express most concern about energy use, efficiency, and the sources (the fuels) used in the state. Many are interested in finding the most effective and most environmentally benign local solutions for energy generation and have a sense of urgency around the future of energy use related both to cost and long-term reliable sources. A participant from Montpelier told us, "We need a concrete energy strategy and we need policy makers who celebrate and promote that. We should push these innovative models that are here to go worldwide."

## Energy Supply and Use

Generally Vermonters think about energy in terms of supply (the sources of energy) and demand (the end uses). The Council heard very few comments about the electrical infrastructure (such as transmission and distribution lines, substations, transformers, etc), and therefore these topics were not explored as priorities of Vermonters.

Vermont's electric supply is different from many other regions of the country because of its reliance on a few major sources of power generation. Overall, Vermont has one of the least carbon-emitting electric portfolios in the country. It relies heavily on power plants outside the state, especially Hydro-Québec, a system of hydroelectric generating facilities in Canada. In 2009, Vermont Yankee (Entergy's nuclear power plant in Vernon) and Hydro-Québec are expected to provide over two-thirds of the state's electricity, but Vermonters are concerned about the uncertainty surrounding this supply in the future. Long-term contracts with both of these power sources are nearing their end and if approved, future contracts are expected to have higher pricing and shorter time periods.

Vermont is highly dependent on oil; some say the state has little control over its energy dependency – that it is “at the end of the pipeline.” The state depends on carbon-based fuel imports for most of its heat and virtually all its transportation needs. Vermont's home heating mix is unusual. Approximately 60 percent of Vermont households use fuel oil to heat their homes compared to 9 percent nationally. Natural gas makes up 12 percent of household heating in Vermont compared to 51 percent nationally. In addition to these sources – all imported fossil fuel – 10 percent is listed as “other,” wood energy being the most important source. In Vermont, 6 percent of all heating and electricity comes from wood, mostly harvested from the state's forests. “What happens to Vermont as oil flow declines? The economy has grown on cheap oil. Oil consumption has grown too... I see Vermont with a much smaller economy,” a participant in Barre told the Council.

Home and commercial heating, not including electrical heating, account for 27 percent of Vermont's total energy use while electricity accounts for 40 percent. For the past ten years, home heating costs have been rising at double-digit rates. Fuel oil prices have been very volatile. In the fall of 2008, they were at triple the rates of 1998, hence many of the conversations in public forums were focused on the costs and challenges of energy use in the future.

Transportation accounts for the last third of Vermont's energy use. Here again, Vermont's

dependence on imported fossil fuels is high even by national standards – due in part to the rural nature of the state, the limited public transportation infrastructure, and the resulting dependency on privately owned automobiles (usually used as single- occupancy vehicles). On any given day, more than 98 percent of Vermonters ride in personal vehicles. In 2001, the average daily distance driven was 36 miles, and more than three-quarters of the vehicle miles traveled by Vermont adults were in single-occupancy vehicles. Vehicles registered in Vermont, vehicle miles traveled, and motor fuel use have all risen in recent decades, while the efficiency (or miles per gallon) of the vehicle fleet has remained about the same for the last twenty years.

Overall, Vermont's energy use over the last forty-five years has steadily increased. While data show that the per capita energy use in Vermont is one of the lowest in the nation, the rate of energy consumption is faster in Vermont than in the United States as a whole. Between 1990 and 2004 total energy demand in Vermont grew by 25 percent and per capita energy demand rose by roughly 13 percent. “Energy consumption [is a challenge]. Decisions made now will have a profound impact on the next generation,” a forum participant in Waitsfield told the Council.

On the electric side, advances in efficiency and conservation have allowed per capita electric consumption to decrease in the last decade, but increases in the number of customers (averaging about 1.5 percent annually for the last twenty years) have added up to a total consumption increase of 11 percent in the past ten years. While Vermont's overall electric use has grown at around 1 percent a year, it is interesting that certain residential, commercial and industrial sectors have recorded reductions in electricity consumption. For example, many businesses switched to energy efficient lighting and advanced motor drives that use less electricity. Residential consumers have moved away from heating homes with electric base-board heat and installed more efficient lighting and appliances.

The data reflect Vermont's leadership commitment to the Efficiency Vermont program and the individual choices that many businesses, households, and families have made towards efficiency and conservation options. The growth in electricity usage comes from new business users and new residents.

Despite the success Vermont has had in lowering per capita electric consumption, population growth and development, along with driving habits, have contributed to a continued growth in carbon emissions; Vermont's total emissions have increased by 2.3 percent annually since 1980.

## Local Costs and Global Concerns

There is an implicit agreement in much of the public testimony that Vermonters would like to have expanded options for the state energy sources, options that include renewable and local sources. The increased urgency for action that Vermonters feel about energy today relates first to the rising personal costs, which will be addressed later in this chapter. Other concerns, such as carbon footprint and Vermont's impact on global climate change, terrorism, and political instability in the global energy economy, also come into play when Vermonters talked about energy use in the future.

Many Vermonters testified to the Council that the costs of energy for businesses, heating, electricity and transportation are becoming unbearable. Some Vermonters also express the desire to develop local in-state energy production to reduce dependence on external sources, especially Middle Eastern oil, and would pay more in the short term to do so. Still others believe that Vermont's economy is best served by the purchase of the most affordable power in the marketplace today.

The range of testimony the Council heard indicates that while many people and businesses would look for the lowest-cost options for future energy sources, they would also like to see the state be as energy independent as possible, producing within Vermont as much as possible of what is needed here and they share values around promoting carbon neutrality and advancing a clean and renewable energy portfolio.

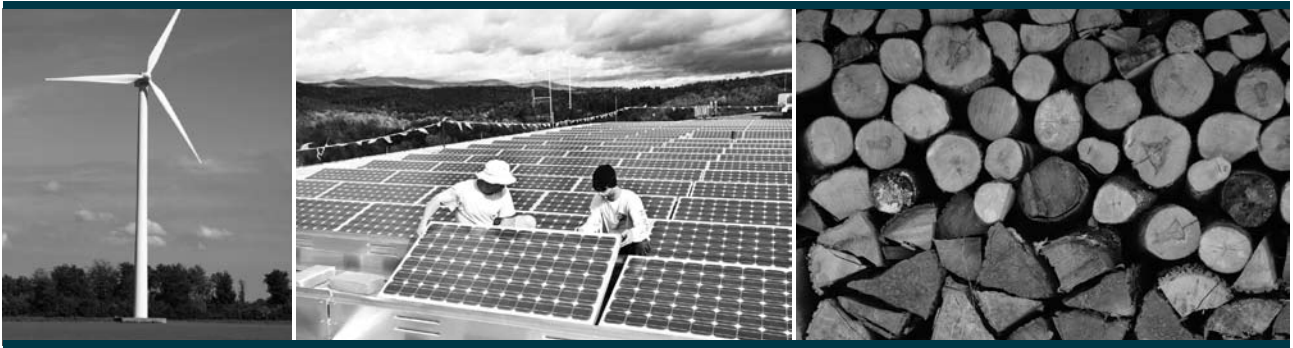
It is interesting that Vermonters did not scrutinize energy use for transportation with the same intensity as they did for other uses. Research shows that the collective behavior of Vermonters reflects this omission. Vermonters are acquiring more vehicles, and the number of vehicle miles traveled on roads and highways has been increasing each year. While energy independence was a general theme in public forums, increased use of personal vehicles has added to Vermont's dependence on petroleum-based fossil fuels and increased its carbon footprint. Public debates center on electric and heating needs, but neglect the fundamental dependence on imported oil for transportation. Transportation efficiency, public transportation, conservation, and personal behavior receive relatively short shrift.

## Challenges and Threats

Many Vermonters expressed what they saw as the core challenges to the management of future use and supply of energy for the state. Those concerns are summarized here:

- One of the most imposing challenges is the fact that much of the energy-related public discussion is often based on projections and conjecture.
- There is a challenge that Vermont's largest electric contracts are terminating between 2012 and 2015.
- There's a challenge in developing opportunities for bio-fuels from forest and agricultural crops that could boost the state's natural resource economy for the future.
- There is a challenging debate around the merits of locally owned or commercially owned electrical generation projects. Many Vermonters support the concept of distributed generation but dislike the idea of generating power (with windmills or wood burning plants, for example) that would contribute through the grid to the state's energy, or to the grid outside the state, without meeting the needs of local consumers. Others would like to see Vermont focus on generating power for in-state use, not as an export economy. Vermonters seem to share rational fears of regional grid and market-based fluctuations in prices for both electricity and fuels.
- Others think local ownership and local control are unrealistic, unnecessary, or even irrelevant distractions.
- Many Vermonters claim that there is a disjunction between social goals, like clean energy development, and the sometimes outdated regulatory frameworks that seem to impede them. Many complain about the challenge and costs of siting even small wind turbines or micro hydro systems.
- Vermonters have very different views about whether there is an 'energy crisis' and about the long term challenge of energy independence and *sustainability*. This means that while some people emphasize low cost power and low gas prices, others want to see community owned projects which have a local benefit or advance sustainable solutions for the long term, but may cost more in the short term to individuals and businesses.





- As with the land use development discussion, Vermonters are also clear that energy development should not damage natural resources by their use beyond their sustainable replacement for fuels, heat, or electric generation.

One of the major issues around energy is the fact that large-scale energy projects have powerful impacts on local areas. Some residents object to the impact on the view of the landscape from their homes or property, on the health and safety of their communities, and on their overall quality of life. The Council heard from advocates for and against the renewal of a contract with the nuclear power plant, Vermont Yankee, as well as many in Sheffield and Barton who are passionate in their concern about the impacts of a major wind development on their small communities and peaceful rural setting. Others commented that since all energy development has its costs, their fellow citizens need to look at those sources and perhaps be more open to sites that are most beneficial for the state as a whole.

The development of in-state power plants in Vermont is directly tied to the amount of electricity used in industrial, commercial, and housing development. Development of power plants also has significant effects on the environment, and some argue there are social effects as well. Energy is therefore connected to some of the most contentious debates in the state – what to do with land and how to promote development that reflects Vermont’s scale and ideals. Many Vermonters call for a strategic long-term plan that would give high priority to an energy portfolio that is reliable, low-cost, and diverse, and therefore less susceptible to global market volatility.

## Affordability

In a time when the state is seeking to attract, retain, and develop employers who can pay good wages, energy costs can be a deciding factor for businesses that might locate here or look to expand or start a business here. Energy costs are of major significance to leading manufacturers, employers like IBM or Ethan Allen Furniture, and businesses ranging from commercial offices to dairy farms. Lead employers are concerned that Vermont must find affordable and reliable sources of power, often including Hydro-Quebec and Vermont Yankee in that mix. They emphasize the point that without bottom-line affordability Vermont will not have a working economy

On the other hand, Vermonters talk about affordability as the challenge that they have on a day-to-day basis, to heat their homes, drive to work, purchase medicine, or pay for their insurance. In the Council on the Future of Vermont poll, Vermonters ranked affordability, defined as, “The increased costs of living, such as transportation, heating, and electricity,” as the issue that they are most concerned about (with 96.1 percent of Vermonters Moderately or Very Concerned). “If we can reduce the cost of energy,” said a resident in Bennington, “A little inconvenience is nothing.”

Rising fuel costs occurring at the time of the CFV forums were clearly upsetting family finances and budgets and limiting residents’ ability to make ends meet. Several forum attendees pointed out that people with low incomes often need to travel further to work and are more vulnerable when transportation and heating costs go up. It is also harder for them to afford the energy savings obtainable by purchasing new, efficient appliances or investing in home improvements. Vermonters live in housing stock that, on average, is some of the oldest in the country and was built in a time of cheap energy. Many worry that energy costs to heat and power their homes could exceed their mortgage payments.

Vermonters wrestle with finding the right balance of costs and benefits among options of affordability, the development of efficiency, and the investment in clean, renewable, in-state power. Part of the challenge with that balance is that the cost effectiveness of many small-scale renewables is marginal at best when oil and electricity prices are low. Some green strategies are not market-ready, and others do not have the same return on investment as existing petroleum products or contracted electricity. Renewable generation that is not competitive without subsidies carries costs that are borne by consumers. Yet all energy sources have embedded costs, whether they are costs to the environment from carbon in the atmosphere or from managing nuclear wastes, and these costs can be hard to quantify into simple cost-benefit equations.

To many Vermonters, the energy crisis is the quiet foundation of the affordability dilemma – people commuting long distances to jobs that don't pay livable wages, living in older housing and struggling to pay for heat, and trying to balance the costs of transportation fuels to fit a budget that covers all their other needs.

Some cite energy costs and emphasize the need for inexpensive power from Hydro-Québec and the relicensing of Vermont Yankee nuclear plant or proposed future nuclear plant development. Many do not believe that energy independence is at all realistic. Although there are green and local electricity programs available from Vermont's major utilities, many consumers have not elected to use them because of their higher costs.

At the same time, Vermonters today talk of building new jobs in the state by expanding the state's energy independence, advancing efficiency, building small-scale solar, micro-hydro, and other renewable electric systems and municipal district heating, combined heat and power systems, and developing Vermont farm and forest-derived biofuels. For these citizens, energy development could be a key to growing Vermont's green economy and all that it could mean for the future prosperity of the state.

Many Vermonters would like to see small-scale, local, household and community-based systems become commonplace throughout Vermont. They believe that supporting energy innovation with public and private investment can build businesses and jobs in the energy

field. They call on Vermont to be a leader, often citing that the state has a strong set of innovators and entrepreneurs but does not celebrate them as it could. Some commentators see these small innovative businesses as key to Vermont's future success. As one forum participant put it, they "fit the brand and small business reality and can grow, adding significantly to jobs and the economy."

### Energy Crisis

Throughout Vermont, participants at public forums expressed a range of opinions about how important it is for the future of the state to make energy a high-priority issue.

Some Vermonters believe that the world has passed the time of cheap oil and that the availability of further fuel resources and oil production is limited. This idea, coupled with the long-term trend of ever increasing energy consumption, has some Vermonters talking about a major crisis, globally and locally. A Franklin County forum participant noted that many Vermonters today are speaking from an "apocalyptic vision." The Council heard from some people who believe that the energy situation is one that will threaten either the basic survival of the species or the continuance of civil society. More often, however, concerns were about change and adaptation, and were

paired with practical statements on how the state and local residents could adapt. Most forum participants seemed to agree on how challenging the energy situation ahead is, but saw it as less than disastrous. At the same time, most participants held the opinion that, even if the state does not face catastrophic change, renewable energy development can dramatically benefit communities and the economy. "How will we function in a world that is energy starved? How will we get from place to place and get goods," a participant in Warren asked.

Many Vermonters believe that the rise in oil prices and the instability of global markets, along with the science behind global climate change, mean that Vermont, the U.S., and the world face a fundamental transition in energy use and development that may entail drastic life-style changes for people everywhere.

*"Energy education is a priority – right now people aren't sure what they should do or how they should do it. But we need to change the bigger attitude and make it the Vermont way to not create waste."*



A Barre resident claimed that, “We are in a different world than we have been.” At several forums participants framed one or another form of the argument that “the car culture will end.” In Hinesburg, a participant argued that, “We are not wired to react until there is a crisis,” but it’s here and it will be, “a civilization changing event.”

Many people throughout Vermont reminded the Council about the energy crisis of the early 1970s and stated that Vermonters as a people should have responded more systematically to that crisis. Some say that because no major changes have been made, the coming crisis will be more severe, and instead of a smooth transition to a post-oil economy Vermont will see a major disruption and economic crisis. To some, “peak oil” will mean the decline of the “American Dream” of increasing levels of consumption in each generation. Built on what they see as an unsustainable consumption of resources, the dream depends on infinite petroleum resources and cheap transport of inexpensive goods. To some, that dream is already over, as one forum participant said, “we are in debt over our heads and it is just a matter of time before the world won’t tolerate our debt and cheap industrial production model.” In Manchester, a resident added, “Energy education is a priority – right now people aren’t sure what they should do or how they should do it. But we need to change the bigger attitude and make it the Vermont way to not create waste.”

### Leadership

Vermonters are impassioned about energy. The state’s cold northern climate, and the fact that the state lacks petroleum or comparable fuels that can be mined or drilled, makes Vermont vulnerable to price fluctuations and uncertainties in the regional and global marketplace. It has also prompted hard soul searching. Many Vermonters see a huge opportunity for Vermont to do something new and innovative in clean energy because of the size and scale of the state. Its sun, wind, water, farm, and forest resources are seen as key components of the solution. While many believe that Vermont is facing an energy crisis, both today and in the future, they think that Vermonters have an historic opportunity to come together and to lead on this front.

There was a common perception that Vermont’s ‘green’ brand should be used to help initiate work in renewable energy. A St. Albans resident claimed that Vermont’s brand is unique and the state could be a clean energy model, “if we get less confused about whether we want to be New Jersey or we want to be Vermont.” A Hinesburg resident echoed that argument, affirming that in relation to energy, “Vermont doesn’t appear to

walk the talk of what it supposedly stands for.” Many celebrate the leadership Vermont has taken with the Efficiency Vermont program, but, as one Vermonter put it, “now other states are passing us by.”

### Sustainability

Many Vermonters believe that residents of the state are in a great position to pro-actively advance state, regional, and local energy solutions that are not petroleum based. Some call for local and regional control of energy generation and envision a dramatic expansion of energy developed at the local level, or “distributed energy.” They suggest that household solar, wind, and other systems would contribute to the grid. Local and regional projects would interweave to produce a resilient grid whose economic benefits, along with sources, would be distributed locally. An elder in Middlebury encouraged the Council to see the energy situation as an opportunity, one where, to quote an old saying, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” A Grafton resident spoke of how traditional Vermont values of “self reliance” and “local production” make Vermont a place where a person can talk about energy independence and “people don’t look at you as if you had three eyes!”

Sustainability, however, means different things to different people. Some Vermonters believe the sustainable way to develop energy is to include ridge-top large-scale wind turbines. Others reject the “industrialization of Vermont’s ridgelines” as a destructive action that will entail corporate control of the rural environment and that unfairly asks for sacrifices from poorer and more isolated rural communities to serve more urban markets.

Similarly, to some, nuclear plant development could provide low cost, long-term power that could serve as the foundation for future economic development. Most Vermonters the Council heard from view that power as suspect, however, like the Addison County resident who claimed that people have been “seduced by wanting to have cheap electricity” into a bad bargain with Vermont Yankee, believing that time is raising the stakes toward a catastrophic accident at the aging nuclear plant.


Many Vermonters want the state to be looking ahead to challenges around the future decline of the oil economy and the fact that Vermont will need to rely less on carbon-based fuels. They call for expanding local food production to meet local needs, and increasing local commerce and local energy development. They ask big questions, such as “If running out of oil will dramatically affect all our lives, what is the population that the state can sustain?”

Many forum participants called for Vermont to move forward in ways that follow the state's history of innovation. They see an opportunity to advance new public transportation systems, build Vermont's bio-fuel economy, and dramatically expand in-state electric generation. They see the need to develop green collar jobs, to advance Vermont's economy in a new direction." Others see a huge opportunity for investment in new technology and a new local energy system if Vermonters can stop exporting dollars for oil: "It's the capital that is missing. Stop financing oil. Use that money for alternative energy!" Several praised the success of the CVPS "Cow Power" program that invests in helping farmers develop methane digesters to convert manure to electricity. Others cite the advance of recycling, the bag refunds at supermarkets, the light bulb exchange programs led by volunteers at the community level – all signs that Vermont communities can take leadership in advancing energy and efficiency solutions.

These dynamic ideas add up to a vision that, while it may not be universal, is held by many Vermonters today – of Vermont serving as a center of a green/sustainable economy. Some call for Vermont to target green entrepreneurs internationally and attract even more "green intellectual capital" to the state.

The optimism of many who think about sustainability is tempered by the tremendous challenge of reducing the world economy's dependence on carbon fuels. It could be said that the coal, oil, gas, and other carbon-based fuels are the sequestered sum of three billion years of solar energy captured by life on earth. To capture similar amounts of energy in a much more compressed time frame is a formidable challenge. Many who attended forums believe it cannot be done, and Vermonters will need to face the fact that there will be a diminished capacity for energy usage in the future. To paraphrase a speaker from the Northeast Kingdom, technology is not energy and technology will not build an unlimited energy source – all will have a cost. To him, "we will need to live with a sense of limits, and change our lifestyles, built environment, and pastimes to successfully adapt." A Burlington resident posited the, "unpopular message" that, "we can be happier and do more with less."

*"...we will need to live with a sense of limits, and change our lifestyles, built environment, and pastimes to successfully adapt."*



## Opportunities

Despite all the challenges, many Vermonters shared remarkable energy and optimism for the future with the Council on the Future of Vermont. They believe that Vermont can succeed in developing innovative ideas, such as energy green zones, and can take advantage of Vermont's green brand to attract and develop a new wave of entrepreneurs. Many see the idea of focusing on green energy and green development as a cornerstone strategy to advance Vermont's sustainability and prosperity into the future. Many participants pointed out that Vermont's scale, local values, openness to change, and creativity make it well situated to try new things, experiment with new energy projects, explore district heat or community wind projects. Here, as in so many areas, Vermonters see the state as situated to test new ideas and serve as a laboratory for community and business development.

There is a real excitement around energy opportunities in Vermont today. The state has embraced a "25 x 25" strategy aimed at achieving one quarter of the state's energy needs from in-state renewable resources by the year 2025. Leading businesses like NRG and groSolar are among the fastest growing enterprises in Vermont. Over sixty towns have built municipal energy committees to explore practical ways to advance efficiency and consider long-term conservation and energy development projects. Towns are seeking to attract pellet manufacturers, evaluating the feasibility of combined heat and power projects for their downtowns, expanding bio-fuel purchases, and purchasing more efficient vehicle fleets. Schools in Vermont have invested in wood heating systems. Meanwhile, in line with Vermont's dynamic civic culture, diverse community groups for "buy local," "peak oil," or "sustainability" have formed in every county in the state.

Everywhere, creative businesses like the Vermont Soap Company in Middlebury or Stark Mountain Woodworking in New Haven are designing ways to use less energy, to heat their shops with alternative and renewable fuels, and to explore potentials like co-generation which combines heat and electric generating



systems so that they meet their own needs and support their bottom line. National Life of Vermont has invested in what may be the state's largest solar array to date. Green Mountain Coffee Roasters is undertaking a similarly scaled solar project. Farmers throughout Vermont are investigating efficiencies and developing energy generation capacity through manure and/or crop digesters, and exploring potential new sources of energy, like algae as a source for bio-fuels. To support these varied projects, Vermont has dramatically expanded "net metering" where individuals and businesses can produce their own power and export excess into the grid.

Many point out that the initial investments for energy efficiency and development projects are often high. Insulating and retrofitting homes or investing in solar panels or a household wind turbine are hard consumer decisions; while there is a lifespan return that make some of them reasonable investments, many believe that state and federal incentives can and should encourage decisions to make such investments by consumers, businesses, and homeowners.

Incentives for efficiency and energy development could also help lure new entrepreneurs here. Several participants in CFV sessions pointed to this activity and green economic development in general as Vermont's answer to the loss of youth – some believe that if Vermont builds momentum in the energy sector, youth will come here to "follow the action."

scale, its communities, and its global footprint; they are searching for ways to manage this. Public testimony about increasing energy independence and expanding local production connects to widely held concerns for an affordable and sustainable future, in the short term and for the next generation.

If energy is a long-term driver of affordability and sustainability, one Hinesburg resident affirms, "we need to realize this to invest in the best way!" Others assert that, although Vermonters need to deal with the immediate human needs of heat for next winter – the short-term crisis – Vermont needs to concentrate on long-term strategic answers to what many see as a generational challenge.

Vermonters would like to see the state make greater use of the state's close-to home, renewable, and sustainable energy options and lessen dependence on imported fuels and electric sources whose embedded environmental and political costs must be included in responsible decision-making here in Vermont. They hope that the people of Vermont can work together to advance efficiency, energy independence, and clean, renewable, and to the extent possible, local power. They would like future energy to be as affordable as possible consistent with the protection of the environment. One participant in Brattleboro called the energy challenge a pivotal opportunity, which Vermont can meet with confidence, if Vermonters come together around a new ecological and economic sense of purpose.

### Common Points



The availability of an adequate and reliable supply of energy of all forms is crucial to the state's future. Despite the range of opinions about energy and Vermont's current and future usage and sources, Vermonters are united in support of making optimal use of the sustainable resources that are available.

When it comes to energy a groundswell in public opinion suggests that Vermonters would like to see energy sources be close to home and may be willing to make sacrifices toward this goal.

Vermonters also acknowledge that there is an increasing share of family budgets leaving Vermont homes, leaving the state, and even leaving the country. Vermonters want to be cost effective when it comes to energy. People are concerned about the impact that energy uses and sources can have on the state's