

State's Environmental Leaders Respond to Governor's 2021 Budget

Applaud Governor's commitment to funding increases for Vermont's people, environment and economy

February 9, 2021 (MONTPELIER, VT) - Governor Scott has released his proposed [budget](#), which includes significant increases in funding for Vermont's people and environment. The proposed budget includes a boost to weatherization funding for low- and moderate-income households; support for clean energy and transportation options; investments in our public lands; and improvements to our downtowns and village centers.

A coalition of environmental and community groups released the following statements in response.

"Vermont's birds need us to protect the fields, forests and waters that they depend upon to live -- and it turns out that the people of Vermont need those same fields, forests and waters for our own health, wellbeing and prosperity. The Governor's budget provides important support for our working forests and farms, and for protecting and restoring the ecological health of our land -- both of which are integral to recovering our state's economy and building resilience to climate change," - David Mears, Executive Director of Audubon Vermont

"Vermont has a tremendous opportunity to put people and communities at the heart of our COVID recovery. Governor Scott has proposed much-needed funding for critical priorities like clean water and healthy communities. Our lawmakers need to turn these proposals into reality and make sure these important investments are put into practice for years to come." - Jen Duggan, Vice President and Director of Conservation Law Foundation Vermont.

"Governor Scott's budget address recognizes that clean air and water are the underpinnings of human health, economic prosperity, and thriving communities. The Governor is recommending important investments in climate change resiliency, ecological health, recreational infrastructure, and workforce development that need to be sustained for the long haul." - Lori Fisher, Executive Director of the Lake Champlain Committee (LCC)

"We look forward to working with policy makers to ensure that these one-time investments propel Vermont's long-term energy and climate resilience." - Olivia Campbell Andersen, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Vermont (REV).

"Many of the Governor's proposals align perfectly with the '[Rebuilding a Resilient Vermont](#)' vision that we and many of our partners have put forward. We look forward to working with

the Scott Administration and the Vermont State Legislature to build off of these important first steps, as we strive to create a future in which both people and nature thrive.” - Heather Furman, Vermont State Director for The Nature Conservancy.

“Vermont members of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers strongly support Governor Scott's proposed investments in our public lands,” said. “As avid hunters, anglers and outdoors people we highly value the ability to freely roam these wonderful areas. The value of outdoor recreation and access to public lands has been a silver lining to this pandemic-marred year. As good as we have it, increased funding is necessary to maintain and enhance the quality and health of this public resource. Conserving wildlife travel corridors and critical habitat, improving access to state and other publicly-accessible lands, increased habitat management to ensure all forest stages are adequately represented to support the year-round habitat requirements of both game and non-game species, improved riparian buffers and conservation of headwater streams to support both aquatic habitat and water-quality, and better planning to ensure new trails and other recreational development maintains the integrity of important habitat features would all benefit wildlife, song birds and wild fish as well as enhance Vermont's recreation economy.” - Matthew Breton, New England Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

“Vermonters understand that environmental protection can foster economic growth. VBSR applauds the Governor for recognizing this and putting forward a series of forward-thinking, green investments that promise to save Vermonters money, create lasting, family-sustaining jobs, and grow our local economies while tackling the climate crisis. We look forward to working with the legislature to build upon these investments and ensure our clean energy, efficiency, and transportation programs benefit Vermonters for generations to come.” - Jordan Giaconia, Public Policy Manager of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR)

“The Governor laid out a series of investments in climate and clean energy programs that will put Vermonters to work, and save people money on their monthly energy bills. These are positive steps forward, and we look forward to working with the Governor and Legislature to support these initial investments, while also working to develop long-term sustainable funding sources to advance these and other initiatives.” - Lauren Hierl, Executive Director of Vermont Conservation Voters (VCV).

“VNRC applauds the Governor’s budget. It makes a strong statement about the importance of investing in clean energy, the economic viability of our downtowns and working lands, and land conservation. But our work is not over. It's now the Legislature’s job to implement these changes and build on these important investments in subsequent years. We hope that the Governor’s commitment is an indication of long-term support, and that our lawmakers will agree to that vision,” - Brian Shupe, Executive Director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC).

“Vermont Youth Conservation Corps sees tremendous opportunity in this budget to support our economy and our working landscape, and to engage young adults in service. We look forward to working with both the Governor and his team, as well as the legislature, to implement strategies that get things done all while creating service opportunities for young people.” - Breck Knauft, Executive Director, VYCC

Additional coalition members include:

South Hero Land Trust
ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain
Vermont Clean Water Network

Experts are available for further comment.

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