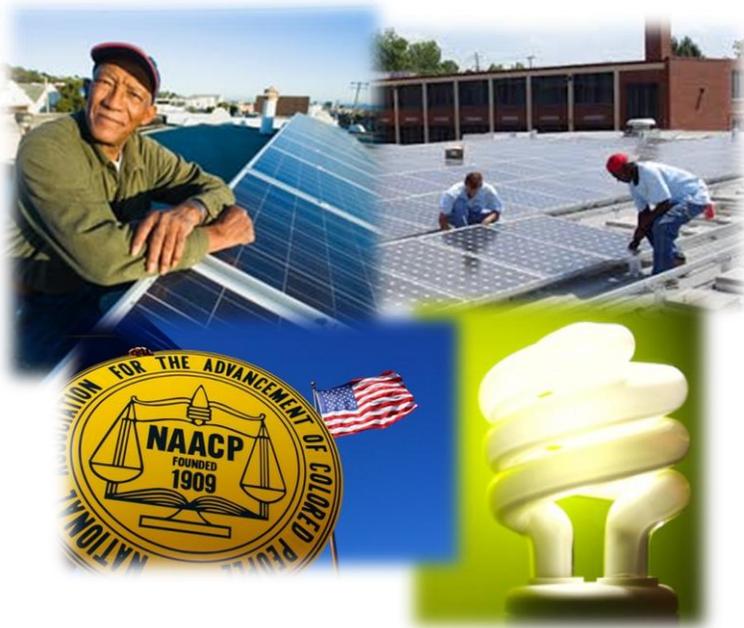
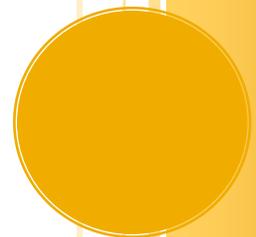


# VERMONT ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,  
Environmental and Climate Justice Program

2/27/2017



# VERMONT ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT

## SUMMARY

Access to clean energy is not just an environmental issue, but also a civil right. Communities of color bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of a fossil fuel based energy economy. This is why the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program stands for just energy policies that will help protect our communities from harmful energy production processes and provide equitable access to the clean energy economy.

This Snapshot profiles Vermont's energy portfolio, evaluates key state energy policies, documents state utility disconnection policies, and outlines opportunities in the clean energy economy. Vermont is a state dominated by nuclear energy. Vermont has hydropower and wind potential, renewable energy accounts for almost 28% of the electricity generation. The state's total energy consumption is the lowest of any state in the nation.

With this in mind, it is important that NAACP leaders engage in these debates in order to ensure that the community's needs motivate just energy policies. This snapshot provides information that will inform NAACP members on avenues for



engagement.



## ENERGY PORTFOLIO<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, Vermont Yankee Nuclear Plant permanently closed, resulting in a 55 percent of Vermont's electricity generating capacity. Now state depends on power from the New England and Canadian grid.

Vermont does not have any coal-fired power plants. The state is a part of a six-state Independent System Operator-New England (ISO-NE) Regional Grid, which receives some of its power from coal during peak times in the winter.

Although Vermont does not produce or refine petroleum, three-fifths of energy consumed in Vermont is petroleum. Rural residents often drive long distances, thus the transportation sector keeps demand for petroleum products high..

In 2012, the state banned hydraulic fracturing, and Vermont receives all natural gas from Canada.

Vermont is the first state to enact the first integrated Renewable Energy Standard (RES). The RES is 55 percent by 2017, increasing by 4 percent every three years until reaching 75 percent by 2032. Ten percent out the 55 percent must come from new in-state renewable generation facilities smaller than five megawatts. A separate energy transformation requirement equaling another 12 percent of sales in 2032 can be met with distributed generation projects. Nearly all of Vermont's in-state net electricity generation was produced from hydroelectric, biomass, wind and solar resources. Ultimately, the state has a renewable goal of 90 percent of all energy from renewable sources by 2050 and reduce energy-use by one-third.

Vermont is also the first state to have a feed-in tariff called The Standard Offer, which offered owners of small renewable facilities a specific price for their power for up to 25 years.

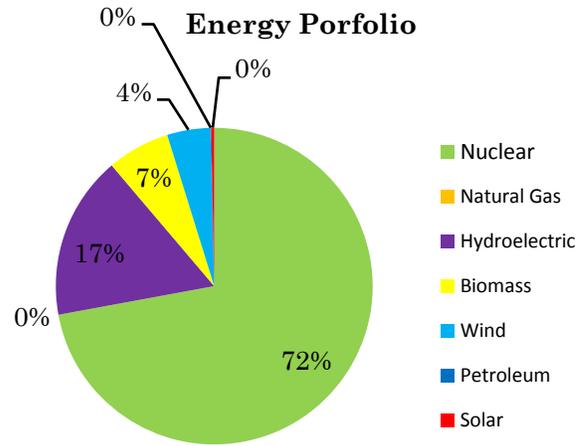


Figure 1. State Energy Consumption Profile

### Renewable vs Non-Renewable Energy

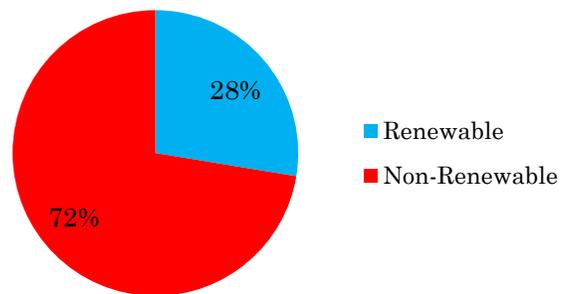


Figure 2. State Renewable vs. Non Renewable Energy consumption

#### Additional Resources

##### State Policy Opportunity Tracker

<http://spotforcleanenergy.org/state/vermont/>

##### Renewable Energy in Vermont

<http://www.acore.org/files/pdfs/states/Vermont.pdf>

For more detailed information and data on Vermont's energy portfolio visit the U.S. Energy Information Administration's webpage, <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=VT>

#### Installed Renewable Energy Capacity, 2013

Solar PV 95 Mega-Watt (MW)

Wind power 119 MW

Biomass 88 MW

Hydropower 315MW

**Total: 559MW**

## State Energy Policies

Policy Type	NAACP Recommended Policy Standards	Vermont Policy Details
<b>Net Metering</b>	<p>Net Metering Standards require utility companies to provide retail credit for new renewable energy produced by a consumer.</p> <p><b>Capacity Limit Recommendation:</b> 2,000 kW (minimally), per system</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p>Vermont has mandatory net metering standards which mandate statewide capacity limits of 4% of a utility's peak demand during 1996 or from the most recent calendar year (whichever is greater); and system limits of 2200 kW for military customers, 20 kW for micro-CHP, and 500 kW for all other systems.</p>
<b>Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)</b>	<p>A RPS requires electric utility companies and other retail electric providers to supply a specific minimum among of customer load with electricity from eligible renewable energy sources.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 25% renewable by 2025</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p> <p><b>Allowable Sources:</b> Wind, solar, geothermal, ocean/wave energy</p>	<p>Vermont has a 55% renewable energy goal by 2017 and increasing by 4% every 3 years to 75% by 2032</p>
<b>Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)</b>	<p>A EERS establish a requirement for utility companies to meet annual and cumulative energy savings targets through a portfolio of energy efficiency program.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 2% annual reduction of each previous year's retail electricity sales.</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p>Vermont has a mandatory energy efficiency standard of 2.1% incremental savings for electricity.</p>
<b>Local Hire Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra renewable energy credit multipliers for in-state installation and in-state manufactured content</li> <li>• Renewable energy credits for utility providing incentives to build a plant in-state</li> <li>• Renewable energy credit for utility that makes an investment in a plate located in-state</li> <li>• Quota for government assisted construction project employers to hire a percentage of workers locally</li> <li>• Bidding Preferences for companies that hire a percentage of their employees in-state for state-funded public works projects and service contracts</li> </ul>	<p>There is no local hire provision for Vermont.</p>
<b>Disadvantaged Business Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training opportunities</li> <li>• Notify DBEs of state business opportunities</li> <li>• Set-aside funds for DBEs</li> </ul>	<p>Vermont's DBE Program at the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) certifies women-owned businesses, MBEs, and "economically disadvantaged" business owners for transportation contracts.</p>

## Utility Disconnection Policies

**Notice** Written notice must be provided before the scheduled disconnection. If mailed, it should be sent five days before scheduled disconnection. If delivered, it should be posted 72 hours before scheduled disconnection. Personal notice required 48 hours before the scheduled disconnection during November 1–March 31. Posted notice or personal notice is required at the time of disconnection.

**Date Based Protection** Yes. November 1–March 31 no disconnections without personal oral notice at least 48 hours in advance of disconnection.

**Temperature Based Protection** Yes. No disconnections on days when it will be below 10°F on the day of disconnection or the following day. No disconnections for households with a member 62 years or older when the temperature will be below 32°F on the day of disconnection or the following day.

**Payment Plan** Yes.

**Reconnection Fee** Yes.

**Disconnection Limitations** Disconnections allowed between 8:00am–2:00pm if the utility’s business hours extend until 5:00pm.  
Disconnections allowed between 8:00am–5:00pm if the utility’s business hours extend until 8:00pm.

**Other Protections** Postponement of disconnection for thirty days with medical certification. Medical certification may be consecutively renewed once. Medical certification for postponement or reconnection may not be used more than three times in a calendar year without written permission from the Commission.

*Utility shut-offs have a disproportionate impact on low-income and African American communities. Check out the [NAACP report](#), “Lights Out in the Cold” for more information.*



Access to energy is not a luxury, it's a necessity. With exposure to both extreme heat and extreme cold, folks should not be forced to choose between paying for medications or their energy bill. Public officials have implemented some policies that protect consumers from the life-threatening practice of utility disconnection (As outlined to the left). However, energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections.

*More disconnection policy details are available at the [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program State Disconnection Policies](https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/Disconnect/disconnect.htm) webpage: <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/Disconnect/disconnect.htm>*

**Action steps:** Meet with the Public Utilities Commission or your local utility company to advocate for the adoption of the following:

- Temperature based protections
- Restriction on reconnection and disconnection fees
- Stronger limitations on disconnections during specific periods
- Expanded protection for vulnerable populations

## Hot Topics: Energy Bills

### Developments in Solar Generation:

The Public Service Board signed off on Vermont's largest solar array in March 2016. The 20 MW, Coolidge Solar Project, will consist of 82,000 solar panels on 88.5 acres of land. The company, Ranger Solar, has plans to build four additional 20 MW arrays in different towns in Vermont.<sup>2</sup>

### VPIRG Petition in support of renewable energy:

In the opening days of the 2017 - 2018 Legislative session, Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) delivered a petition to every legislator in the house and senate. The petition garnered 650 signatures and 17 organizational sign-ons in less than 36 hours. The message was simply for the Vermont Legislators and Governor Scott to support renewable energy and energy efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

## DEVELOPING THE BLACK-GREEN PIPELINE

The NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative promotes the equitable inclusion of communities of color into the green economy to address unemployment in our communities and to increase the voices and influence of our communities in the green economy.

Overall, African Americans and Latinos suffer from higher unemployment and poverty rates. According to the 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national rate of unemployment for African Americans was 9.6 percent.<sup>4</sup> African Americans are inadequately represented in the clean energy sector. The green economy offers an opportunity for communities of color to join a career-level field with opportunities for upward

mobility. The green job field is diverse with 45 percent of all green jobs in the United States being held by workers with a high school diploma or less. It is the goal of the NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative that African Americans will have increased representation across all sectors of the clean energy economy.

*To subscribe to the Black-Green Pipeline Initiative Weekly Digest send a blank email to:*

[naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## The Green Labor Market and Communities of Color

Vermont has an average concentration of energy employment with 6,185 traditional energy workers statewide. This percentage accounts for 2 percent of total state employment, compared to the 2.4 percent national employment average. However, Vermont has an additional 10,918 jobs in Energy Efficiency, which accounts for 0.5 percent of all energy efficiency jobs nationwide.<sup>5</sup>

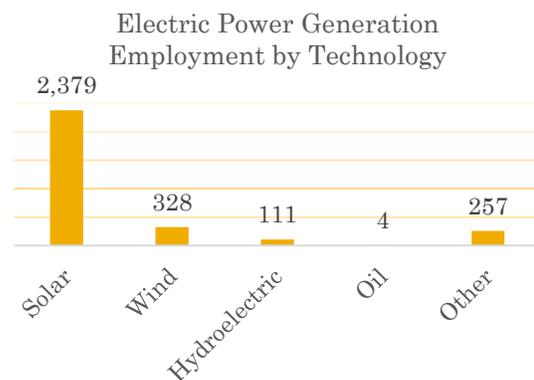


Figure 3. Electric Generation Employment in Pennsylvania

In Vermont, the electric power generation segment employs 3,078 workers with solar making up the largest segment with 2,379

jobs, followed by wind generation with 328 jobs. Wholesale trade accounts for 36.7 percent of the electric power generation jobs, while construction accounts for 18.4 percent. In 2015, the Solar Foundation

Solar Workers by Project Scale

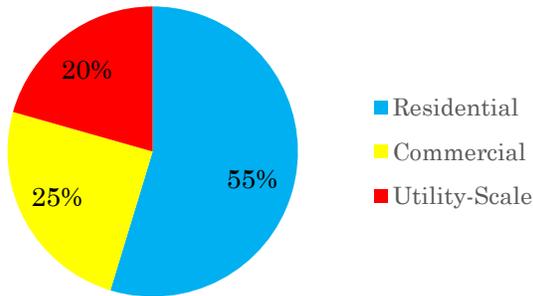


Figure 4.. Source: Solar Energy Industries Association

reported that thirty-three states, including D.C. saw a positive growth in solar jobs.<sup>6</sup>

In 2016, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) reported that recent solar capacity additions in the United States have been predominately commercial and utility-scale projects. However, in 2016 over half of the nation’s solar workers were at work on residential solar projects. This imbalance is attributed to the fact that utility-scale generation typically produces more megawatts per labor unit installed compared to distributed generation.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 5 shows the online wind projects and the gears represent the manufacturing facilities in Vermont. Investing in wind adds jobs in operations, maintenance, construction, manufacturing and support sectors. In 2016, the wind industry added 1,000 to 2,000 direct and indirect jobs to the energy job sector.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 5. Wind energy projects and manufacturing facilities in Pennsylvania  
Source: American Wind Energy Association

## TAKE ACTION

### Host a Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy Roundtable

- The NAACP ECJ Program is committed to advancing a meaningful dialogue and concerted action on engagement of communities of color in the green economy.
- To start taking action, organize a multi-stakeholder roundtable with socially responsible energy business leaders, historically black colleges and universities, environmental groups, civil rights organizations, labor unions, and others to discuss developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that policies/laws/regulation, research initiatives, community level practices, corporate social responsibility measures, etc. are in place to ensure greater engagement of communities of color in the green economy.

### Implement a demonstration project such as a community solar garden or rooftop solar project

- Interested in taking a direct role in implementing clean energy practices in your community? Install rooftop solar or community solar.
- There are several rebates and incentives available to residents interested in pursuing renewable energy projects. Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for a list of renewable energy incentive program available on the state and federal levels.

### Launch a Just Energy Policies Campaign

- Identify one or more of the focal policies outlined in this snapshot and documented more extensively in the Just Energy Policies to champion.
- Build a coalition with likeminded energy justice advocates and other local and state allies to build power and momentum.
- Host a town-hall to educate the community about the policy and get input from members on their needs, priorities, and perspectives.
- Set up lobby trainings and coordinate a lobby-day with elected officials.

### Make public the NAACP energy justice platform and engage the public through media

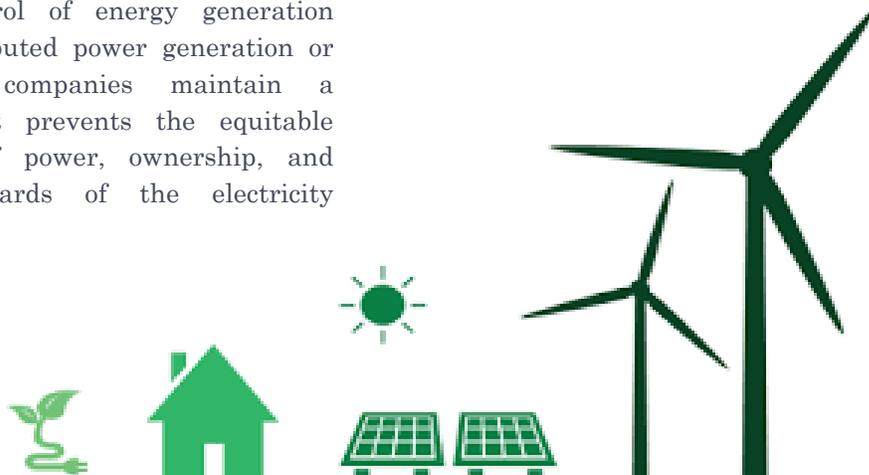
- Develop and place an op-ed by NAACP Unit President or ECJ Chair in a local newspaper
- Participate in a radio interview, TV interview, podcast
- Be quoted in a local newspaper
- Post an article or blog to an online platform

## CLOSING

With the repeal of several federal environmental laws, it has become imperative to make a just transition to clean renewable energy. States like Vermont have become leaders in energy transition and demonstrate that our energy systems can be both clean and just.

Embracing a transition to clean renewable energy sources will not only provide significant environmental and health benefits for Vermont, but will also diversify and strengthen the state's renewable energy economy. NAACP just energy leaders should advocate on behalf of a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, and Net Metering standards. In addition, Vermont should ensure that policies are in place to ensure equity in energy enterprise such as local hire provisions and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Although there is a little debate as to whether or not Vermont should transition to a clean energy economy, the path to 100 percent renewable is still being paved. Vermont has made some major strides in renewable energy generation, the state still faces decisions that will determine how and if it can meet this goal. At stake is the fundamental question of whether power should be generated from the top-down or bottom-up. Will customers be able to seize control of energy generation through distributed power generation or will utility companies maintain a monopoly that prevents the equitable distribution of power, ownership, and economic rewards of the electricity system?



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### Created by the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program

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<sup>1</sup> "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." Vermont - State Energy Profile Overview - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). June 15, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> "State approves solar array that will be Vermont's largest." VTDigger. March 28, 2017. Accessed July 17, 2017. <https://vtdigger.org/2017/03/28/state-approves-solar-array-will-vermonts-largest/>.

<sup>3</sup> "Groups and citizens deliver pro-clean energy petition to lawmakers to kick off session." Vermont Public Interest Research Group. January 06, 2017. <http://www.vpirg.org/news/groups-and-citizens-deliver-pro-clean-energy-petition-to-lawmakers-to-kick-off-session/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Unemployment rates for African Americans by state in 2015 : The Economics Daily." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. March 04, 2016. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/unemployment-rates-for-african-americans-by-state-in-2015.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Energy Employment Report (2017) U.S. Energy Information Administration, November 2016 Monthly Energy Review. [https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/us\\_energy\\_jobs\\_2017\\_final.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/us_energy_jobs_2017_final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> *The Solar Foundation's National Solar Jobs Census 2015*. Publication. The Solar Foundation. 2016. 1-65.

<sup>7</sup> "Solar Market Insight Report 2016 Year In Review." Solar Energy Industries Association. 2016. <http://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-market-insight-report-2016-year-review>.

<sup>8</sup> "State Fact Sheets." AWEA - American Wind Energy Association. 2017. <http://www.awea.org/state-fact-sheets>.