
THIRD ACT VT

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

"The fact that there is zero fossil fuel infrastructure on-site is a big component. It's the right thing to do, and it makes sense to our customers to move in this direction..."

— Evan Langfeldt, O'Brien Brothers CEO

Hello!

Many of us are buttoning up our homes for another cold, snowy (we hope) Vermont winter. It's a good time to note some of the positive green building efforts in the state, such as 155 net-zero homes going up at Hillside at O'Brien Farm in South Burlington. Called Hillside East, reports [Seven Days](#), the homes "will be one of the first neighborhoods in the country to share power on a microgrid, a small-scale power grid that connects homes in the net-zero development with each other and with the electric company Green Mountain Power." The homes come with rooftop solar, electric vehicle chargers, and Tesla Powerwalls. Though the price tags are beyond the reach of many Vermonters—1,300- to 2,200-square-foot homes starting at \$600,000—the project at least sets a precedent for climate-forward developer-utility collaboration.

A warm welcome to those who've recently joined our working group and/or email list. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our Volunteer Coordinator, John Woodland, at johnwoodlandr90@gmail.com or 406-529-4317.

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Take Action

Emergency Response Pilot Project

Representative Kathleen James is serving as Majority Whip in the 2023-2024 legislative session and has asked for our help. She is leading the establishment of an “Emergency Response” group. This is a pilot project that may change over time, but the current idea is to generate op-eds, letters to the editor, social media posts, etc., on short notice. Third Act VT is on the list to receive these requests, and we will be passing some along to you. Your response to these calls for action will be essential to our ability to make use of this exciting new tool. We are grateful for the opportunity and hope you will participate.

Senior to Senior: Seniors Helping High School Seniors Register to Vote

Election 2024 is just around the corner, and there’s so much at stake! You can make a difference by joining Third Act National and The Civics Center on this initiative. Learn more and preview the resources available to schools on The Civics Center [website](#).

Third Act VT is collaborating with the League of Women Voters Vermont ([LWVVT](#)), which is also involved in high school voter registration. Here is the [Google spreadsheet of all VT schools](#). Check the spreadsheet for any schools near you that have not already been approached. Claim your school(s) by putting your name in the "contacted by" column.

Please email Suzie McCoy with questions: SuzieMcCoy1@gmail.com. She is happy to share a one-page flyer she created to use when contacting schools. We need Third Act VT support from around the state!

Legislative Team Update

Preparation for the legislative session is on track. We continue to meet with allies to gather information about likely bills and strategies. This work will continue for the next month or so.

We are also starting up a series of educational webinars on legislative and related topics. The first will occur this Thursday, November 16, as part of the Third Act VT statewide meeting. The Divestment Action Team will present on efforts to require that the state divest its state retirement pension funds from fossil fuels. This key bill, S-42, has passed the Senate by a veto-proof majority but has run into some opposition in the House. Third Actors must advocate strongly with their legislators, and the first step is to understand the bill and the issues.

Another bill that is likely to capture a majority of time and energy this session will be a bill to upgrade what is called the “Renewable Energy Standard” (RES). The RES mandates how much of our electricity must come from renewable sources and how much from in-state renewables. Third Act VT will be holding educational webinars soon on this important topic.

It's going to be a busy legislative session for the climate, and Third Act VT can have a major impact if we are all informed and active.

Recent News, Podcasts, and Articles

The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication is offering a free email course: Ten Climate Communication Insights. The [website](#) explains, “Over a few weeks, you'll delve into ten insights that have emerged from YPCCC's research, surveys, experiments, and partnerships and how they can help support a winning communication strategy. You will learn more about how the American public thinks and feels about climate change, why it is important to break the “Spiral of Silence,” how to leverage social norms, and more.

“Each week, you'll receive a few emails, providing you with an overview of the relevant research and actionable examples to incorporate into your campaigns and communication efforts. By the end of the course, you'll be equipped with a toolkit to navigate complex communication challenges and drive real-world impact.”

A podcast worth exploring is [America Adapts](#). The website says, “Join climate change adaptation expert Doug Parsons as he talks with scientists, activists, policymakers and journalists about the choices we face and the people who make them....

“America Adapts is dedicated to finding and elevating the voices of pioneers in adaptation who are already making a substantial impact on society and the environment. Although there is still much to learn in the developing field of adaptation, by fostering crucial communication and investigating potential directions for advancement, this podcast significantly contributes to increasing our society's capacity for adaptation.”

Next Statewide Meeting

The monthly statewide meeting is Thursday, November 16, starting at 4:30. The meeting will have a different format this month. It will begin with the usual open session from 4:30 to 5 for more of a social, meet-and-greet time to hear from members about what is on their minds and answer questions. At 5 we will have a lightning round of key updates. From 5:15 to 6 we will focus on the divestment campaign and bill S-42 currently in the House. Members of the Divestment Action Team will explain the campaign and bill and answer your questions. We feel it is extremely important that our members be well informed about the bill so they can advocate effectively with their legislators. Please join us.

Here is the meeting [link](#).

Meeting ID: 852 7447 9615

Passcode: 136173

Third Act Vermont Handout

This is the latest [Third Act VT handout](#) in PDF form. Feel free to print it and share it with friends, distribute it at community events, post it on grocery store bulletin boards, etc.

Print it on 8.5 by 11-inch paper on both sides. You may have good luck with a local print shop that can print the sheets double-sided, then cut them into four quarters. We recommend using light card stock, not plain paper. You may want to print 10 sheets and cut them into quarters, which gives you 40 handouts and should be relatively inexpensive. If you have any questions, please contact Jud at judlawrie@mindspring.com.

Happening Elsewhere

This is not a Third Act VT project, but we thought newsletter readers might be interested.

Climate Action and the Role of Faith Communities

Thursday, November 16, 6:30-8 p.m., online and at Guilford Community Church, 83 Church Drive, Guilford

Windham County VIA clergy and leaders are hosting a discussion to address climate change. Bill McKibben will join remotely as the featured speaker. Following McKibben, there will be an in-person panel featuring Vermont State Senator Becca White, cochair of the Legislative Climate Solutions Caucus; Dr. Becky Jones of 350 Brattleboro; and Alex Wilson, author, environmentalist, and founder of BuildingGreen.

Afterward we will encourage participation in a public forum on how to take climate action—from the grassroots in our communities to the policy level at the Statehouse.

A key question will be what role faith communities should be playing to address the current reality. Extreme temperatures, extreme rain and flooding, and even extreme wildfire smoke from nearby Quebec Province and faraway forest fires are increasingly common and threatening to Vermonters. This is our chance, as people of faith, to examine what our response ought to be.

[Register](#) whether joining in person or online. For more info, contact Mike@viavt.org.

Thank you for being a member of Third Act Vermont!