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# THIRD ACT VT

## JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

“Friction is growing.  
We're reaching the point where the climate crisis slows the machine.”

—Bill McKibben

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Dear Third Actors,

In Bill McKibben's recent [Substack](#) article, he discusses how the climate crisis is impacting the insurance industry and explores some of the ramifications for the U.S. Vermonters whose homes or businesses have been impacted by recent severe weather know how important it is that leaders take swift, decisive action on climate mitigation and resilience.

In this newsletter, you'll find many ways to get involved and make a difference—from protesting in Montpelier and Washington, DC, to influencing Vermont legislators and helping teens register to vote.

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](mailto:johnwoodlandr90@gmail.com) or 406-529-4317.

### In This Issue:

- Protest with Bill McKibben in Washington, DC
  - Update on helping high school seniors register to vote
  - Legislative Team update
  - Divestment Action Team update
  - Windham Regional Third Act update
  - How to get ahold of a Third Act VT handout
  - Next statewide Third Act VT meeting date, time, and focus
  - Happening Elsewhere: March and Rally in Montpelier on January 27
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## Take Action

### Protest with Bill McKibben in Washington, DC

February 6–8

Join Bill McKibben, Third Act, frontline leaders, and national allies in three days of nonviolent civil disobedience at the Department of Energy in Washington, DC, to push Secretary Jennifer Granholm to stop approving new Liquefied Natural Gas terminals, including the CP2 project in Southwest Louisiana! Find more information [here](#) on the Third Act website. In preparation,

Third Act is hosting five online trainings. It's not too late to join other folks from Third Act Vermont to take a road trip to DC. Contact Laurel at laurel1planet@gmail.com regarding carpooling.

## **UPDATE on Senior to Senior: Seniors Helping High School Seniors Register to Vote**

It's estimated that only 30 percent of 18-year-olds are registered to vote! High school is the time and place to get it done. Third Act VT has an important role to play in welcoming young people into our democracy and instilling a lifelong interest in voting and good citizenship.

**Only 25 out of 90 Vermont schools have been contacted.** We need your help! 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 to see schools near you that have not yet been approached. Claim your school(s) by putting your name in the "contacted by" column.

Please email Suzie McCoy with questions: [SuzieMcCoy1@gmail.com](mailto: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!

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## **Legislative Team Update**

Climate action is heating up in the legislature. Vermont is exceedingly fortunate to have such a forward-looking and -acting legislature, but there is widespread anticipation that any legislation will be vetoed by the governor and thus require a veto-proof majority. Third Act VT will review the bills as they are introduced, write a position, and then ask our members to advocate for our position with their legislators. If you are interested in working on legislation, please contact Patrick Flood at pflood001@aol.com. Here is what we know so far.

1. **Renewable Energy Standard.** The House Committee on Environment and Energy started taking testimony last week on a compromise agreement that emerged from the working group that met last fall. There is no bill yet, but one was expected by the end of last week. The House hopes to move this bill out of committee in about two weeks, which means it could be on the floor of the House by the end of the month.

Reportedly, the utilities are pretty much on board. The utilities are predicting it will raise average rates about ½ cent per kilowatt hour (KWH); Renewable Energy Vermont testified that it estimates the cost for all of the new renewables is about \$4/month on average by 2030. Part of the compromise was to reduce net metering in favor of alternative projects (the utilities don't like net metering). Reportedly, the compromise was necessary to gain a veto-proof majority. It still requires 100 percent renewables by 2035, including 40 percent new renewables by 2035, and puts Vermont in line with MA and CT. It also prohibits any new biomass or large hydro.

The supporters are asking Third Act VT for our support. We will reach out to members in the near future about making that support clear with your legislators. This proposal is a huge jump forward for Vermont in removing fossil fuels from electricity generation.

2. Divestment. Reportedly, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs will take up the divestment bill in about a month. The Third Act VT Divestment Team is actively trying to shore up support on the committee. The legislatively mandated study is due to the committee in February.
3. Make Big Oil Pay. This bill is gathering steam. It has 20 cosponsors in the Senate and more than 60 in the House. There is a press conference on January 16 to introduce the bill. The organizers said this was a collaborative effort with MD, MA, and NY.
4. There is a climate resilience bill, S-213, focused mostly on rivers, wetlands, and dams.
5. Geothermal Networks. New bill H-669 adds some provisions to last year's bill.
6. New ratepayer protection bill H-668 is very important, given the likely increase in rates with the new renewable energy standard. According to H-668's statement of purpose, "This bill proposes to require the Public Utility Commission to propose in the form of draft legislation a low-income electric ratepayer protection program that is funded on a statewide basis."
7. We also expect to see a transportation and climate bill this week.

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## Divestment Action Team Update

Third Act VT member David McColgin met with Rep. Mike Mrowicki, a member of the House Government Operations and Military Affairs Committee, and his intern, Penelope Keane, about divestment bill S.42 and the proposed clarifying amendments that the Vermont Pension Investment Committee (VPIC) agreed to and requested. Rep. Mrowicki is the divestment bill's "champion" and will present the bill to the full House once it is voted out of the committee. David also spoke briefly with Rep. Mike McCarthy, chair of the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs. McCarthy said that he sees a "path forward" for the divestment bill and expects to hold hearings in about a month.

David attended a reception for the 2024 Environmental Common Agenda on Wednesday, January 10. The event offered an opportunity to engage with climate experts, mingle with legislators, and address questions about this year's environmental priorities. David met Senator Alison Clarkson and updated her on the divestment bill.

David also attended the Vermont Climate Solutions Caucus meeting on January 11 at the Statehouse. There, Rep. Mrowicki spoke well about Third Act VT.

Third Act VT members Steve Crofter and David McColgin met with the Divestment Team of Third Act Illinois. The Third Act IL team wanted to know how our team works and what we've done, as well as to share resources.

David also will meet with his House Representative, Rep. Chea Waters Evans, recently to discuss the divestment bill and the proposed clarifying amendments.

Third Act VT's Beth Sachs will join David to meet with Steve Howard, executive director of the Vermont State Employees' Association, at the end of January to explain divestment bill S.42 and its amendments.

TAKE ACTION: Please consider signing [this letter](#) if you or a family member or friend are a member of the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System (state educators, state employees, and some municipal employees). We will send this letter to our Vermont legislators and perhaps the governor, as well as to the VPIC commissioners. Please share this letter with other folks who have pensions in the system.

Here is a [sample introductory letter](#) that you can personalize when contacting your family and friends about bill S.42.

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## Windham Regional Third Act Update

The Windham County regional group started working on democracy efforts. Our primary approach at this time is mailing postcards. We are currently using curated lists and scripts provided by [Activate America](#). Our group has written and mailed 90 postcards for a special election to fill the seat of former New York Representative George Santos, who was expelled from Congress in December. We have also activated the [Brattleboro Zen Center EcoSattva](#) group, who will mail another 90 postcards on January 26, the date chosen by Activate America. We expect to take more action before then.

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## Third Act Vermont Handout

This is the latest [TA 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](mailto:judlawrie@mindspring.com).

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## Next Statewide Meeting

Please join us for our next statewide meeting on Thursday, January 18. From 4:30 to 5 p.m., we'll introduce Third Act for everyone new to the Vermont Working Group. During the main meeting, from 5 to 6 p.m., there will be a presentation and discussion on how to be an effective legislative advocate. Learn how the legislature works, how to approach your legislators, and how to use the legislative website. Third Act Vermont members have already gained a reputation for being strong advocates, and we want you to be able to impact climate legislation. Here is the *new* meeting [link](#). The meeting ID and passcode have changed.  
Meeting ID: 839 2382 1289  
Passcode: 089568

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## Happening Elsewhere

*This event is supported by Third Act VT but is not one of our events. We thought you might be interested.*

### Vermonters Together: Building A Better Future MARCH AND RALLY

Saturday, January 27, 2024, 1–3 p.m.  
Meet at Montpelier City Hall to march

In an increasingly divided world, there is a need for Vermonters to come together across issues, for the people and the planet, calling on our decision-makers to



work with us for a better future.

We can no longer accept the undue influence of corporate interests in shaping our future. We can no longer afford business and politics as usual. The problems we are working to solve are interconnected, and we need our politicians to address root causes and work for systemic change.

Vermont needs a strong democracy, with responsible leadership based on science-based data and independent expert advice. The voice and needs of the people should be reflected in all our policies, with investments in our communities, farmers, and land; the provision of safe, warm, and affordable housing; and 100 percent low-emissions affordable renewable energy for all. We are bigger than what divides us. No more corporate schemes, forgotten people, prisons, and wars. Together we can create a just and thriving future in balance with our planet.

All Vermonters interested in working to create a better future are welcome at the march. We will rally in the streets of Montpelier to call on the Vermont legislature and the governor to prioritize the needs of the people and our collective future. Together we will stretch beyond what is comfortable and embrace the imagination, courage, and boldness required of all of us at this time.

Learn more and register to participate [here](#) on the 350 Vermont website.

Third Act VT is one of more than 15 organizations that have endorsed and will be participating in the event. We will have a table there to provide information and sign up new members.

**Thank you for being a member of Third Act Vermont!**