

**Vermont Public Service Department – Planning Division**

**112 State Street  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 3, 2023**

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**REPORT REVEALS VERMONTERS’ RENEWABLE ENERGY PRIORITIES**

**Montpelier, VT** - The Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) has released a new report that presents insights into the public opinion on renewable electricity in Vermont.

The report, titled "Vermont Weighs In," offers key takeaways from a project which surveyed 700 Vermonters and held a series of 11 focus groups across the state to discuss priorities around and preferred sources of electricity, as well as their awareness of current electricity sources and policies. This effort was part of an ongoing process being conducted by the PSD to review the state’s current policies and programs on renewable electricity, acting on recommendations made in the [2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan](#) and [2021 Climate Action Plan](#). The project sought to implement Phase 2 of the PSD’s [Public Engagement Plan](#) for this review, issued in December 2022. MassINC Polling Group (MPG) conducted the research on behalf of PSD.

"We are proud to present this summary of the survey and focus groups that MPG conducted this summer," said Public Service Department Commissioner June Tierney. "This research provides valuable insights into the priorities and preferences of Vermonters when it comes to renewable electricity."

Engaging with Vermonters through the statewide survey illustrated the following:

- When considering how Vermont gets electricity, reliability of service and affordability for consumers were identified as the two of the most important factors, with 87% and 82% of respondents considering them “very important”.
- When asked for their single most important consideration, three rose to the top:
  - Affordability (29% of participants),
  - Reducing carbon emissions (19%), and
  - Reliability of electric service (17%).

Focus group discussions offered the ability to engage more deeply on issues of equity and affordability in renewable electricity policies and programs, the need to address greenhouse gas emissions, and support for specific types of electricity sources. Participants in these conversations often directly linked concerns about equity with concerns about affordability. For example, participants discussed the details of issues such as the cost of energy for low-income neighbors, the difference in cost and renewable access between homeowners and renters, and proximity and access to local generation options.

Director of Regulated Utility Planning TJ Poor emphasized the value of this resource. "We hope that this report will help inform policymakers and stakeholders in Vermont as they work to consider the electricity supply structure and policy choices before them."

When considering future electricity supply, the report indicates that Vermonters largely prefer renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, over non-renewable sources like natural gas. On the statewide survey, participants expressed support for getting electricity from hydropower (90%, includes respondents who "strongly support" and "somewhat support"), solar power (84%), and wind power (77%). But they want it to be affordable and reliable too. The report also notes that there is a lack of awareness about current renewable energy policies and programs in Vermont. Residents tended to underestimate the extent to which Vermont's current electricity mix is renewable and low carbon.

The PSD will continue its review of renewable electricity policies and programs throughout 2023, with several additional opportunities for public engagement with the process. Upcoming opportunities for engagement are posted on the PSD's website (<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewables>).

The full report is available for download on the Vermont Department of Public Service's website at <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewables>.

*About the Vermont Department of Public Service*

*The Vermont Department of Public Service is charged with representing the public interest in energy, telecommunications, water and wastewater utility matters. PSD serves all citizens of Vermont through public advocacy, planning, programs, and other actions that meet the public's need for least cost, environmentally sound, efficient, reliable, secure, sustainable and safe energy, telecommunications and regulated utility systems.*

*About The MassINC Polling Group:*

*The MassINC Polling Group is a leading public opinion research firm that specializes in survey research, focus groups, and data analysis. MPG helps organizations and government agencies make informed decisions based on public sentiment.*

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