



GBIC

Good Jobs In A Clean Environment

**THE GREEN ECONOMY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ENTERPRISES IN
VERMONT**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

APRIL 2, 2008

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under contract to GBIC. Glenn McRae and Heidi Klein are the primary authors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the work conducted by the Snelling Center for Government (Snelling Center) in tandem with the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), to generate strategic concepts that inform public policy and legislation to advance development of the green economic sector and green practices in all Vermont businesses and institutions. GBIC commenced work on this project in the summer of 2007 and contracted with the Snelling Center in December to conduct a fast cycle policy development and outreach process. The two organizations designed and implemented a multi-step engagement project to solicit the ideas, experiences and recommendations of Vermont's leading green business leaders and stakeholders essential to successful development and implementation of future efforts to create a vibrant green economic cluster and enhance green practices in Vermont.

How do we grow and sustain a vibrant green economy in Vermont?

This project and the resulting recommended actions have four objectives:

- Building a vibrant and strong sustainable green economic sector that creates high wage jobs for Vermonters in environmental enterprises and industries committed to developing value-added products, goods and services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems, encourage new sources of clean energy, or reduce negative impacts on the environment.
- Maximize the number of companies, organizations and communities participating in sustainable and "green" operations and practices.
- Raising Vermont's profile as a hub of environmental integrity, innovation and opportunity.
- Stimulating entrepreneurial activity, research and technology in environmental and sustainable enterprises.

Definition of the Green Economic Sector

The sector of companies and organizations that create value-added products and services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems, encourage new sources of clean energy, or those which directly or indirectly reduce negative impacts on the environment.

--from the GBIC/LCRCC Summer Study

In order to achieve these aims, VT must consider the unique needs and abilities of its entrepreneurial leaders, protect our treasured natural and social resources and make investments in economic development that will allow Vermonters and Vermont-based enterprises to compete in the global economic marketplace. In order to succeed, Vermont must provide a competitive climate that nurtures, cultivates and supports innovation. Furthermore, Vermont must invest in developing and maintaining a well-educated and trained workforce with a versatile set of skills.

Four key areas of strategic action were distilled from the process:

- A. Creating intellectual capital and supporting innovation through a nexus of coordinated action by government, business and higher education
- B. Strategic investments in workforce development that are targeted to green sector needs
- C. The diversity of green enterprises and green business practices is a strength and supporting initiatives should recognize the special needs of different sectors along with the shared
- D. Governmental leadership, modeling and focused marketing and promotions will play a major role in the successful branding and actualization of a green economy

Vermont's actions must be bold, sustainable, forward thinking and coordinated to build a foundation, year by year, for a dynamic green economic cluster to grow and develop; a wide variety of actions, some small steps and others more aggressive, represent a broad based strategic approach that can be continued within the context of resources that can be reliably invested by the State and coordinated by all partners in this enterprise. Actions today should be building blocks for future initiatives.

I. INTRODUCTION

GBIC commenced work on this project in the summer of 2007 and contracted with the Snelling Center in December to conduct a fast cycle policy development and outreach process. This report summarizes the work conducted by the Snelling Center for Government (the Snelling Center), in tandem with the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), to generate strategic concepts that can inform public policy and legislative options to advance a ‘Green Economic Development Strategy.’ The primary objective of the strategy is to design, develop and cultivate a “Green Economic Sector” that creates high wage jobs and encourages entrepreneurial activities.

The Snelling Center sought to expand upon the information gathered and the ideas generated by a summer study convened by the GBIC and LCRCC. The Center designed and implemented a multi-step engagement project to solicit the ideas, experiences and recommendations of Vermont’s leading green business leaders and stakeholders essential to successful development and implementation of future efforts to create a vibrant green economic sector in Vermont.

The result of the engagement process was two-fold: 1) development of public policy recommendations that can be utilized by the Vermont legislature and state agencies, which reflect the experiences and expertise of Vermont’s leading green sector entrepreneurs; and 2) creation of connections with new sets of partners moving forward to stimulate additional growth of a variety of sectors in a green economy. This report outlines the process used and the evolution of ideas as a broader array of entrepreneurs, strategic partners, and state experts considered the key items needed to foster and sustain a vibrant green economic sector. The report chronicles this specific process and it is not intended as a comprehensive analysis or accounting of the green economy in Vermont. Future actions based on this initiative should provide that resource.

II. BACKGROUND

GBIC/LCRCC Summer Study

During the summer of 2007, The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation and the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce engaged in a summer study that was charged as follows: *to establish a working definition of the industry sector described as the “green economy” in order to analyze the structural elements necessary to cultivate that sector. The purpose of this effort from a public policy perspective is to recommend concrete strategies, goals and additional questions for the development of the sector, such that the long-term economic well-being of this state is tied to enhancing the long-term environmental well-being of the world.*

The study group developed the following working definition of green economic sector:

The Green Economic Sector is the sector of companies and organizations that create value-added products and services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems, encourage new sources of clean energy, or those which directly or indirectly reduce negative impacts on the environment. The sector definition is intrinsically tied with positive economic growth rather than restrictive policy.

Vermont's objective should be maximizing the number of companies, organizations and communities participating in sustainable and "green" operations and practices. This will truly build Vermont's reputation and brand as a "green state". This includes companies which have "green" products and services as their core business activity, and also those who have multiple products and activities, some of which achieve the "green" definition to be developed, and also those companies and organizations with products and services which are not identifiable as "green", but who conduct their business and activities in a manner which promotes sustainable and environmentally sound objectives. Vermont can and will become the most "green" when every company, organization and community pursues this objective.

The GBIC /LCRCC Green Economic Development Strategy Summer Study Group

Chair: Charlie Kireker, Fresh Tracks Capital

Members:

- Ted Adler, Union Street Media
- Gretchen Babcock, UVM
- Daniel Hecht, VEC
- RB Klinkenberg, Harrington's of VT
- Mary Lintermann, DEW Construction
- Santo Longo, Paul Frank and Collins
- Peter MacDougall, Paul Frank and Collins
- Jeff McMahan, Dinse Knapp and McAndrew
- Senator Hinda Miller
- Tom Moreau, CSWD
- Kimberly Murray, Town of Colchester
- Carrie Violette, Town of Milton
- Brad Worthen, VT Commercial

Green Products and Services Companies: Those companies and organizations which create value-added products or deliver services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems.

THEMES

The following factors were identified as important in stimulating additional sector growth:

- State government leadership
- Workforce development
- Financing/access to capital
- Collaboration between green sector businesses and higher education
- Statewide infrastructure,
- Markets for green products and services
- Support for green practices across all businesses and institutions
- Branding of Vermont.

Green Operating Companies: Those companies and organizations that manage and control their day to day activities, or provide public service, so as to provide a measurable protection or enhancement to the world's natural systems through waste reduction, remediation, recycling, energy conservation, reduction of carbon footprint, utilization or creation of alternative clean energy sources, employ innovation of work or production schedules, employ transportation efficiencies, so as to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

The study committee developed a strategy that seeks to encourage the retention, attraction and growth of companies and organizations that create value-added products and services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems, encourage new sources of clean energy, or reduce negative impacts on the environment. A full copy of the strategy can be found in Appendix A.

III. POLICY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A MULTI-STAGE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

GBIC recognized that there was a wide and diverse range of experience in growing environmental enterprises and green economic activity in Vermont. Not all of this experience had been tapped for the summer study. In addition, a wide range of stakeholders would have to be engaged to devise a forward thinking strategic process to enhance the cluster of green enterprises that was present in Vermont and grow it as a dynamic part of the broader economy of the state. GBIC contracted with The Snelling Center for Government to bring their expertise in convening diverse stakeholders and identifying new opportunities for advancing initiatives in Vermont. The Snelling Center proposed a three stage process of engagement and development in this process.

In the first stage, a series of three focused conversations with green business leaders and entrepreneurs was conducted to identify key factors that encourage or limit the development and flourishing of a green economic sector in Vermont that creates high wage jobs, brings revenue to Vermont, and encourages entrepreneurial activities. One of the sessions was focused upon branding and marketing. Second, a meeting of the state's key stakeholders was convened to solicit their expertise in and perspectives regarding implementation strategies that will create/bolster a vibrant green economic sector in Vermont given the themes identified in the focused discussions. Finally, GBIC brought a summary and distillation of the themes and potential actions to a group of tax and economic Advisors for their review and consideration. What follows is an overview of the engagement process and the participants. A presentation of the outcomes and ideas from the process are presented in the next section of the report.

The Focused Conversations

On behalf of GBIC, The Snelling Center engaged approximately 30 entrepreneurs and business leaders¹ whose companies and organizations fit a broad definition of green enterprise and were associated with a variety of core business activities including: manufacturing, energy production, consulting, contracting, agriculture, and the provision of other green industry services. These companies ranged from start ups to mature value-adding businesses; whose products, goods and or services are primarily, but not exclusively, exported and generate revenue from out of state while creating high wage jobs in Vermont; and representing geographic diversity from around Vermont. This group of entrepreneurs and business leaders served as the ‘experts’ in developing green businesses in Vermont and the primary source of raw policy ideas to formulate possible actions to stimulate and advance Vermont’s green sector.

The goal of the focused discussions was to identify key factors that encourage or limit the development and flourishing of a green economic sector in Vermont that creates high wage jobs, brings revenue to Vermont, and encourages entrepreneurial activities. These professionally facilitated two hour discussions followed a script of fifteen questions to capture participants’ reflections on: assets available in Vermont; barriers/obstacles to “green” business development in VT; and legislative/regulatory changes that would support development and growth of these companies. The discussions were also used to test out themes identified in the summer study, specifically the role of the following factors in stimulating additional sector growth:

Participants in the Focused Conversations (January 2008)

- Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Andrea Asch
- Biocardel, Steve Daigle
- BrighterPlanet, Pattie Prairie
- Chelsea Green Publishing Co., Shay Totten
- Chittenden County Solid Waste District, Tom Moreau
- Distributed Energy Systems, Erika Schramm
- Geotech Environmental Equipment, Peter Murray
- Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Paul Comey
- Green Planet Partners, Kevin Hartley
- groSolar, Dori Wolfe
- High Mowing Seeds, Tom Stearns
- LED Dynamics, Jonathan Wish
- Marlboro College MBA, Ralph Meima
- National Life Group, Shawn Bryan
- NativeEnergy, Inc., Rob Smart
- Neuton, Inc./Country Home Products, Tom Hughes
- NRG Systems, Abby White
- Radiantec, Bob Starr
- RecycleNorth, Tom Longstreth
- Resource Systems Group, Clay Adams
- Seldon Technologies, Inc., Jonathan Wilson
- Stone Environmental, Inc., Chris Stone
- The Regulatory Assistance Project, Richard Sedano
- TruexCullins Architecture, Tom Hengelsberg
- URS Corporation, Lee Gustaphson
- Vermont Country Store, Ken Martin

¹ The pool of invitees was more than 60 institutions aggregated from a number of sources, including the Vermont Environmental Consortium, Renewable Energy Vermont, a list generated by The Snelling Center for the Commission on the Future of Vermont, and suggestions from associates of GBIC. A survey was provided to businesses that expressed interest but could not participate. Respondents included: Draker Laboratories; Jasper Hill Farm; Smugglers' Notch Resort; Vermont Natural Coatings; IBM Corp.; Seventh Generation; Kilawatt Technologies; King Arthur Flour.

workforce, financing or access to capital, collaboration between green sector businesses and higher education, statewide and community infrastructure, markets for green products and services, and branding of VT. A copy of the discussion guide and a description of the themes that emerged from the discussions can be found in Appendices B and C respectively.

The last focused discussion was designed to explore the notion of branding in greater depth. This session included representatives from highly successful Vermont-based businesses which did not necessarily fit within the definition of a green enterprise but are associated with Vermont, contribute to Vermont's branding and utilize Vermont in the company's brand.

The Stakeholder Meeting

A group of approximately 50 key stakeholders participated in a half day working session on February 22, 2008. More than 100 possible participants were identified and invited. All of the enterprises who participated in the focused discussions were invited along with a wide selection of economic development and green enterprise support institutions including nonprofit groups with an interest in energy and the environment, business membership organizations, economic development corporations, faculty and administrators in higher education, governmental leaders and others.

While also a source of raw policy ideas, this group was invited primarily to help vet and refine the ideas that were generated by the business leaders. Participants were presented with the information gathered and the themes that emerged through the summer study and the focused conversations related to factors affecting the development and growth of a green economic sector. They were then asked to review and build upon the potential strategies identified and to offer any cautions about pursuing these strategies. This meeting yielded two important tangible products: 1) a list of the participants and the assets/resources they bring in stimulating the green economic sector; and 2) a list of strategic options that have been developed and reviewed by key stakeholders who will ultimately be essential in the implementation of the strategies to stimulate and support future economic development and/or businesses. Resources from this meeting can be found in the Appendices, including: a copy of the agenda (Appendix D), the list of strategic options and recommendations to consider (Appendix E), the list of participants (Appendix F) and the summary of ideas generated by participants (Appendix G).

GBIC Economic and Tax Policy Advisors

As the last part of the formal engagement process, GBIC invited a small group of advisors who have worked with them on other issues in the past and who have a good understanding of the Vermont economy and economic and tax policy experience. This group reviewed the themes, proposed policies and potential activities that emerged from the other group processes, and made recommendations of how to group them and prioritize ideas for short, medium and long term actions. They also helped GBIC to consider what implementation structures might be most effective for different approaches. From this analysis GBIC worked to formulate more specific proposals to advance.

IV. THE EVOLUTION OF IDEAS: THEMES AND STRATEGIES

The engagement process was designed as a developmental series where information gathered in the stage before is shared and then considered by another set of individuals with a different lens and/or expertise. The following is a description of the key ideas generated through the exploration of the question: *How do we grow and sustain a vibrant green economic sector in Vermont?*

Themes from the Summer Study

The following factors were identified as potentially important in stimulating additional sector growth: workforce, financing/access to capital, collaboration between green sector businesses and higher education, statewide infrastructure, markets for green products and services, and branding of Vermont.

Initial Themes Generated from Focused Conversations with Green Businesses

The focused conversations yielded additional information about the factors identified in the summer study. Some of the discussion yielded themes common to all economic sectors. Other themes might be more specific to companies in the green economic sectors.

A. Themes in Common with Other Sectors

Not surprisingly, many of the ideas and recommended actions generated might have emerged from any focused conversation about the Vermont economy in general or most other clusters of economic activity. These included:

Vermont's Quality of Life (QOL)

- We live here, we start businesses here, we grow our business here because we like to live in Vermont (Community, accessibility, scale, natural beauty)
- QOL is a critical factor in recruitment, attraction and retention of quality workforce

The Vermont Business Environment

- Doing business in Vermont can be challenging and can offer great opportunities
- It is easy to stand out
- Great access to government, local, state, federal
- Space is inexpensive compared to other regions
- Image as "bad for business" → Hard to attract investors
- Limited business to business networks
- Vermont has high tax rates and can be an expensive place to conduct business
- Housing is very expensive which adversely affects employment attraction, recruitment and retention

Financing and Access to Capital

- Local banking community is very supportive
- Local/municipal loan and incentive programs helpful but limited
- State loan and incentive programs have been helpful to some but very limited in scope and scale
- Limited venture capital for start-ups and R&D
- Venture capital often pulls companies to leave Vermont
- Not many tools for accessing capital

Workforce

- Perhaps the most critical factor mentioned in all 3 focused conversations; without a strong and skilled workforce companies cannot survive and grow
- VT workers are dedicated, loyal, and largely here because they want to be here
- Vermont workers seek out jobs that match values as well as economic needs
- Specialists are hard to identify in VT and recruit to VT in some industries
- Young people with necessary skills are often not available for entry level jobs
- Little connection seen between Vermont's institutions of education and possible jobs
- Weak knowledge of young entry workers (high school and college grads) as to employment and career opportunities with companies in Vermont
- High tax rates and real estate taxes may be deterrents especially for higher level employees
- Entrepreneurs who make it big feel "punished" for success (tax rates)

Higher Education

- Good institutions but not always accessible
- Institutions not aligned with economic development needs
- Not necessarily producing grads for VT companies, especially in the technical fields

Infrastructure

- Need border to border ubiquitous broadband and cell coverage
- Need good road system for transit of goods and people
- More public transit would help connect workers to workplace
- More air travel options
- Energy costs are high
- Shortage of commercial / manufacturing space in some regions

Government Programs and Leadership

- Many good programs at local level, towns and regions (limited but helpful)
- Good workforce training and development programs
- VOSHA and P2 at ANR excellent assistance programs
- Efficiency Vermont is a good program
- Government needs to set a positive tone about business in Vermont
- Better alignment of government programs and services is necessary

B. Themes in the Green Economic Sector

Themes which might uniquely apply to the development and growth of companies and businesses in green economic sectors include:

State Brand as GREEN

- Vermont is associated with quality, frugality, authenticity
- Vermont enjoys a international reputation and has a cache as being a green, sustainable and environmentally conscious place
- Vermont is recognized for past leadership in developing policies to protect and enhance the environment (billboards, bottle bill, Act 250); continued leadership is critical to the authenticity of green branding in the future
- Green Mountain image and positive association in minds of people outside VT
- Vermont's working landscape is a key factor in its green brand identity
- In green technology, Vermont not seen as a leader or innovator when compared to Washington, Oregon, Michigan, California or Canada efforts
- Vermont is not as green as it seems; thin façade
- VT "cache" is important to workforce recruitment, business development, and sales/marketing

Government leadership

- State government programs tend to be in silos - no innovative interaction
- State regulatory environment does not embrace "green" innovations in the very technologies that Vermont companies are trying to market and grow
- Government needs to do a better job of "walking the talk" if the "green" label is to stick in Vermont; this is essential to both business development and workforce recruitment
- To grow innovative green businesses and technologies, government should be the first customer and leading promoter
- Establish first rate (national) programs for incentives for consumers to buy green (e.g., solar tax credits; expanded net metering)

Infrastructure that specifically supports lowering the carbon footprint

- Added benefit of ubiquitous broadband and cell coverage is to allow telecommuting and connectivity so that work can be virtual and globally connected as possible.
- Good public transit and compact community design also feed the interest and needs of green enterprises that want to showcase their values in both product and operations—again related to the green branding of Vermont .

Vermont Markets

- A number of businesses, mostly green technology enterprises, do not see Vermont as a major market for their products, but do see Vermont as an important place for their products to be in use and showcased by Vermont businesses and institutions
- Local markets can however play an important function in demonstrating leadership to external investors, increase external sales, add to VT brand in recruiting workforce and attracting investment

Workforce

- Need better programs to prepare the next generation of Vermonters for jobs in the green economy - particularly the green economy of Vermont - more interaction between employers and k-16 training/education programs
- Develop workforce programs that meet the core needs of businesses in this economic cluster
- If we want to grow the workforce in this field, provide direct incentives for people working in it (tax rates, college loan forgiveness, etc.)

Higher Education

- Vermont higher education needs to play a more significant role in growing the green economy in Vermont through career introduction and development, workforce preparation, technology transfer, and innovation
- There are lots of successful models elsewhere for higher education leadership in workforce development, research and development, internship programs, business innovation and incubators.
- There needs to be a business- government - higher education nexus for the green economic sector; it should also include relevant nonprofit actors
- Higher education facilities should reflect the use of the best that green technology and process has to offer - a showcase

Regulation

- Align state regulatory and policy development to support green sector growth
- Regulations and policy that allows for and encourages innovation in using technology and processes that addresses environmental problems and issues

Sectors for Growth

- *Green technology and manufacturing:* Vermont may not best positioned for high volume manufacturing; instead focus on innovative or cutting edge technology (e.g. nanotech, LED, electric mower) and specialized high quality, manufacturing
- *Energy alternatives:* Vermont is a leader in wind and solar technology that is being used elsewhere
- *Financial industry:* There is some interest in developing new financial products that are in line with a green economy and public interest in sustainability. It is hard however, to justify VT to venture capitalists and to attract financial leaders due to low wages and “provinciality”.
- *Sustainable agriculture and niche products:* One of the key defining features of Vermont and our existing brand is the working landscape. There is a strong network of individuals and companies committed to creating a vibrant economic sector based in sustainable agriculture, agricultural niche products and the “slow food” movement. It is speculated that VT could anticipate venture capital and external financial support.
- *Innovation technology:* technology companies that are leaders in innovation focused on the creation of world class technology design, development, manufacturing, production and services. Such innovation is taking place in large and small, old and new Vermont firms. For example, IBM Vermont developed and manufactures the new sets of computer chips powering parts of IBM's most recently announced "z" series computers. These main

frame systems will reduce information technology energy expense by approximately 70% from current "blade" server installations. Hazelett Strip Casting in Colchester has found a global market for its specialized machinery in part because of how energy efficient the process is. These long established companies, along with emerging firms in LED lighting and nanotech innovations provide a core for a growing cluster of such pioneering technology companies and institutions.

V. Actions to Stimulate and Support the Growth of Vermont's Green Economic Sectors

Areas of Potential Action Identified

Participants in the focused conversations suggested a number of concrete administrative and legislative actions, business support programs, and promotional opportunities to stimulate the growth of the green economic sector in Vermont. These suggestions were categorized using the schemata below to bring forward for consideration at the stakeholder meeting.

A. Higher Education - Business – Government	<i>Create nexus among 3 sectors to support green enterprise</i>
B. Promotional efforts	<i>Enhance marketing and branding efforts related to Vermont's green business sector</i>
C. Workforce	<i>Develop and support a continuum of workforce recruitment, retention and skill development initiatives specific to the current and future needs of the green economic sector</i>
D. Financing	<i>Expand the range of financing options and capital resources for green businesses</i>
E. Business development	<i>Create focal points in business development programs and opportunities for green businesses</i>
F. Model the green sector	<i>Establish policies for government and public sector institutions to model green practices, products, services and stimulate Vermont green business markets</i>
G. Regulation and Policy	<i>Align state regulatory and policy development to support green sector growth</i>
H. Cross-Cutting Strategies	<i>Strategies which may serve/address two or more critical factors in stimulating and supporting a vibrant green economic sector</i>

The summary of all input was then brought to a broad range of Vermont leaders for their consideration in the stakeholder meeting. This meeting was designed to solicit responses to the following central question: *What concrete actions, strategies or changes will help to stimulate and advance a green economic sector in Vermont?*

Participants were given an initial list of potential actions, culled from the summer study and focused conversations, which were organized around the categories above. They were asked to amend the suggestions, add new ideas, and offer cautionary notes to the ideas presented. A full reporting of the results of the focused conversations blended with the input of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix G. The cumulative findings and recommendations were then vetted with the group of tax and policy advisors.

The following suggested actions are a consolidation of cross-cutting ideas originating in one of the three venues (the summer study, the focused conversations or the stakeholder meeting), and were refined in each successive step of the engagement process. The notes below are not intended to fully summarize the wealth of ideas and actions collected to date or to suggest priority for attention and action. Rather the intent is to bring forward themes which are linked and suggested actions which may serve more than one end point. GBIC has further consolidated these ideas into set of action steps that can be found in Appendix H.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT AND STIMULATE THE GROWTH OF VT'S GREEN ECONOMIC SECTORS

A. Creating Intellectual Capital and Innovation

Participants in the engagement process spoke of the convergence needed to create a critical mass of intellectual capital to stimulate and support a green economic sector. The example given was the convergence in Stanford/Silicon Valley of the public and private sectors, educational institutions, and entrepreneurs in creating the opportunities for new ideas and technologies to flourish into a vibrant economic sector. There were three sets of action consistently mentioned in the engagement process which could each enhance intellectual capital, provide mentoring for the next set of environmental enterprise leaders, and support networking of existing enterprises:

1. Establish an Environmental Enterprise Institute/Collaborative

A formal collaboration of government, institutions of higher education, businesses leaders and the non-profit sector is needed for research, development and commercialization of new technologies. This collaborative would:

- Harness cross-sector creativity in the development of a statewide environmental enterprise strategy
- Stimulate innovation and exploration
- Encourage the collaboration of key state agencies and the network of Vermont's statewide colleges and institutions to stimulate development of environmental education, environmental technology, sustainable agriculture, and green economics
- Invest in research and development focused on new products/technologies and to solve problems (e.g., University of Waterloo)

2. Create Vermont Green Enterprise Zones: Incubators + Eco-Industrial Parks

Environmental entrepreneurs are seeking opportunities to collocate to share expenses, innovative ideas, etc. Incubators were also considered as one idea to accelerate business development. Intrinsic to the success of the an environmental enterprise incubator and/or an eco-industrial park is the simultaneous investment of funding, technical support (i.e. access to researchers and technical specialists, connection to institutions of higher education) and mentoring in business planning and development. Investing in incubators/eco-industrial parks holds promise in accomplishing multiple endpoints:

- Creating financing and/or other necessary capital (commercial or manufacturing space) to start ups
- Enhancing innovation by enabling the convergence of intellectual capital
- Connecting businesses for B→ B (business to business) market development
- Branding – through walking the talk and promoting entrepreneurial efforts

3. Provide Supported Networking, Business Development and Peer Assistance for Green Enterprises

The enterprises in the green economic sectors need an active and supportive mechanism for networking, business development, peer assistance and mentoring to:

- share business ideas and developing sound business plans
- move from "idea to product" phase as well as to plan for and manage growth
- identify and share capital
- create opportunities for B→ B sales and product integration and/or potential mutual investment in R & D
- identify possibilities for joint marketing and promotion

A variety of specific actions were recommended to support networking and provide peer assistance:

- Develop a statewide database of Vermont's green economic sector businesses and capabilities for local and global markets, and a network of similar companies through the Vermont Environmental Consortium
- Create an inventory and mechanism for networking of "green" companies, organizations, and efforts; internet-based with local contacts
- Develop an online social networking tool, a Facebook-like community, for green sector
- Create a "Vermont Virtual Enterprise Zone" that supports networking and peer assistance through the actions list above could also assist in market development and branding efforts by creating a showcase for Vermont Green Products and Services and an online map, the "Vermont Green Trail," of publicly accessible LEEDS certified buildings

B. Investing in Workforce Development

Existing environmental enterprises noted workforce recruitment and retention were the most critical factors in starting and growing their enterprises and that a skilled and dedicated workforce is perhaps the most important factor to continued success. Mission-oriented and values-based enterprises did not identify recruitment as a problem except for highly technical or specialized positions. These entities noted that branding of Vermont is very helpful in recruitment efforts. One key challenge is finding personnel for entry-level jobs when college educated population in 20's leaves for bigger cities while those who remain in Vermont often lack the necessary skills required. Participants noted that many workers are more committed to Vermont than to specific company, leading to a great potential for (re)training workforce. If the green economic sector is to grow, a growing workforce of skilled, entry-level workers and experience workers with new skill will be required.

Key actions suggested to ensure an adequate workforce include:

1. Conduct a labor skills study to determine which skills are vital, and how access to training so skills can be upgraded and expanded.
2. Develop industry councils/organizations that can coordinate with employers and develop the specific curriculum/strategies to “fill the pipeline” for talent/workers – career development and guidance.
3. Conduct an analysis of the curriculum in Vermont’s education to evaluate whether it reflects the workforce needs of the green economic sector
4. Develop an implementation plan for secondary schools to fulfill the requirements of the labor market for environmental employment

Actions specific to Secondary Education

5. Pilot Project: create a Virtual Academy and Green Curricula of applied science and technology curriculum that includes a community partnership between a school district, Vermont’s institutions of higher education, and the private sector.
6. Establish on-going programs (e.g. internships, work study, career days and career introduction opportunities) between green enterprises and high schools to create steady flow of personnel for entry level jobs
7. Create green certification programs in trades/professions that would focus tech schools on green.

Actions specific to Higher Education

8. Create career introduction events and internship events throughout Vermont that brings together students of Vermont institutions and Vermont businesses to promote sector and recruit workforce: ex: Vermont green job fair(s) and the Tech Jam in Burlington convened by Seven Days and Champlain College
9. Provide state college aid for students to take up green trades and fields within Vermont.

C. Expanding Financing and Capital

Limited capital and financing options are significant barriers to the growth of the environmental enterprises in green economic sectors. Participants specifically recognized the need to:

1. Create incentives for investments in green sector growth and “green” practices
2. Establish a research and development grant fund
3. Explore options for a green economic sector research tax credit.

In determining which options hold the most promise, participants in the engagement process urged the consideration of the following:

- Make sure the timing of needs and availability of funds is well matched –e.g. tax credits may not be meaningful to start-up businesses
- Provide in-depth technical assistance to entrepreneurs as they develop their business—do not just drop in \$ without business planning assistance
- Offer the best ideas, products, opportunities to provide in-depth support rather than giving a little bit to everyone and not enough to anyone.

D. Promoting Business Development through Governmental Leadership in Modeling, Incentives, Direct Branding, Marketing and Promotions

A common theme throughout the engagement process was the essential role of governmental leadership and commitment in support of green sector innovation and entrepreneurial enterprises. Governmental leadership will add substance to Vermont’s green brand, attract external investors, increase external sales, and assist in recruiting a high quality workforce. This leadership needs to be demonstrated through concrete actions such as purchasing Vermont green products/services, showcasing entrepreneurs, expediting permitting for environmental enterprises, coordinating services to/for green businesses, and using legislative incentives to stimulate and reward green enterprises.

1. Best Practices for State Institutions and Government Agencies

- a. Coordinate Governmental Access and Support Across Agencies
 - Map out key points of connection needed based on stages in business development, permitting needed by business sector, regulatory requirements, etc.
 - Facilitate cross-agency support and expedite green business sector development
- b. Develop environmental design objectives for each new building and major renovation
- c. Establish purchasing preferences for Vermont green sector goods and services; develop bid opportunities for Vermont environmental enterprises— source in state first and provide cost incentive for buying from local green biz.
- d. Plan for maximizing the operating efficiency of the solid waste management system - innovations to increase recycling and minimize waste

- e. simple but highly visible practical tools available to citizens and visitors (e.g., free air pump service at Interstate rest stops; portable home energy meters to be checked out of every public library in Vermont)
 - f. Review opportunities to fast track permitting for environmental enterprises
 - g. Establish joint legislative committees to oversee the integration and leadership for the green economic sectors and environmental enterprise
2. *Incentives for Investment in Green Economic Sectors*
- a. Changes within the Act 250 regulatory framework that will encourage sustainable and efficient building and project design
 - b. Certification of exception when a pilot or other project primarily develops and implements, for testing, a significant and innovative technology
3. *Branding*
- a. Authenticity is essential; must be backed by true leadership, clear standards and proven action
 - b. Branding is important to market development + workforce recruitment
 - c. Start with (bold) action to demonstrate commitment to green business sector development; then work to develop/reinforce brand
 - d. Establish Vermont green biz seal/ certification to demonstrate quality – back up seal with clear criteria and monitoring
4. *Promotion and Marketing of Green Industries*
- a. Showcase Vermont state investments in green sectors through display of new technologies, products and services in state-owned buildings or properties and at government sponsored events
 - b. Utilize Vermont’s tourism and economic development agencies to promote green enterprises both within and out of state
 - c. Convene Global conference on Green Economic Development, Environmental Enterprise and Sustainability
 - d. Support Marketing and advertising; consider green standard/seal/certificate as part of showcasing Vermont green technologies
 - e. Green Practices: Create the process for advancing green practices that enhance Vermont’s brand in those companies, organizations and communities that manage and control their day to day activities, or provide public service, so as to provide a measurable protection or enhancement to the world’s natural systems through waste reduction, remediation, recycling, energy conservation, reduction of carbon footprint, utilization or creation of alternative clean energy sources, employ innovation of work or production schedules, employ transportation efficiencies, so as to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

VI. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN MOVING FORWARD

Vermont's objective should be maximizing the number of companies, organizations and communities participating in sustainable and "green" operations and practices. This will truly build Vermont's reputation and brand as a "green state". This includes companies which have "green" products and services as their core business activity, and also those who have multiple products and activities, some of which achieve the "green" definition to be developed, and also those companies and organizations with products and services which are not identifiable as "green", but who conduct their business and activities in a manner which promotes sustainable and environmentally sound objectives. Vermont can and will become the most "green" when every company, organization and community pursues this objective.

A. Vermont's green economic cluster is composed of an array of subsectors, each requiring attention. These subsectors include, but are not limited to:

- *Environmental Remediation and Pollution control*: air and water pollution control, potable water systems, waste and storm water treatment systems, waste management, recycling, and ecological restoration businesses.
- *Clean technology*: technology companies focused on treatment and prevention of environmental impacts or contamination through pollution prevention and clean alternatives.
- *Energy efficiency and conservation*: products and services specific to promoting and enabling the efficient use of energy
- *Renewable energy*: Generation of energy from renewable sources and equipment and services to facilitate such production
- *Agriculture*: The production and processing of livestock and plants for food, feed, fiber, or fuel in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- *Finance*: The use of innovative financial services to enable clients to offset their carbon footprint, finance energy efficiency, to create local risk capital pools and invest in alternative energy.
- *Professional services*: engineers, researchers, knowledge-based professional service providers, consultants, lawyers, green architectural and design professionals, geologists, and other professional service providers, supporting sustainable development and green economy initiatives.
- *Innovation technology*: technology companies that are leaders in innovation focused on the creation of world class technology design, development, manufacturing, production and services.

B. Green operating practices are increasing as standard practice among many types of businesses and institutions in Vermont whether or not they have "green" products and services as their core business activity. Businesses and institutions that conduct, or seek to conduct, their activities in a manner which promotes sustainable and environmentally sound objectives also need to be recognized as part of the state strategy for growing a green economy. Vermont can and will become the most "green" when every company, organization and community pursues this objective. The measurements may include: Those companies, organizations and communities that manage and control their day to day activities, or provide public service, so as to provide a measurable protection or

enhancement to the world's natural systems through waste reduction, remediation, recycling, energy conservation, reduction of carbon footprint, utilization or creation of alternative clean energy sources, employ innovation of work or production schedules, employ transportation efficiencies, so as to reduce negative impacts on the environment. Work to enhance green operating practices that should continue and be further developed includes:

- Efficiency Vermont's support to businesses and institutions to reduce electrical usage.
- The Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence and Pollution Prevention
- The Vermont Environmental Consortium's recent "Green Makeover" video

C. To meet the needs of these clusters and green business practices, Vermont must do better in the following ways.

1. Government must provide leadership and demonstrate commitment to green practices, focus on providing coordinated support to environmental enterprises and function in a client-focused manner.
2. Education must be committed to providing the workforce with the knowledge base and versatility to tackle the challenges and imagine the opportunities in technological innovation.
3. Business must be prepared to coordinate its response, investment and address its responsibility.
4. All three must work together, in a coordinated manner, to ensure harness the creativity and stimulate the innovation necessary for the growth of a vibrant green economic cluster.

D. The state of Vermont must demonstrate through its internal actions and investments a significant commitment to Vermont's environmental entrepreneurs by supporting the expansion of the green sector through implementing the tools, goods, and services developed locally in state, municipal and institutional buildings whenever practicable. The adoption of green practices is vital to sustaining the Vermont brand of environmental integrity and innovation.

E. Vermont's working landscape and tight knit communities are key defining features of its green brand identity. The economic vitality of Vermont's communities and working landscapes are vital to the preservation of Vermont's brand of environmental integrity, authenticity and quality.

F. Building a vibrant green economic sector will require new skill sets, new entrepreneurial energy, and a growing workforce of skilled, entry-level workers. Succeeding will require continued innovation in the ways in which Vermont is already investing in programs to attract and retain young professionals to become active players in the state economy.

CONCLUSION

This engagement process was initiated to better understand the needs of Vermont's environmental entrepreneurs and leaders. What we found was a strong entrepreneurial spirit, deep green ethic and widespread commitment to economic growth that meets the needs of this generation without compromising the needs of the next. We heard numerous suggestions for how we can grow environmental enterprises and industries committed to the development of value-added goods, products and services that protect or enhance the world's natural systems, encourage new sources of clean energy, or reduce negative impacts on the environment, and create high wage jobs for Vermonters.

In order to continue to grow these sectors, Vermont's actions must be bold, sustainable and coordinated to build a foundation, year by year, for a dynamic green economic cluster to grow and develop; a wide variety of actions, some small steps and others more aggressive, represent a broad based strategic approach that can be continued within the context of resources that can be reliably invested by the State and coordinated by all partners in this collective enterprise. A framing of those steps is offered in a Policy Memorandum by GBIC that grew directly out of this process (See Appendix H).

In the global marketplace, the fundamentals of business and commerce are necessarily changing. This is a time of enormous challenge and tremendous opportunity for those places that seek to advance through creativity and innovation. Green represents the largest economic and innovation opportunity of the 21st century. Vermont is recognized globally as a green and sustainable place, green is our brand. Now Vermont has the opportunity to build upon this brand and create economic opportunities for Vermonters while making significant contributions toward protecting and enhancing the world's natural systems and reducing negative impacts on the environment. Vermont's objective should be maximizing the number of companies, organizations and communities participating in sustainable and "green" operations and practices and producing innovations in products and practices that are viable to compete in the global marketplace. Vermont can and will become the most "green" when every company, organization and community pursues this objective.

APPENDICES

All appendices and supporting documents can be found on line, along with an electronic copy of the full report at: <http://vermont.org/gbic/>

Appendix H: GBIC Policy Memorandum on the green economic sector
is included in this print copy.

SUMMER STUDY

Appendix A:
GBIC /LCRCC Green Economic Development Strategy Summer Study

FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS

Appendix B:
Discussion Guide

Appendix C:
Themes from the Focused Conversations

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Appendix D:
Stakeholder Meeting Agenda (February 12, 2008)

Appendix E:
Participants at the Stakeholder Meeting (February 12, 2008)

Appendix F:
Assets in the Room Stakeholder Meeting (February 12, 2008)

Appendix G:
Potential Strategies Generated by Stakeholders (February 12, 2008)

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Appendix H:
GBIC Policy Memorandum on the green economic sector

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Appendix H: GBIC Policy Memo on the green economy in Vermont



MEMORANDUM

TO: GBIC Board, Cynosure Board and the LCRCC Executive Committee
FROM: Frank Cioffi, President, GBIC and Dan Smith, Vice President, GBIC
DATE: March 26, 2008
RE: The Green Economy in Vermont

In the global marketplace the fundamentals of business and commerce are fundamentally changing. This is a time of enormous challenge and tremendous opportunity for those places that seek to advance their economies through creativity and innovation. Green represents one of the most significant economic and innovation opportunities of the 21st century. Vermont sits in a position of initial leadership in the development and expansion of a Green Economic Sector. Vermont has long been known for its ethic of environmental integrity, recently being named the “greenest state” by Forbes magazine. Vermont is recognized globally as a green and sustainable place; green is our brand and we should capitalize upon further developing our brand. Furthermore, we should focus upon building a vibrant and strong sustainable green economic sector that creates high wage jobs and economic opportunities for Vermonters while making significant contributions toward protecting and enhancing the world’s natural systems and reducing negative impacts on the environment. GBIC recognizes that this is an opportunity for the state of Vermont to both lead the way on green economic development and to leverage our green brand identity into the creation of value-adding, high wage jobs and enterprises while maintaining our core values and preserving the Vermont way of life.

The GBIC Green Economic Strategy engagement process was initiated to better understand Vermont’s economic opportunities. What we found was a strong entrepreneurial spirit, deep green ethic and widespread commitment to economic growth that meets the needs of this generation without compromising the needs of the next. During the course of this process it became apparent that the ethos of a green economic sector is inherent to the practices of a widespread and diverse group of businesses across our state. Green provides connectivity between every sector of the Vermont economy and, as such, the necessary strategies to support growth must create a transferable support and knowledge base for all members of the Green economy. Because of the diversity of goals and interests our recommended strategic actions provide an immediate and dynamic first step in what promises to be a long-term opportunity to build and develop a vibrant green economic opportunity for the State of Vermont.

Vermont's objective should be to maximize the number of companies, organizations and communities participating in sustainable and "green" operations and practices. This will truly build Vermont's reputation and brand as a "green state." This includes companies that have "green" products and services as their core business activity and also those that have multiple products and activities, some of which achieve the "green" definition to be developed and also those companies and organizations with products and services that are not identifiable as "green," but who conduct their business and activities in a manner that promotes sustainable and environmentally sound objectives. Vermont can and will become the most "green" when every company, organization and community pursues this objective.

By working together Vermonters can succeed in this initiative.

GBIC RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of this process it became apparent that the ethos of a green economic sector is inherent to the practices of a widespread and diverse group of businesses across our state. Green provides connectivity between every sector of the Vermont economy and, as such, the necessary strategies to support growth must create a transferable support and knowledge base for all members of the Green economy. Because of the diversity of goals and interests the following strategic actions provide an immediate and dynamic first step in what promises to be a long-term opportunity to build and develop a vibrant green economic opportunity for the State of Vermont.

2008 Actionable Items for Legislation:

- Support for the continued development of a Vermont Green Economic Strategy through the working group of: The Vermont Climate Collaborative: The State of Vermont and The University of Vermont together with Regional Economic Development (RDC) Professionals, the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and General Affairs and the Chairperson of the House Committee on Commerce. This collaborative will work to draft and present “Green Economic Strategy” legislation in January 2009.
- Green Workforce Development
 - Department of Labor assessment and survey of the green economic sector
 - Inventory of environmental enterprise employees
 - Development of regional profiles of workforce skill sets
 - Survey of environmental enterprises to determine competencies necessary for success

2008-09 Actionable Items for Implementation by Business/Economic Development Corporations:

- Green Enterprise Zones
 - Each RDC should develop a plan for submission to the Department of Economic Development. The plans will focus on the revitalization of a property in their regions to provide space on a right of first offer basis to companies in the green economic sector. Each plan shall make funding recommendations for achieving site control, development and operations. The goal is to create innovative enterprise parks and facilitate the sector development by enabling collocation.
- Continued support for the State of Vermont – Higher Education - Business collaborative to advance Green economic development initiatives.

2008-09 Actionable Items for Implementation by Higher Education:

- Encourage the creation of Green Summer Academies by Vermont institutions of higher education and state agencies linking students to identified and emerging fields.
- Continue support for the State of Vermont – Higher Education - Business collaborative to advance Green economic development initiatives.
- Encourage every Vermont institution of higher education to host a regional job/career fair for the green economic sector.

2008-09 Actionable Items for Implementation by State Government:

We believe that the following are important steps that could be advanced within the existing resource base of state government:

- The Department of Economic Development should conduct a market analysis for environmental goods and services.
- The Workforce Development Council should host a job fair for the green economic sector.
- Promotion of Vermont's Green Economic Sector
 - ACCD/ANR plan a global conference on Green Economic Development, Environmental Enterprise and Sustainability to take place in 2009-2010.
 - ACCD and the Department of Tourism and Marketing consider:
 - Creating a Vermont Life Magazine profile on the Green Economic Sector.
 - Collaborating with Vermont Public Television to create a program on the green economic sector.
 - Developing an advertising campaign highlighting the green economic sector for use in on-line video search engines and international broadcast.
 - Developing a targeted marketing campaign on green economic sector opportunities for media markets with common community characteristics and/or professional schools and higher education institutions.
- Recruitment and Business Development Strategy
 - ACCD consider developing a program for the green economic sector, including attendance at green economic sector events, and direct outreach to the state's largest employers to seek investment in the development of new environmental value-added products and the creation of new environmental enterprise jobs.
- Directed funding support and strategy for the Vermont Environmental Consortium (VEC) whereby the VEC uses the funding to:
 - Develop a virtual enterprise zone and online social networking tool for the green economic sector.
 - Create a website showcasing green products and services, and the Vermont Green Trail: publicly accessible examples of green development, LEEDs certification and renewable energy projects.
- **Best Practices**
 - Department of Buildings and General Services consider developing environmental design objectives for new buildings and renovations, and a policy for showcasing Vermont technologies and products. BGS shall also develop a policy for instate sourcing of clean energy technology and services.
 - The EEU consider purchasing portable energy meters for each public library and make them available for check out.
 - ANR seeks to work with solid waste management districts to improve district operating efficiencies, improve the rate of diversion and promote waste reduction.
 - The Agency of Transportation considers providing free air pump service at all rest areas, and promote with appropriate signage, the mileage value of proper tire inflation.

GBIC Endorses:

- A complete green economic sector strategy requires action on the following items:
 - Full support and implementation of the E-State Initiative by the Telecommunications Authority.
 - Full implementation of the goals and actions required by the 25x '25 Initiative.
 - Full implementation and support for the terms of S. 209.
 - The Green Vermont Employment Growth Initiative proposed in S. 359
 - The amendments to the licensed lender statute proposed in S. 227.
 - Full support and implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Vermont Environmental Engineering Advisory Council on Holistic and Systems Engineering.
 - Support for the emerging Vermont Climate Collaborative: a partnership between the State of Vermont led by the Secretary of Natural Resources and the University of Vermont.
 - Continued growth in the innovative energy programs and value added agriculture product programs presently conducted by the Agency of Agriculture.



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Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation



GBIC

Good Jobs In A Clean Environment

GBIC ~ The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation

Frank Cioffi, Dan Smith, Curt Carter, Seth Bowden, Andrea Fiekers,
Dawn Francis, Cathy Davis.

Building strong communities in a clean environment through good jobs for Vermonters

GBIC Vision Statement

“A thriving Lake Champlain region with an economic environment providing meaningful employment consistent with an uncompromised natural environment, enabling present and future generations of Vermonters to live, learn, work, and play in the Champlain Valley.”

GBIC Mission Statement

“To attract, retain, and expand environmentally sensitive high-paying jobs in the Champlain Valley; and to initiate and support advocacy, education, and collaboration programs in promoting our Vision.”

The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation ~ GBIC is a non-profit economic development corporation. **GBIC** was incorporated by 50 municipal officials and civic leaders from the Greater Burlington area and was created in 1954 by an Act of the Vermont Legislature. The founders were citizens interested in creating sustainable economic opportunities for future generations.

GBIC is affiliated with the State of Vermont as Vermont's certified regional economic development corporation for Chittenden County Vermont. Chittenden County is Vermont's largest county and it has Vermont's most diversified economic and demographic region. GBIC is a key partner in Vermont's overall economic development. As one of Vermont's twelve Certified Regional Economic Development Corporations (RDC), GBIC is continually working with the Vermont Department of Economic Development, The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, state officials and others to help sustain a positive business climate in such areas as the labor and housing markets, business financing, education, export assistance, transportation, growth planning and development issues, and environmental concerns.

Since its founding in 1954, GBIC has served as a catalyst for economic opportunity in Chittenden County, helping local businesses with their concerns, and working to attract new business investments and high value-added employment opportunities to the region. **GBIC's** efforts have provided sustainable economic opportunities and jobs for thousands of Vermonters.

GBIC has developed seven industrial parks and operates a Foreign-Trade Zone in the Chittenden County Area. For 53 years, GBIC has played an important role in assisting in the creation and retention of thousands of new jobs in the value-added industry sectors, which have paved the way for thousands of additional support jobs in the wholesale, retail, and service trades.

The primary goal of GBIC is the creation and retention of value-added jobs that will strengthen the region's economy and improve the quality of life for area residents. The primary economic market focus of GBIC is the region's value-added industry sectors and the region's economy-driving businesses.

GBIC conducts annual visits to each municipality. Additionally, GBIC completes more than 200 business visits with Chittenden County businesses annually. GBIC conducts continuous community outreach efforts with many organizations both regionally and statewide that affect economic and community development such as the Vermont Technology Council, the Lake Champlain Regional Workforce Investment Board, the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, the University of Vermont, the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, and many others.

For over 50 years, GBIC has provided the following core economic development programs and services to the municipalities and value-added businesses of Chittenden County.

- Economic Incentives Assistance to Municipalities
- Business Resource Forums
- Incentive Program Assistance
- Legislative & Gov't Advocacy
- Business Development Support
- Business Recruitment Services
- Permit Facilitation Services
- Business retention/expansion support
- Regional Promotion & Marketing
- VEDA Financing Assistance
- Workforce Education & Training
- Comprehensive Economic Development Support Strategy (CEDS)

