

Manchester Journal

Laberge named to state Climate Action Commission

Posted Wednesday, July 26, 2017 10:12 pm

By Greg Sukiennik, gsukiennik@manchesterjournal.com (mailto:gsukiennik@manchesterjournal.com)

DORSET — Bill Laberge is looking forward to being part of Gov. Phil Scott's Vermont Climate Action Commission — with the key word in its name, from his perspective, being "action."

"I was pretty excited about what this commission is going to do," the Dorset solar power entrepreneur said. "They're not just going to meet and talk about climate change."

Laberge is the sole Bennington County representative among 18 business and civic leaders appointed to the commission on July 20.

"The United States pulling out of the Paris climate agreement really spurred a lot of action," Laberge said Tuesday in his Dorset workshop. "The states are saying now we have to do something."

"I think the benefit or one positive that comes out of [the Paris withdrawal] is that people are actually taking action," Laberge said. "So I'm pretty hopeful that this will actually be about action."

Vermont has a goal of increasing its renewable energy use to 90 percent by 2050.

"The planing and aspirations are there, but what are the actions needed to be done to get there? That seems to be what they want to really focus on," Laberge said.

Laberge has long been committed to action on climate change, through his own business, which sells and installs solar power systems, and through organizations including the Renewable Energy Vermont, Manchester Riverwalk and Transition Town Manchester, a group working to promote the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy in Manchester.

The commission is reuniting Laberge with Paul Costello of the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Costello helped lead the Manchester 2020 program, which led to the creation of the Riverwalk.

Laberge testified before the Legislature on solar power storage technology this past spring. On that trip to Montpelier, he met with state Rep. Linda Joy Sullivan (D-Dorset), and that discussion planted a seed in Sullivan's mind, which sprouted when she was approached about candidates for the commission.

"It was my pleasure to recommend Bill Laberge," Sullivan said Tuesday. "When I was asked to make a recommendation I knew that Bill was knowledgeable and dedicated to doing what was needed for Vermonters. It was a no-brainer."

The commission will hold its first meeting in August and is co-chaired by Costello and by Peter Walke, deputy secretary of the state Agency of Natural Resources.

Laberge said the commission will hold community discussions in its first two months, with the first set of recommendations due in five months and a full set of recommendations of actions by July. Those recommendations could include things state government could do to incentivize the growth of the emerging renewable energy industry — or ways it could get out of the way of the private sector.

"We are already seeing tremendous growth in renewable energy jobs," Scott in a press conference announcing the formation and members of the Commission. "Since 2013, employment in this sector has grown 30 percent. That is something to build on. But all sectors of Vermont's economy will need to change to take advantage of this tremendous economic opportunity."

LOCAL NEWS

Author's kin responds to controversy (/stories/authors-kin-responds-to-controversy,514895)

SVMC launches ExpressCare (/stories/svmc-launches-expresscare,514894)

Laberge named to state Climate Action Commission (/stories/laberge-named-to-state-climate-action-commission,514893)

Architect of Paris Climate Agreement speaks at bookstore (/stories/architect-of-paris-climate-agreement-speaks-at-bookstore,514892)

Arlington: HS future belongs to voters (/stories/arlington-hs-future-belongs-to-voters,514891)

Read more ▶ (/local-news/)

()

Puzzles Palace



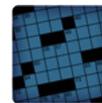
K-Doku

(<http://manchesterjournal.com/games/?arkpath=/games/k-doku>)



Mahjongg Dimensions

(<http://manchesterjournal.com/games/?arkpath=/games/mahjongg-dimensions>)



Premier Crossword

(<http://manchesterjournal.com/games/?arkpath=/games/premier-crossword>)



Spot The Differences