

Vermont's Thermal Energy Networks Act

A demonstrated solution for Vermont communities

Now an amendment to S.305, formerly H.669 and S.252

We can help many Vermonters enjoy the benefits of reliable, resilient, affordable energy by employing geothermal and other Thermal Energy Networks, a demonstrated heating and cooling solution.

Vermont's Thermal Energy Networks Act allows existing utilities as well as municipalities, businesses, co-ops, non-profits, and others to develop local Thermal Energy Networks.

THERMAL ENERGY NETWORKS: Community-scale heating and cooling

Thermal Energy Networks use only local sources of thermal energy—shallow geothermal boreholes and waste heat from building ventilation systems and wastewater. Water-filled pipes in underground loops can both heat and cool an entire street or town center. The more buildings are connected, the more affordable and efficient it gets. More than just a heating and cooling solution, Thermal Energy Networks also reduce demand on the electric grid, shave electric peaks, and store thermal energy underground.

Other states have authorized utilities to implement these systems, including NY, MA, CO, WA, and MN.

Operational from Toronto to Texas, Thermal Energy Networks are efficient, affordable, and resilient. Many campuses and communities, including in colder climates like ours, are already reducing emissions and lowering energy costs by using geothermal and other non-combusting thermal sources.

SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATION

Vermont's Thermal Energy Networks Act is adapted from New York's Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act. Led by a surprising alliance of utilities, unions, and climate advocates, the bill requires utilities to build Thermal Energy Networks and create quality jobs.

VERMONT'S VERSION

Vermont's Thermal Energy Networks Act is backed by a similar coalition of Vermonters united in support of making Thermal Energy Networks available to communities across the state. Our version creates a pathway for putting this clean energy solution to work in Vermont and:

- Authorizes all municipalities to provide Thermal Energy Networks without PUC approval or regulation, just as municipal water and sewer utilities operate under local control.
- Allows existing utilities and other entities—e.g. businesses, developers, co-ops, non-profits, fuel dealers—to obtain PUC authorization to operate a Thermal Energy Network utility.
- Directs the PUC to supervise rates and quality of service for non-municipal Thermal Energy Network utilities as it already does for other utilities.
- Does not apply to campus, condominium, or landlord/tenant properties where the owner provides a Thermal Energy Network to itself and its members or tenants.
- Does not require state funds or taxpayer dollars.

A KNOWN SOLUTION FOR A MORE EQUITABLE, SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION

In Vermont, we can bring Thermal Energy Networks to our communities by allowing municipalities, existing utilities, co-ops, non-profits, and businesses to own and operate these systems. Affordable housing can be prioritized, and current fossil fuel workers can use current skills to build the interconnecting systems.

For more information on Thermal Energy Networks, visit vctn.org.