

Office of the Speaker  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

September 28, 2020

Speaker Mitzi Johnson,

This letter is to express my interest in the "Fuel Sector" position on the Vermont Climate Council created by H.688, the Global Warming Solutions Act.

As the director of Vermont Fuel, a non-profit trade association, I work for Vermonters that distribute most of the energy sold in the state, including natural gas, oilheat, kerosene, propane, gasoline and diesel fuel. These fuels represent approximately 80% of the BTUs used in Vermont.

Vermont's small energy companies are undergoing a transformation similar to the one that took place 80 years ago. My grandparents, Helen and Ken Cota, converted thousands of homes in Windham County from coal to oil back in the 1940's as Vermont families sought out a cleaner source of heat. We now see a similar transformation in the thermal sector as more Vermonters choose BioHeat, biomass and electric cold climate heat pumps. In the transportation sector, traditional motor fuel distributors are responding to the demand for liquid biofuels and EV charging stations.

Not only do I help small businesses navigate these regulatory challenges, I also operate a school for skilled trades. I am committed to diversifying our workforce and have partnered with Vermont Works for Women to help train the next generation of drivers, plumbers and heat techs. Working with a talented team of HVAC instructors, I emphasize instruction that focuses on maximizing the efficiency of heating systems.

I have a record of working collaboratively in groups similar to the Climate Council. I partnered with Renewable Energy Vermont to mandate sulfur limits for oilheat in the Vermont Energy Act of 2011 (Act 47). I was recognized for this effort by Governor Peter Shumlin with an Environmental Excellence Award. I also served on Governor Shumlin's Thermal Efficiency Task Force in 2012 and collaborated with Efficiency Vermont to create the Efficiency Excellence Network in 2013. Most recently, I served on Governor Phil Scott's Climate Action Commission and worked with the

Department of Environmental Conservation on the implementation of Vermont's Aboveground Storage Tank Regulations and tank inspection requirements.

In 2015, I applied for and received a grant from the U.S Department of Agriculture to convert waste from local breweries and dairy farms into algae that can be turned into heating fuel. I advocated for the passage of a federal law signed by President Barack Obama in 2014 and reauthorized by President Trump in 2018 that allows the oilheat industry to continue the transformation into a completely renewable liquid fuel.

Much of the information in this letter was conveyed in my testimony in the House Energy Committee this year. While the changes we requested were not adopted by the Committee, I have expressed my appreciation for how this legislation evolved over the past couple of years. As I have stated in my testimony on the GWSA, a successful Climate Action Plan will need to involve the Vermont men and women that provide both fuel and service. I think I can serve this role and speak for this sector on the Climate Council.

Thank you for your consideration.



Matt Cota  
802-318-2190

Cc:

Rep. Tim Briglin, House Energy Committee Chair

Rep. Laura Sibilia, House Energy Committee Vice Chair

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Vermont Fuel Dealers Association, Montpelier, VT**

*vermontfuel.com*

*Executive Director*

*(April 2007–Present)*

Direct legislative initiatives and provide regulatory assistance for heating fuel and service companies in Vermont. Operate business and technical training school. Design and implement strategic planning initiatives. Organize trade shows and member events. Develop public policy and reach consensus among members.

### **Split the Ticket Fund, Montpelier, VT**

*vermontfuel.com/split*

*Founding Director*

*(October 2007–Present)*

Created non-profit 501c-(3) heating assistance charity that has provided more than 100,000 gallons of free heating fuel to Vermont families.

### **Development Review Board, South Burlington, VT**

*southburlingtonvt.gov*

*Chairperson*

*(2015– Present)*

Chair of panel appointed by the City Council to enforce South Burlington's Land Development Regulations. Chair is responsible for leading the discussion and mediating disputes between land owners, neighbors, city staff and other members of the Development Review Board.

### **KSBY-TV (NBC), Santa Barbara, CA**

*ksby.com*

*Bureau Chief*

*(August 1998–April 2007)*

### **WPTZ-TV (NBC), Colchester, VT**

*mynbc5.com*

*Reporter, Statehouse Beat*

*(June 1996–September 1998)*

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## **EDUCATION**

### **California State University Northridge**

*Master of Public Policy with Distinction, 2013*

### **The George Washington University**

*Bachelor of Arts, Political Communications, 1996*

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## **Volunteer Positions**

- ▶ National Energy and Fuels Institute, Current Executive Committee Member
- ▶ Petroleum Cleanup Fund Advisory Committee, Current Member
- ▶ Home Energy Assistance Task Force, Current Member
- ▶ Plainfield Planning Commission, Former Commissioner
- ▶ Energy Action Network, Former Coordinating Committee Member
- ▶ Biomass to Biofuels Program, University of Vermont, Lecturer
- ▶ Contributing Author, "Bioenergy" published by Academic Press

## **Honors**

- ▶ 2012 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence
- ▶ 2011 Vermont Business Magazine Rising Star
- ▶ 2009 U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Financial Services Champion