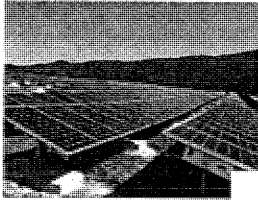


\$5 per month on their Green Mountain Power electric bills.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2015/09/15/vermont-city-claims-title-solar-capital-new-england/72343428/>

Rutland claims 'solar capital of New England' title

WILSON RING 8:16 p.m. EDT September 15, 2015



(Photo: Wilson Ring/AP)

COMMENT EMAIL MORE

RUTLAND The city of Rutland is assuming the mantle as the "solar capital of New England."

Officials with Green Mountain Power, Vermont's biggest utility, have been working for years to change the way the city of 16,500 produces and uses electricity.

They announced the new designation Tuesday, saying a survey they conducted found that the city produces more electricity per capita from the sun than any other in New England. It follows the recent completion of the 2.5-megawatt Stafford Hill solar project atop an old landfill near the high school.

The 7,722 solar panels brought the city's total solar power capacity to just under 7.8 megawatts. There are 51 homes, businesses and other projects currently generating clean energy in the city. The energy produced is enough to provide 1,600 average homes with electricity for a year.

"Ideally we want to stay ahead and we want to stay ahead through innovation," GMP President Mary Powell said outside a home covered with solar panels. "We want to stay ahead by thinking about how do we continue to work collaboratively to push solar."

Vermont has seen a surge in solar power in the last few years as the state works to increase its reliance on renewable sources of energy, such as solar and wind. In some communities, proposals for solar arrays have been met with strong opposition for reasons including costs and aesthetics.

In addition to generating power locally in Rutland, GMP is working with landowners to reduce electricity consumption by helping them insulate their homes and businesses and using alternative heating and cooling technologies that reduce the use of traditional fossil fuels.

The \$10 million Stafford Hill solar project uses battery storage so that it can power the emergency shelter at the high school. It is part of a broader project to create what Powell called a "micro grid" so that when power is disrupted during storms or other events, there will still be electricity available locally.

Rutland Mayor Christopher Louras said what makes his city unique is its focus on local generation and not traditional power poles and transmission lines, which he called a 19th-century model.

"That's not what we're doing here," Louras said. "This is a 21st-century model."

http://www.reformer.com/latestnews/ci_28812789/cement-plant-solar-gets-cpg

Cement Plant Solar gets CPG

Company gets CPG from PSB

By Domenic Poli

dpoli@reformer.com @dpoli_reformer on Twitter

POSTED: 09/14/2015 09:50:00 PM EDT | UPDATED: 5 DAYS AGO

0 COMMENTS

JAMAICA — A limited liability company was issued a certificate of public good for its proposed 498-kilowatt group net metering solar electric generation facility off Route 100 in Jamaica.

Net metering involves multiple places using the solar electricity from solar panels located in a designated spot and splitting the bill to save money.

Cement Plant Solar LLC's intended project will promote the general good of the state, according the Vermont Public Service Board on Sept. 4. The PSB listed certain conditions to go along with its certificate of public good. The project will produce power for the facilities of William E. Dailey Precast LLC.

According to the PSB, Cement Plant Solar has designated Robert and Charles Grant as the group administrators responsible for all communication. Meters will be added to the group or removed from it only under agreement between Cement Plant Solar and group members.

According to the PSB, the project will span roughly 4 acres on an approximately 10-acre parcel that has historically been used for concrete and logging operations. The project is expected to consist of solar panels ground-mounted "on a rack system, inverters, two new utility poles, overhead and underground utilities, and transformers." It will also involve extending an existing gravel road, a concrete equipment pad and shed, and perimeter fencing.

The PSB stated the project's operation and maintenance must be consistent with the plans and evidence submitted to the PSB. The Board must approve any substantial change to the project. Cement Plant Solar, the petitioner, will be required to limit construction of the facility to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction will be allowed on Sundays or state or federal holidays. Cement Plant Solar also must obtain all necessary permits and approvals before site preparation or construction begins. The net-metering system's installation must be completed within one year.

According to the PSB, the project will not have any negative effect on aesthetics, historic sites or "rare and irreplaceable natural areas." It will be set back more than 50 feet from existing property boundaries and more than 100 feet from Route 100.

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/kyocera-suncommon-and-kendall-sustainable-infrastructure-introduce-innovative-community-solar-array-program-in-vermont-2015-09-15>

PRESS RELEASE

KYOCERA, SunCommon and Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure Introduce Innovative Community Solar Array Program in Vermont

http://solarindustry.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.15678

Solar And EVs Seem Like A Match

Published: Sept 15, 2015 11:05 a.m. ET

Program expands solar power access to a wider audience

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Sep 15, 2015 (BUSINESS WIRE) — [Kyocera Solar Inc.](#) announced today a partnership for an innovative Community Solar Array (CSA) Program in Vermont that offers a cost-effective way to participate in solar. Approximately 50 projects averaging 200kW each will enable consumers to virtually purchase about 13 megawatts of solar power without installing individual rooftop systems.

The CSA Program is a group effort coordinated by Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure (KSI), an impact investment firm and principal sponsor; Kyocera, a leading solar manufacturer providing solar panels and additional capital; and SunCommon, Vermont's largest residential solar company heading project development, EPC and ongoing support.

Under the new CSA Program, landowners within an electrical service territory can arrange to dedicate a portion of their property to generating clean energy — a new “cash crop” helping farmers and Vermont landowners stay on their land. Each acre of solar panels generates enough electricity to power about 30 homes.

Participants enroll to virtually purchase power generated by solar arrays within their service territories. Solar power is fed into the grid, and participants purchase an amount of grid power equal to that generated by the arrays. The partnership expects to construct 50 CSAs, with nearly a dozen online or expected to be operational by year-end and the remainder in 2016.

“This Community Solar Array Program offers a tremendous opportunity for Vermonters to benefit from solar energy, even if their rooftops don't provide ideal conditions,” said Hitoshi Atari, President, Kyocera Solar, Inc. “With our partners, we're able to implement best practices, including integration of residential solar, flexible participation terms and deep community engagement.”

“With the help of Vermont's supportive solar policies, we can offer Community Solar with no up-front purchase cost,” said SunCommon co-president Duane Peterson. “CSA participants simply sign up for the program for a monthly payment that's actually less than their former power bill. It turns out that doing the right thing while saving money is a popular offering.”

“This pioneering program combines mature aspects of the power and solar industries with innovation, and is the right opportunity to put our impact investors' capital to work building clean energy,” said John Chaimanis, Managing Director of Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure. “SunCommon has put together an excellent program in Vermont and is a detail oriented community partner; combined with world-class solar power equipment and sophisticated financing, our capital is making a direct impact both for Vermont ratepayers and the global climate.”

For more information, click [here](#).

About the Program Participants

Kyocera Corporation of Kyoto, Japan, recorded consolidated sales of \$12.7 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2015. The company has a 40-year tradition of innovation in solar energy research, development and manufacturing, with a U.S. customer base served by Kyocera Solar, Inc. of Scottsdale, AZ.

SunCommon is a Vermont Benefit Corporation founded on the belief that everyone deserves a healthy environment and safer world – and that clean energy is where it starts. Now the state's largest residential solar business, SunCommon is a Certified BCorp committed to the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure, LLC (KSI) is an investment firm affiliated with Kendall Investments focused on building, financing and owning sustainable infrastructure projects and renewable energy assets. The firm works closely with investors, developers, product suppliers and other parties to build world-class renewable

energy facilities that have positive, long-term financial, social and environmental impacts.

View source version

on [businesswire.com](http://businesswire.com:http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150915005844/en/):<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150915005844/en/>

SOURCE: Kyocera Solar, Inc.

LPI Communications for Kyocera

Leasa Ireland, 310-750-7082

leasa@lpicomcommunications.com

Made In Heaven, But The Devil Is In The Details

in E-Features

By **Nora Caley** on Wednesday 16 September 2015

 [Email article](#)  [Print](#)  [Permission](#) [Reprints & Permissions](#)

Vol. 2 | Issue 57 | September 17, 2015

It seems like a perfect combination: solar power and electric vehicles (EVs). Simply set up some charging stations that are powered by solar panels, and the EV driver can enjoy an emissions-free recharge. After all, solar costs are decreasing, and EVs are gaining in popularity, so why not combine the two?

Several charging station providers and solar companies say it is indeed possible to have solar supply at least some of the electricity to power plug-in vehicles, but there are a number of hurdles to a wide rollout of solar-powered EV charging stations.

"It's a perfect matchup when you consider all the developments with battery storage and you consider where PV is going as those costs come down and the performances go up," says Robert P. Boisvert, executive vice president of GOe3 LLC.

Scottsdale, Ariz.-based GOe3 is building a network of EV charging stations on interstate highways. The focus is on connecting cities and eliminating owners' range anxiety - the fear of not being able to reach a charging station before the batteries run dry.

"EV drivers are charging at home 70 percent of the time," Boisvert says. "The real need is on interstates. You are not going to care if there is a charging station two blocks from your house."

Not every EV site is suitable for solar. The company has plans to build 1,000 charging stations over the next five years. Of these, 10% of them might be solar.

"Each site requires its own analysis," Boisvert says. "It depends on the location, how much sun they get, peak demand charges. Most of what we focus on are sites that have relatively high power requirements, so solar makes sense."

The interstate locations will likely be travel center locations or places of interest. The chargers will be DC fast-charging stations, as opposed to the Level 2 stations that take longer. The DC fast-charging stations would not need separate inverters.

"Instead of having to buy another inverter for solar arrays, we can use the one inherent in our charging stations," he explains.

So far, GOe3 has built seven charging stations. None are solar, but solar might be in the works for a planned location in Arizona.

Solar can make sense in some charging stations in the future, says Josh Castonguay, director of generation and innovation for Green Mountain Power in Vermont. "I think you will definitely see charging incorporated with solar, no question, in certain locations," he says.

The more ambitious your solar EV charging requirements are, the more space will be needed.

"If you're trying to cover a little bit of charging, you need a few panels," Castonguay says. "If you want to cover all your charging, you would need to include batteries, as well - for at night - or limit the charging only to solar hours."

Also, the space would have to be a good solar site - one that is not shaded. One complication is that EV chargers are often near commercial buildings, which cast long shadows. Nevertheless, there could be opportunities for combining solar and EV charging. Providing solar EV charging during peak demand hours could take a lot of pressure off the grid.

Green Mountain Power recently announced a partnership with NRG EVgo to build 12 Freedom Stations in Vermont. The first one opened in Rutland, Vt., this year. The station can provide approximately 80% of a battery charge in 25 minutes when using the DC fast-charging option. The Freedom Chargers will also have Level 2 capabilities that provide up to 24 miles of charge per hour.

So far, these are not solar, but that could happen in the future, Castonguay says. "Ideally, we will see locations with rooftop solar installing a charger, as well, along with an energy storage capability," he says.

In San Diego, Envision Solar **announced** in August that it agreed to a partnership with ChargePoint, which operates an EV charging network in the U.S. and Canada. Both companies will offer ChargePoint chargers on Envision Solar's solar-powered EV charging products. The partners say the combination will enable EV owners to drive on sunshine.

8/9/2017

ATT00018.htm



Pete Antos-Ketcham Joins Energize Vermont as Executive Director

Antos-Ketcham Brings 22 Years of Natural Resource Management to the Statewide Non-profit

Huntington, VT – Energize Vermont is pleased to announce that Pete Antos-Ketcham, formerly of the Green Mountain Club (GMC), has joined the organization as its new Executive Director. Antos-Ketcham succeeds Mark Whitworth.



While Executive Director, Whitworth led many of the organization's initiatives including lobbying for effective climate change policies, environmental preservation, and sensible deployment of renewables. Whitworth will continue to carry out policy analysis for Energize Vermont and will serve on its Board of Directors.

Pete Antos-Ketcham comes to Energize Vermont with over 22 years in natural resource and non-profit management. Antos-Ketcham is leaving his position as GMC's Director of Land and Facilities Management. While at GMC, he oversaw the construction of the club's new Visitor Center in Waterbury Center, Vermont. The Visitor Center consumes no fossil fuels and employs appropriately-scaled renewables to produce more electricity than it uses. It demonstrates an approach to an energy future that doesn't require massive energy sprawl.

Antos-Ketcham said, "I look forward to continuing the great work Mark has done. He has been a clear voice advocating responses to climate change that respect our communities and preserve our natural resources.

"People are worried about climate change and they are concerned that Vermont's climate change response has gone very wrong. They wonder what has happened to the traditional guardians of Vermont's natural resources heritage. Why are the conservation groups not promoting real conservation? Why aren't natural resource groups protecting our natural resources? Why is no one representing the real interests of the public?

"Energize Vermont offers an alternative for the many people who are disturbed by the conduct of these old-line organizations. Energize Vermont has no industry moguls on its board and has not compromised its mission in exchange for large donations.

"Our first priority in responding to climate change has to be the preservation of our irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Industrializing our mountains, forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands may be profitable for a few, but it is jeopardizing the ability of countless species to adapt to a changing climate. Energy developers are destroying our environment and our cultural heritage for meager amounts of intermittent electricity. I will advocate sensible energy policies that bring our communities together—policies that emphasize conservation, efficiency, and thoughtful siting of Vermont-scale renewables."

Outgoing Executive Director, Mark Whitworth said, "We look forward to Pete's leadership of Energize Vermont. His many years of experience with the Green Mountain Club, his advocacy for effective climate change response, and his passion for preserving Vermont's landscape, make him ideally suited to Energize Vermont's mission to promote common-sense renewable energy solutions."

Board member and former Executive Director Lukas Snelling said, "We couldn't be happier with the appointment of Antos-Ketcham to lead the organization. Pete comes to us with deep experience in natural resource management and is greatly respected in the environmental community for the work he has done. Pete will continue the organization's growth and work with his fellow Vermonters toward an energy future that emphasizes sustainability, conservation, adaptation, and resilience."

Pete Antos-Ketcham is a resident of Starksboro, where he lives with his wife and two children. He graduated from UVM with a B.S. in Environmental Studies. He has served six years on the ATC (Appalachian Trail Conservancy) Stewardship Council, the Board of Directors for the RMC (Randolph Mountain Club) and as an Emergency Medical Technician for Stowe Rescue, Stowe Mountain Rescue and Huntington First Response.

Energize Vermont is a non-profit education and advocacy organization that promotes renewable energy solutions that are in harmony with the irreplaceable character of Vermont, and that contribute to the well-being of all her people. This mission is achieved by researching, collecting, and analyzing information from all sources; and disseminating it to the public, community leaders, legislators, media, and regulators

for the purpose of ensuring informed decisions for long-term stewardship of our communities.

For more information about Energize Vermont and the organization's mission, visit energizevermont.org.

Annette Smith
Executive Director
Vermonters for a Clean Environment
789 Baker Brook Road
Danby, VT 05739
(802)446-2094
www.vce.org

Chen, Zachary

From: *redacted*
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 1:55 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Re: FW: VCE Solar Update 9/20/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force Video

OKay. I will include them.

On 1/20/2016 1:51 PM, Chen, Zachary wrote:

> I actually would like to see them.

>

> Thanks,

> Zach

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: *redacted*

> Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 1:33 PM

> To: Chen, Zachary

> Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update 9/20/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force Video

>

> Some of the e-mails are like these, and seem to be to a mailing list

> that *redac* found himself on. The ones that are to the mailing list

> (*vce@vce.org*) seem to be similar to these. These are the ones that will

> clutter up your mailbox quickly, so if you don't need these ones, just

> let me know.

> Thanks,

> *reda*

>

>

> ----- Forwarded Message -----

> Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update 9/20/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force

> Video

> Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 10:38:07 -0500

> From: *redacted*

> To: *redacted*

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>

> From: *vce@vce.org*

> Date: Sun, 20 Sep 2015 23:01:26 -0400

> Subject: VCE Solar Update 9/20/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force Video

> To: *vce@vce.org*

>

> Lots of solar news since the last update 914. Be sure to read this one

> (text below) "Report: Green energy drives jobs" which has the latest

> from Gov. Shumlin about the role of towns, and the PSB process.

>

> Two Charlotte PSB solar items this week.

>

> One is a site visit on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. at the constructed large project on Hinesburg Road.

> On Thursday there is a prehearing conference on a 500 kW solar array proposed for Charlotte at 9:30

>

> <http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/orders/2015/2015-09/NMP%206314%20Order%20Opening%20Investigation.pdf>

>

>

> CPG #NMP-6314 Prehearing Conference

>

> In Re: Application of Vermont AllSun Solar XII, LLC for a certificate of public good for an interconnected 500 kW group net-metered photovoltaic electric power system in Charlotte, Vermont Before Thomas Knauer, Hearing Officer

> Location: Public Service Board Hearing Room, Third Floor, People's United Bank Building, 112 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont

> Event Date and Time:

> Thursday, September 24, 2015: 9:30 am

>

>

> Public hearing on a 2.2 MW solar array in Richmond at 7 pm. Presumably

> there is also a site visit earlier in the day, ask psb.clerk@vermont.gov

> <<mailto:sb.clerk@vermont.gov>>.

>

>

> #8564 Public Hearing

>

> In Re: Petition of GMPSolar - Richmond, LLC, for a certificate of public good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing the installation and operation of a 2.0 MW solar electric generation facility off of Governor Peck Highway in Richmond, Vermont, to be known as the "GMPSolar Richmond Project" --- (Order of Notice

>

> <<http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/document/8564%20Order%20of%20Notice%20Public%20Hearing.pdf>>

> Section 248 Project Information --- Petition, Prefiled Testimony &

> Exhibits

> <<http://psb.vermont.gov/8564PetitionPrefiledTestimonyAndExhibits>>

> Before Lynn Fabrizio, Esq., Hearing Officer

> Location: Second Floor Conference Room at the Richmond Town Center, 203 Bridge Street, Richmond, Vermont

> Event Date and Time:

> Thursday, September 24, 2015: 7:00 pm

>

> -----

> VIDEO of Solar Siting Task Force Meeting #2

> https://youtu.be/9_r5u10Wxks

>

> <http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

>

> *Meeting #2*

> September 17, 2015

> 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Giga Conference Room, 3rd Floor, VT Public Service

> Dept., 112 State St., Montpelier

> Press Release

>

<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/sites/solarsiting/files/documents/press_releases/SSTF%20Media%20Release%20091515.pdf>

> Agenda

> <http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/sites/solarsiting/files/documents/meeting_agendas/2015-09-17%20Agenda%20SolarTaskForce.pdf>

> Draft Guidelines for Siting Solar Energy Projects in Vermont from David Raphael of LandWorks

>

<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/sites/solarsiting/files/documents/meeting_materials/Solar%20Siting%20Guidelines.pdf>

> State Goals and Analysis of Future Solar Development

>

<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/sites/solarsiting/files/documents/meeting_materials/ASH%20for%20solar%20siting%20TF%2020150917.pdf>

> by

> Dr. Asa Hopkins of DPS and BCRC Solar Potential Map

>

<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/sites/solarsiting/files/documents/meeting_materials/BCRC_Solar_Within1Mile%20-%20Compressed.pdf>

>

> -----

> Elizabeth went to the site visit and public hearing. There was no public at the site visit, it appears to be a good site. There were a few members of the public at the public hearing but nobody signed up to speak. There is a 5 minute video, where chairman Volz opened and closed the hearing. It is the first solar project I am aware of where the full PSB ran the hearing.

>

>

> #8562 Intervention Deadline

>

> In Re: Petition of GMPSolar - Williston, LLC for a certificate of public good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 219a, 229, and 248, authorizing the installation and operation of a 4.69 MW net-metered solar electric generation facility near Mountain View Road in Williston, Vermont, to be known as the "GMPSolar Williston Project"

> Intervention Deadline

> Event Date and Time:

> Wednesday, September 23, 2015: 7:45 am - 4:30 pm

>

> -----

> The first public showing of one of these energy planning maps was at the solar siting task force on Thursday morning (see Asa's presentation > above) and then in Manchester on Thursday evening. We learned that the

> solar maps do not exclude forested areas, so it is a constructive
> comment to suggest they add that layer. And it would be good to ask
> what percentage of the load Chittenden County must do, and how they are
> expected to meet that load, and see what the answer is. I hope some of
> you can go to these upcoming energy planning forums and weigh in. None
> of their maps include structures, there is no consideration for the
> human factor.
> <http://www.vnews.com/home/18661780-95/sunday-forum-help-draft-a-regional-energy-plan>
>
>
> Sunday, September 20, 2015
>
> Help Draft a Regional Energy Plan
>
> To the Editor:
>
> As recent headlines in the Valley News will attest, the siting of
> renewable energy projects is an important issue in the Upper Valley. The
> Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) has been working
> with the Vermont Public Service Department and the Vermont Energy
> Investment Corp. on a new regional energy planning initiative.
>
> The goal of the regional energy plan is to advance the state's energy
> and climate goals while being consistent with local and regional needs
> and concerns, and to provide specificity to enable progress to be made
> in the region toward those goals.
>
> To help develop the regional energy plan, TRORC will organize a series
> of public forums seeking input from municipalities and other
> stakeholders. The first public forums will focus on a discussion of
> potential renewable-energy-generation site mapping.
>
> Follow-up public meetings will help identify specific education and
> outreach efforts; the most effective implementation programs and
> activities; and local policies that can be implemented to help reach
> regional energy goals.
>
> The first regional energy plan public meetings, focusing on renewable
> energy siting, are scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 22, from 6 to 8 p.m. at
> the Bethel Town Hall, 318 Main St., Bethel; and Monday, Sept. 28, at the
> Bradford Academy, 172 North Main St., Bradford. You are invited to help
> shape energy planning in the 30-town TRORC region. For more information,
> please contact me at dgish@trorc.org <<mailto:dgish@trorc.org>>.
>
> Dee Gish
>
> Finance manager
>
> Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
> -----
> <http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20150920/OPINION06/709209943>
>

> Opinion
> <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
> |Perspective
> <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION06>>
> In energy rush, farmland needs protection
> By Roger Allbee
> Commentary | September 20,2015
> Vermont's environmental heritage has been defined over time, and today
> is being tested or challenged by goals to have the state have 90 percent
> of its energy from renewable sources by 2050. A special recent report on
> VTDigger.org <<http://VTDigger.org>>, "Tax breaks drive Vermont's solar
> gold rush," indicates that solar developers have their eyes on Vermont
> due to these additional tax breaks or incentives. Can this expansion of
> solar, and even wind on our ridgelines, be compatible with articulated
> environmental and land use goals of the past?
>
> It is reasonable or necessary to step back and better define how these
> energy goals can be compatible with existing and past polices pertaining
> to the environment and land use. A brief review of history is in order.
>
> In 1847, Vermont Congressman Perkins Marsh gave a speech to the Rutland
> Agricultural Society on agricultural conditions in New England and the
> need for better resource management and active efforts for restoring the
> land. The early settlers to Vermont had stripped the forests leading to
> severe erosion and loss of soils and water degradation. Marsh's ideas
> were said to be radical at the time but in the end led, many argue, to
> the establishment of the conservation movement in the United States.
>
> Since then there have been numerous efforts to better define our state's
> commitment to the wise use of our land and water resources. In 1927, the
> Vermont Commission of Country Life looked at and studied every facet of
> Vermont life. One of the recommendations was that the state take over,
> as rapidly as possible, the summits of the principal mountains for park
> and forestry purposes. Also, it was stated that in the larger
> development of recreational resources, which may be expected, "care
> should be taken to avoid features that disfigure the landscape and are
> an offense to good taste." Recreation or tourism was then seen as the
> most promising opportunity for business growth into the future.
>
> The 1960s growth of ski areas and connected recreational housing came
> into conflict with some of the articulated goals of the 1927 report
> relative to activities that disfigure the environment. In 1969,
> Republican Gov. Deane Davis appointed Arthur Gibb of Weybridge to chair
> the Governor's Commission on Environmental Control. Many public hearings
> were held, and the commission's work resulted in the passage of Act 250,
> Vermont's pioneering land use law. This law has procedures in place to
> protect our state's most productive soils.
>
> Over time and since the passage of this pioneering land use law, various
> studies and programs have been created to address Vermont's commitment
> to its wise use of land and water resources. In the late 1970s Gov.
> Richard Snelling and the Vermont Legislature passed the current use tax

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> /Roger Allbee is a former Vermont secretary of agriculture and chairman
> of Working Lands Coalition of the Vermont Council on Rural Development,
> which led to the creation of the Working Lands Program. He was a
> contributing author to the book "The Vermont Difference, Perspectives
> from the Green Mountain State" by the Vermont Historical Society and the
> Woodstock Foundation. /

> -----

> <http://www.vermontbiz.com/news/september/governor-shumlin-model-getting-energy-right>

>
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>

> Governor Shumlin: A model for getting energy right

>

> Sun, 09/20/2015 - 4:19am --

>

> *by Governor Peter Shumlin* It is all too easy for those of us who care
> about protecting our environment, combating climate change, and
> preserving a sustainable planet for our kids and grandkids to lose hope
> that we can win the fight. At the national level, powerful fossil fuel
> interests and their climate-denier allies in Congress prevent meaningful
> action and work to preserve the status quo. Here in Vermont, however, we
> are showing that progress can be made and that there is a model for
> energy that is good for our economy and our environment.

>
>

> This week I joined with energy efficiency and clean energy businesses to
> release a new report on the state of clean energy in Vermont. The good
> news: We have over 16,200 clean energy jobs in Vermont, up about 1,000
> jobs from last year, and employers expect to add another 1,000 jobs in
> the next six months. This fast-growing sector of our economy is one
> reason that Vermont has the third lowest unemployment rate in America.

>

> Our steady focus on energy efficiency also continues to pay dividends.
> Investments over the last 15 years to retrofit our homes and businesses
> have reduced the amount of electricity we were projected to use by 13
> percent. That has led to a reduction in our annual electric costs of
> more than \$50 million. And this doesn't take into account the tens of
> millions of dollars we have saved by deferring costly transmission

> projects and reducing our share of regional transmission costs.

>

> We have made extraordinary progress on solar, cutting the price of solar power by more than 60 percent since 2010. As the solar industry has matured, we have prudently trimmed incentives and grant programs. Even still, we have increased the amount of solar energy in Vermont by more than ten times since I became Governor.

>

> Vermont has also been able to avoid the electric rate shocks that are happening in many of our neighboring states, thanks in large part to our dedication to long-term, stably priced contracts for renewable energy. When we purchase local hydro, or power from Hydro-Quebec, or lock in a good deal for solar or wind energy we do not just reduce carbon emissions. We also reduce our exposure to volatile energy markets and help protect ratepayers.

>

> Electric ratepayers in our neighboring states have routinely seen double-digit rate increases in the past several years, and this year the price for wholesale electricity in New England is the most expensive in the nation. Vermont bucks that trend. Our largest utility, Green Mountain Power, has reduced electric rates three of the past four years. Year-over-Year data comparing 2015 to 2014 shows Vermont's electric rates for residential, commercial, and industrial customers have all come down, while every other state in our region experienced rate increases. Our electric rates are now second lowest overall in our six state region. Those who say we are not competitive with our neighbors should keep these facts in mind.

>

> It is not just that our utilities are helping keep rates stable for customers. They are also partners in helping develop a new model for energy. Legislation I signed in June creates new opportunities for utilities to provide on-bill financing for customers to invest in energy saving upgrades for our homes and businesses. The new model for energy is this: instead of paying for more power generated out there somewhere, we are going to help Vermonters weatherize their homes, install solar on the roof, and cold-climate heat pumps to reduce their oil and propane use. From Montpelier to Rutland, I have visited homes where this is being done. Oil bills are down 60 to 80 percent, homes are more comfortable, and overall energy costs are more affordable. Bill McKibben recently wrote an article in the New Yorker stating that our program shows "innovative, energy-saving and energy-producing technology is now cheap enough for everyday use."

>

> With all of our progress, I remember back to when many of us were fighting to close Vermont Yankee and invest instead in a renewable energy future. Back then the gloom and doom crowd was saying closing the plant would raise our electric rates, thereby hurting our economy. Turns out they were wrong. Our largest utility has lowered electric rates in three of the past four years even though they stopped purchasing power from Yankee in 2012 and our state's economy is strong. In Vermont we have a new model for energy that is working for our economy and our environment. We know we have more to do, but as we look at a Congress

> that is paralyzed, and at dinosaur utilities in some parts of the
> country that can't innovate, we should be proud of the work we have
> accomplished together in Vermont.

> -----
> *Vermont's Solar Surge Energizes Debate | Vermont Public Radio*
> September 19, 2015
> <http://digital.vpr.net/post/vermonts-solar-surge-energizes-debate>
> -----
>
>
> Balmer: Solar Siting
>
> By RANDALL BALMER <<http://digital.vpr.net/people/randall-balmer>> /.
> <http://digital.vpr.net/post/balmer-solar-siting>
> -----
> <http://watchdog.org/238316/green-mogul-blasts-nimby-concerns/>
>
>
> Green mogul opposed wind farm off Martha's Vineyard, blasts
> objectors in Vermont
>
> By Bruce Parker <<http://watchdog.org/author/bparker/>> / September 16,
> 2015 / 13 Comments
> <http://watchdog.org/238316/green-mogul-blasts-nimby-concerns/#disqus_thread>
>
> <<http://watchdog.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/01/OffshoreWind-AP.jpg>>
>
> <<http://watchdog.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/01/OffshoreWind-AP.jpg>>
>
> AP file photo
>
> NIMBY: Thomas Melone, CEO of New York-based Allco Renewable Energy,
> opposed Cape Wind over concerns it would hurt the view from his home in
> Martha's Vineyard. Melone's company has been critical of so-called NIMBY
> concerns in Vermont.
>
> A green energy mogul who protested an offshore wind farm near his summer
> home on Martha's Vineyard is criticizing Vermonters who oppose his
> company's four-megawatt combined solar farm proposed in Bennington.
>
> In 2010, Thomas Melone, CEO of Allco Renewable Energy, petitioned to
> block Cape Wind, a large offshore wind farm sited in federal waters in
> Nantucket Sound.
>
> In an appeal to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, Melone
> protested the proposed construction of 130 ocean wind turbines on the
> basis the renewable energy project would affect his viewscapes and hurt
> the value of his \$15 million beachfront property in Edgartown,
> Massachusetts.
>
> While the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court rejected his "Not in my
> back yard"-based complaints in May 2012

> <<http://archive.capenews.net/communities/region/news/1842>>, Melone and
> Allco have issued scathing criticisms toward Vermonters who say Allco's
> Chelsea Solar farm planned for Bennington's Apple Hill area will greatly
> disrupt noise, wind and visual aesthetics for local
> residents and visitors to the nearby welcome center.
>
> Libby Harris, an intervenor and resident of Apple Hill, has urged the
> Vermont Public Service Board to deny Allco a certificate of public good
> <http://watchdog.wpengengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/09/8454_Harris_Brief_091015.pdf>
> on
> the basis that clear-cutting acres of forest for the solar project
> will boost highway noise and destroy the natural wind buffer that
> protects homes in the area.
>
> Harris also claims removing the forest will disrupt wildlife and remove
> trees that absorb CO2, in addition to harming the visual beauty of the area.
>
> *RELATED: Vermont woman challenges NYC investor in effort to block
> Bennington solar farm
> <<http://watchdog.org/237764/libby-harris-challenges-solar-farm/>>*
>
> Despite Melone's efforts to keep renewable energy away from his home in
> Martha's Vineyard, Allco appears to have little sympathy for Harris'
> objections.
>
> In an Aug. 6 post-hearing brief
> <<http://watchdog.wpengengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/09/post-hearing-brief-FINAL-with-cert.pdf>>
> filed
> with the Vermont Public Service Board, Allco's Michael Melone, son of
> Thomas Melone, wrote that impending climate change disaster supersedes
> the concerns of intervenors in Vermont.
>
> "The Chelsea Project will advance the goals of fighting the devastating
> (sic) impacts from climate change. Whatever the unsubstantiated and
> private concerns of Libby Harris may be, they pale in comparison to the
> benefits provided by the Project, and the urgent need for action on
> climate change," the brief states.
>
> To stress the urgency of an impending climate disaster, Michael Melone
> writes, "President Barack Obama has rightly called climate change the
> greatest threat to national security," and he adds that researchers
> claim "the effects of climate change, pollution and deforestation have
> caused the Earth to enter the beginning of a new extinction phase where
> humans could be among the first casualties."
>
> In an Aug. 12 petitioner's reply brief
> <<http://watchdog.wpengengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/09/Petitioners-Reply-Brief-FINAL-with-Cert-of-Service.pdf>>,
>
> Michael Melone disparages Harris as a "lone wolf" objector and dismisses
> her worries as "NIMBY concerns."

>
> According to Harris, such dismissive statements are characteristic of
> the way Allco deals with residents concerned by the firm's solar farms.
>
> "The solar company bought the land directly across from my house. From
> the beginning they have used so much subterfuge to be seemingly fine
> with what they're doing, and yet every step of the way they have used
> their power and deep pockets to bully us," Harris told Vermont Watchdog.
>
> A retired school teacher, Harris claims she became an intervenor because
> it's the only affordable way local residents can voice their objections.
>
> "I decided to become an intervenor because I'm an abutter (to the site).
> This has become my personal mission to do what I can because I don't
> have all that money to go to Superior Court," she said.
>
> While Harris said intervening at the PSB is more affordable than paying
> the more than \$10,000 she would need to fight Allco in court, she claims
> the company has treated her poorly for her role as intervenor.
>
> "They told me in a conference call that since they owned the land
> directly across from me, if I didn't withdraw my intervenor status they
> would remove every single one of the six acres of apple trees on that
> land that I look out on."
>
> Michael Melone did not return Watchdog's request for comment.
>
> "None of us are against going to renewables," Harris said. "But I think
> the Public Service Board, being three appointed people, has been rubber
> stamping these wind and solar projects all over the state. It's already
> done a great deal of harm in ruining the natural habitat."
>
> /Contact Bruce Parker at bparker@watchdog.org/
>
> -----
> <http://www.newsandcitizen.com/news-and-citizen/lamoille-news/solarfacilityplannedformorrisville>
>
>
>
>
> Solar Facility Planned for Morrisville
>
> posted Sep 18, 2015, 5:51 AM by Staff News & Citizen
> *by Andrew Martin *
>
> Morristown could soon be the home of a new solar facility. David
> Blittersdorf, the CEO of AllEarth Renewables, has filed an application
> with the Vermont Public Service Board for a Certificate of Public Good
> that if approved would allow him to construct a 150 kW solar facility on
> Walton Road in Morristown.
> The project that Blittersdorf has planned in Morristown is known as
> Walker Hill Solar and it would be constructed on land owned by Leo and

> Bonita Lefevre.
> "The landowner contacted us interested in participating in solar
> net metering and augmenting his income," AllEarth Renewable Chief
> Strategy Officer Andrew Savage explained on why the site was chosen,
> "The site is an open, mowed field with good southern exposure."
> Plans for the project call for a 150 kW AC group net-metered solar
> generation facility to be installed on a two-acre section of a larger
> 43-acre lot located at the address 1806-2182 Walton Road. The facility
> will consist of 30 AllEarth Renewable solar trackers as well as
> underground electrical connections and an equipment panel. The facility
> will tie back in with the local electrical grid via a utility pole
> located on Walton Road. According to Savage the facility is not being
> constructed to allow for any future expansion or additional trackers.
> As part of the agreement to build the facility on privately owned
> land AllEarth Renewables will have a land lease agreement with the
> Lefevres for the two-acre portion of the parcel where the solar trackers
> will be located.
> Moving forward the project will be reviewed and considered by the
> Vermont Public Service Board following the completion of the 30-day
> public comment period. That period is quickly drawing to a close, and
> once it has the board will decide whether or not to issue a Certificate
> of Public Good for the project or not. If the project application is
> approved by the board then construction will begin soon after according
> to Savage.
> "We will plan to commence construction as soon as the permitting
> process concludes, and the project is allowed to proceed," Savage
> explained. He added that the actual installation of the trackers should
> proceed quickly and take no more than two weeks. Plans call for the
> facility to actually begin producing power in 2016.

>
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> <http://www.newsandcitizen.com/news-and-citizen/lamoille-news/hydeparksolarreceivesfunding>

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>
> Hyde Park Solar Receives Funding
>
> posted Sep 18, 2015, 5:52 AM by Staff News & Citizen
> *by Andrew Martin *

>
> The project to build a municipal solar facility in Hyde Park has
> received a big boost. The Vermont Economic Development Authority
> recently reserved \$3.5 million in Clean Energy Renewable Bonds (CREBs)
> for the Hyde Park project, known as Hyde Park Solar, Waterhouse Project,
> which would see a solar facility built in the town. Voters approved the
> application for the zero-interest CREBs by a four to one margin earlier
> this spring, and municipal and town officials will now go about
> completing the process necessary to secure the \$3.5 million in
> zero-interest bonds that has been set aside for the project.
> According to Carol Robertson, the General Manager for the Village

> of Hyde Park, her utility now has less than 170 days to finalize the
 > process that will secure the CREBs for their project. She also explained
 > that local officials expect that the solar project will cost roughly \$3
 > million but that the utility applied for the \$3.5 million figure,
 > because they expected to receive only a portion of the funds they
 > applied for.

> Hyde Park Solar, Waterhouse Project is planned to be a 1 megawatt
 > solar energy generating facility that will be interconnected with the
 > Hyde Park Electric system. According to Robertson the facility will
 > likely be located at 1124 Silver Ridge Road in Hyde Park, a lot just
 > behind the House of Troy. The Village of Hyde Park has a lease option on
 > that site on behalf of Hyde Park Electric.

> "This site was analyzed along with multiple properties that met
 > critical solar site standards and could tie with the Hyde Park Electric
 > system," Robertson stated in an email interview with the News & Citizen,
 > "It ranked #1 by the project manager, Encore Redevelopment, so we
 > included it with our CREBs application."

> "Provided that it meets all necessary approvals and receives
 > required permits, the Village will lease this property," she continued.
 > The CREBs that have been set aside for the project are payable from the
 > net revenues that are derived from the operations of the Hyde Park
 > Electric Department. The zero-interest CREBs will be paid back using
 > those net revenues over a period of 30 years if the project is completed.

> The goal of creating the municipal solar facility will be to
 > protect Hyde Park from market volatility via the long-term stably priced
 > renewable power resource the utility will control. The facility will
 > also eliminate the need to pay transmission costs for the power
 > generated there while also helping to meet the renewable resource
 > portfolio requirements that all utilities in Vermont will soon have to
 > meet.

> Moving forward, Robertson explained that the project is now in
 > Phase 2. As part of that phase a public information hearing will be held
 > sometime in October. Along with town and village officials in attendance
 > representatives from Encore Redevelopment will also be present to answer
 > any technical questions about the solar facility.

> "We held a similar meeting on April 21 and the room was full,"
 > Robertson explained, "Then, on May 6, Village voters approved the CREBs
 > to pay for the project. There is a lot of interest in local,
 > community-owned solar and we expect a crowd again..."

> "We hope to see all of Hyde Park and friends of Hyde Park at the
 > meeting," she added.

> Along with the special informational meeting in October a Special
 > Village Meeting and Australian Ballot vote will also be taking place
 > sometime in the near future, likely December, in order to give final
 > approval to the project as it moves forward. Robertson believes that the
 > project will already have approval by the Public Service Board at that
 > time.

> "Once we receive more information from the PSB and our project
 > developer, Encore Redevelopment, these meetings and the final vote will
 > be warned," Robertson explained with regards to both upcoming meetings
 > and the vote. She added that during the Special Village Meeting the
 > Australian Ballot item will be voted on only by eligible voters from the

> Village of Hyde Park. Only Hyde Park Village voters will be allowed to
 > vote since it is the village that owns and operates Hyde Park Electric.
 > There will be an opportunity to cast absentee ballots and details
 > will be published with the warning," Robertson continued, "It is
 > important to remember that the CREBs vote depends entirely on the
 > regulatory and voter approvals no later than February 2, 2016."
 > Robertson added that if for some reason Hyde Park does not complete
 > all the necessary requirements to receive the CREBs set aside for the
 > Hyde Park Solar project than other funding sources will be pursued.
 > "With the approval of our CREBs application, we are moving quickly
 > to meet their deadlines in order to secure the bonds," Robertson stated,
 > "With bond approval, financial and site analysis complete, we now enter
 > Phase 2, which will involve project design and permitting."
 > Robertson went on to add that Phase 3 of the project will be
 > construction, which will begin next year with requests for proposals for
 > the construction materials, labor, and service components.
 > "This project began in 2014 when Village voters unanimously
 > approved Article #13, which gave us the authority to begin a Community
 > Resiliency Program," Robertson added, "Hyde Park Solar, Waterhouse
 > Project will be the first accomplishment..Hyde Park should be
 > congratulated for being both progressive and practical."
 >
 > -----
 > <http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/18/robert-holland-vermont-renewable-energy-program-increases-states-carbon-footprint/>
 >
 >
 >
 >
 > ROBERT HOLLAND: VERMONT RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM INCREASES STATE'S
 > CARBON FOOTPRINT
 >
 > COMMENTARY <<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> SEP. 18 2015, 7:00 PM
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>
> /Editor's note: This commentary is by Dr. Robert R. Holland, of
> Irasburg. He is one of the protesters known as the Lowell Six who were
> arrested and convicted of trespassing at the Lowell Mountain wind site
> in 2011./
>
> In 2005 the Vermont Legislature passed renewable energy legislation
> establishing the SPEED program. SPEED was repealed in 2015 with
> legislation initially called RESET. The name RESET has been dropped as
> leaders thought that the name implied that SPEED had been a mistake that
> required correcting. SPEED was a mistake and Vermont will be living with
> its legacy for at least 20 years.
>
> While other states established renewable energy programs that decreased
> their carbon footprints, SPEED increased Vermont's - by about 236,000
> metric tons of CO2 per year. A similar annual burden will continue until
> SPEED projects like the Lowell, Sheffield and Georgia wind projects are
> decommissioned.
>
> Since such a profound mistake was made and nobody has apologized to
> Vermonters, it seems prudent to perform an "autopsy" to see how
> Vermonters were tricked into believing that a renewable energy program
> would decrease their carbon footprint.
>
> There are two basic concepts of electrical engineering that our
> governor, legislators, secretaries, Public Service Board and Public
> Service Department seemingly did not understand that set SPEED up to
> fail from its inception.
>
> How do you count renewable energy? Renewable energy is not counted by
> measuring the output of your wind and solar projects. Renewable energy
> is measured by counting the renewable energy certificates that an entity
> owns. Due to the complexity of the electrical grid, it is difficult to
> associate electrical power with its precise source and its associated
> emissions. To simplify this complexity utilities agreed to separate
> electricity from its emissions. A renewable energy project generates
> both electricity and renewable energy certificates (RECs). A business
> generating renewable energy can sell both. A REC is valued at \$55-\$60
> per MWh. A typical wholesale price for non-renewable energy in New
> England is \$32 per MWh. According to Federal Trade Commission
> guidelines, only the owner of RECs can claim its energy as renewable, no
> matter how the energy was generated. If both the seller and buyer of a
> REC make a renewable energy claim it's called "double" counting and is
> at least unethical, and arguably criminal.
>

> How do you attribute carbon emissions? If an entity holds a REC for each
> MWh sold, the entity has zero emissions. For those MWh sold without a
> REC, the entity assumes responsibility for a proportionate share of
> total emissions for the regional grid. A renewable generator who sells
> its RECs effectively assumes the emissions of the buyer.

>

> With a command of these two concepts anyone could have predicted in 2005
> that SPEED would increase Vermont's carbon footprint as all the RECs
> generated by SPEED projects are sold to out-of-state utilities to
> satisfy their state's renewable energy requirements. With the sale of
> the RECs Vermont forfeits the right to call the energy renewable and all
> SPEED-generated energy assumes the average regional emission rate,
> increasing Vermont's carbon footprint.

>

> Consider the following exchange between Public Service Board Chair James
> Volz and a witness for Green Mountain Power regarding the word
> "renewable" in testimony before the PSB on Feb. 4, 2011, page 187. The
> initial topic of the testimony is a report that the PSB is required to
> write in 2017 on the achievements of the SPEED program.

>

> GMP: . the rub will come when Vermont assesses how we do on achieving
> SPEED goals. And a report or similar document is issued that describes
> what renewable sources does Vermont have. That would be a moment at
> which this concern (double counting) might arise.

>

> CHAIRMAN VOLZ: So if we didn't ever do that report, and just make that
> assessment, then we could avoid that problem perhaps. That may be a
> legal question, I don't know.

>

> GMP: I had not thought about it that way, sir.

>

> CHAIRMAN VOLZ: We could encourage all the renewables we want, put in
> place programs to encourage renewables, allow the RECs to be sold, but
> as long as we don't make a claim somewhere publicly that we have a
> certain amount of renewables then, or that we have met a specific goal,
> then we might be able to avoid the problem.

>

> GMP: I think that's fair, and you understand the dynamic. . But I think
> you have it right.

>

> CHAIRMAN VOLZ: Okay. Thank you.

>

> Now consider how Green Mountain Power and the Vermont Electric
> Cooperative "sold" the Lowell Wind project to Vermonters.

>

> At the same time that SPEED projects were being constructed Hydro-Quebec
> had excess hydro power equivalent to 10 times the output of GMP's Lowell
> project until 2023 that is currently being sold for 3.5 cents per kwh
> with no addition to the buyers' carbon footprint.

>

> "Kingdom Community Wind means clean renewable energy built in Vermont
> for Vermonters."

>

> "We have always believed that this wind resource would provide a clean,
 > cost-effective energy resource for Vermonters, and this upgrade is
 > helping us achieve that goal."

>

> "This project [KCW] is an important part of Green Mountain Power's
 > strategy to provide its customers with long-term, stably priced
 > renewable energy."

>

> In none of these conversations do the Public Service Board, Green
 > Mountain Power, nor Vermont Electric Cooperative demonstrate an
 > understanding of the FTC standard for the use of "renewable energy."
 > Vermont's new renewable energy legislation also does not define
 > renewable energy consistent with FTC guidelines. None of the parties
 > demonstrate an ability to clearly communicate to Vermont's citizens.

>

> Vermont utilities currently receive about \$50 million annually from the
 > sale of RECs, this represents about 6 percent of the cost of
 > electricity. At the same time that SPEED projects were being constructed
 > Hydro-Quebec had excess hydro power equivalent to 10 times the output of
 > GMP's Lowell project until 2023 that is currently being sold for 3.5
 > cents per kwh with no addition to the buyers' carbon footprint. As a
 > citizen I wonder who made the decision not to buy this cost-effective
 > renewable energy. VEC buys GMP wind power for 12 cents per kwh and sells
 > the associated REC for about 5.5 cents kwh increasing our collective
 > carbon footprint.

>

> As Vermont's new renewable energy program is trotted out again with the
 > Blittersdorf-proposed 5 megawatt wind project in Irasburg, be watchful
 > for the deceptive use of language. According to 9 V.S.A. § 2453 "
 > deceptive acts .. in commerce . are unlawful." While no longer allowing
 > double counting, current policy still allows RECs to be sold out of
 > state increasing our carbon footprint.

>-----

> <http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20150918/OPINION02/709189951/1018/OPINION>

>

>

>

> Opinion

> <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

> |Letters

> <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION02>>

> Solar collectors are blue plague

> September 18, 2015

> Re: "Report: Green energy drives Vt. jobs," Sept. 15. The thought of the
 > blue plague of solar collectors overspreading Vermont's green vistas
 > reminds me of an American officer's quote from the Vietnam War: "It
 > became necessary to destroy the town (in order) to save it."

>

> RICHARD L. BROWN

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>
> Rutland
> -----
> <http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/17/solar-task-force-learns-space-demands-of-vermonts-future-energy-needs/>
>
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>
> HIGH SPACE DEMANDS FOR VERMONT'S FUTURE SOLAR FARMS IF ENERGY STAYS LOCAL
>
> MIKE POLHAMUS <<http://vtdigger.org/author/mike-polhamus/>> SEP. 17 2015,
> 9:05 PM 31 COMMENTS
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>
> South Burlington's new twenty-five acre solar farm promises to generate
> a reported 2.2 megawatts of electricity for the state, enough to power
> roughly 450 homes. VTD/Eric Blokland
>
> Vermont would need an additional 200 to 350 acres of photovoltaic cells
> each year to meet anticipated power demands in Vermont by 2050,
> according to future scenarios presented to state leaders Thursday.
>
> The proposed scenarios could meet the legal requirements for power
> generation by the year 2050, but they are meant to be considered as
> possible developments, rather than understood as plans or goals, state
> experts told members of the Solar Siting Task Force.
>
> At the second meeting of the task force, a legislative study committee
> charged with helping write a law to guide where solar farms can be

- > built, Asa Hopkins, Director of the Planning and Energy Resources
- > Division of the state's Public Service Department, presented the
- > challenges in meeting the state's long-term energy goals.
- >
- > Renewable energy sources account for about 16 percent of Vermonters'
- > total energy consumption. The 2050 goal is to raise that to 90 percent.
- > All of the energy-production scenarios Hopkins presented were based on
- > the assumption that Vermonters want most of their energy produced in state.
- >
- > "This 90 percent goal reflects a strong desire among Vermonters to be
- > energy secure and energy independent, to ensure stable prices, and as
- > much as possible to rely on sources indigenous to Vermont," Hopkins said.
- >
- > "We don't have local fossil fuel resources, or nuclear fuel resources,
- > and so the resources indigenous to Vermont are renewables," he said.
- >
- > "We're trying to do our part to try to mitigate climate change, and meet
- > the state's greenhouse reduction goals . moving to a more efficient and
- > renewable energy mix helps keep more money local, resulting in a state
- > economic benefit," he said.
- >
- > The figures make up an important piece of the state's new Comprehensive
- > Energy Plan, which officials anticipate releasing to the public within
- > weeks.
- >
- > The plan raises the state's 16 percent renewable energy use to 25
- > percent by 2025, Hopkins said.
- >
- > The state is using current technology to develop models for
- > energy-production projections decades into the future, Hopkins said.
- > Current projections show that 150 kilowatts of power is generated for
- > every acre of solar panels, Hopkins said.
- >
- > If the state used solar cells to deliver the majority of future power
- > needs, an additional 8,000 to 13,000 acres of panels would need to be
- > built over the next 35 years.
- >
- > Policymakers intend to put their "thumb on the scale" and encourage
- > solar developers to install panels on structures, several task force
- > members said. There are at present roughly 3,650 acres of commercial
- > building area in the state, Hopkins said.
- >
- > Demand for power in Vermont is expected to be 9 terawatt-hours per year
- > in 2050, Hopkins said. That projection assumes dramatic reductions in
- > power requirements as the result of improved efficiency and conservation
- > measures, Hopkins said.
- >
- > The state of Vermont currently uses between 5 and 6 terawatt-hours per year.
- >
- > Members of the Solar Siting Task Force say they're in an "exploratory
- > phase" now, prior to developing and delivering recommendations to the
- > Legislature by mid-January.

>
> The nascent task force had some detractors during a half-hour public
> comment period following Hopkins' presentation and another by landscape
> architect and planner David Raphael.
>
> Kathleen Nelson disputed the group's credibility. The task force, she
> said, does not include a single public advocate and is stacked with
> industry representatives.
>
> "This task force is devoted to promoting the industry," she said.
>
> Montpelier resident Ben Eastwood said communities might benefit from
> community solar arrays as an alternative to large installations put in
> place by out-of-state corporations.
>
> Vermonters in general support the state's renewable energy goals,
> Gabrielle Stebbins, the executive director of Renewable Energy Vermont
> and a task force member.
>
> "The majority of Vermonters, when you poll them, they still poll very
> much in support of conservation, and renewables, and having local
> energy, just like they support local foods," she said.
>
> Noelle MacKay, commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community
> Development, said task force members are still trying to pin down what
> issues confront the group.
>
> "I think we're still in the exploratory phase," she said.
>
> The group's goals still need to be precisely articulated, she said. They
> must also determine how to arrive at those goals, how to meet the
> concerns of members of the public, and how to meet the needs of developers.
>
> "I think this issue is really complex," MacKay said. "There are a lot of
> different pieces.
>
> "The Legislature put this committee together, and assigned who's on it,"
> she said. "The people who are there will do their best to find the
> facts, to understand the issues, and make some thoughtful
> recommendations to the Legislature this year."
> -----
> <http://www.wcax.com/story/30055272/uvm-plans-to-go-solar>
>
>
> UVM plans to go solar
>
> /Posted: Sep 17, 2015 12:31 PM EDT//Updated: Sep 17, 2015 7:02 PM EDT/
> By Eliza Larson
> CONNECT <<http://www.wcax.com/story/30055272/uvm-plans-to-go-solar#>>
>
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> <http://wcax.images.worldnow.com/images/8818474_G.jpg>

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> <http://wcax.images.worldnow.com/images/8818479_G.jpg>
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> <http://wcax.images.worldnow.com/images/8818480_G.jpg>
> BURLINGTON, Vt. -
>
> The University of Vermont announced plans to become more solar-friendly,
> but it's looking to providers to help decide where to put the panels.
>
> In order to brighten UVM, the school is turning toward the sun. UVM is
> considering a number of expansions that will affect how it powers its
> campus. In a partnership with the Burlington Electric Department, the
> school is looking at several projects to bring more solar power on campus.
>
> "Instead of picking any one project, we put the whole campus up for an
> RFP. Ask solar developers where we should build solar on campus," said
> Neale Lunderville, Burlington Electric Department general manager.
>
> Lunderville says solar developers are using a map of the campus to
> generate ideas for potential solar panel locations.
>
> "The University of Vermont has a long history of being a very
> environmentally conscious, green university. And by working together
> with a green utility like Burlington Electric, we're finding ways they
> can both create local power, create some revenue streams for them which
> they may not have had before and contribute to the overall fabric of
> that environmental consciousness that they have," said Lunderville.
>
> Lunderville says proposals must include plans to build solar panels on
> campus buildings or solar canopies over parking lots. They want to avoid
> the campus green spaces, a tactic he thinks will not detract from the
> campus' beauty. Some students agree.
>
> "I don't think it's bad at all. I think it kind of - it would be
> beneficial to the school. Obviously it's already a super green school
> with all the recycling and all the alternative energy, but I think it
> would just improve it," said Hannah Kenney, UVM freshman.
>
> Other students think building a more solar-friendly campus emphasizes
> UVM's effort to be environmentally conscious.
>
> "I'd feel more comfortable with a lot more solar panels around, you
> know. Renewable energy is definitely the future," said Tripp Pace, UVM
> junior.

>
> "The school supports being environmentally friendly and it really just
> brings it up and helps more," said Nichole Brady, UVM freshman.
>
> Lunderville says BED will work with the university to decide which
> proposals are best suited for the school. It could be more than one, but
> in the end, it's the university that decides where to attract the sun.
>
> Proposals must be received by BED no later than Nov. 15 of this year.
>
> -----
> <http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20150915/NEWS03/709159923/1004/NEWS03>
>
> Report: Green energy drives jobs
> By Neal P. Goswami <<mailto:neal.goswami@rutlandherald.com>>
> VERMONT PRESS BUREAU | September 15, 2015
>
> MONTPELIER - Gov. Peter Shumlin is touting a report commissioned by the
> Vermont Department of Public Service that shows rapid job growth in the
> clean energy industry.
>
> So-called green energy jobs - from solar, wind and other renewable
> energy sources - have spiked in the past few years, Shumlin said Monday.
>
> "The clean energy industry grew by 6.2 percent this year. It now
> supports 16,231 jobs. That's up 1,000 jobs from a year ago," the
> governor said at Building Energy, a Williston construction firm
> specializing in energy efficiency. "We expect to add an additional 1,000
> jobs in the next six months."
>
> The second annual report found that the green energy sector in Vermont
> has grown by 9.8 percent since 2013 and now includes 2,519 businesses.
> More than 80 percent of those businesses have 10 or fewer employees, and
> about 66 percent have fewer than five employees.
>
> "The choices that we're making about energy, moving from dirty oil and
> coal to renewables, getting energy efficiency right, is creating jobs
> for Vermonters. It's working for our economy," Shumlin said. "It's also
> reducing rates for Vermonters and putting money in their pockets."
>
> State officials said they were unsure how many of the more than 16,000
> jobs in the clean energy sector are directly with energy businesses. The
> total includes ancillary jobs, including professional services like
> accounting, that derive some business from that sector.
>
> "Anything where someone feels they are either partially or fully
> contributing to the clean energy economy is included," Public Service
> Commissioner Christopher Recchia said.
>
> Still, the number of jobs within the clean energy industry is on the
> rise and projected to grow about 6 percent next year, he said.
>

> The renewable energy boom, particularly in solar, has allowed the state
> to reduce incentives for solar production. Recchia said the state was
> providing incentives worth more than \$2 per kilowatt-hour for solar
> production several years ago to encourage its growth. Last year the
> incentive was dropped to 20 cents and was eliminated this year
> altogether, he said.

>
> "We're no longer providing incentives for solar, and it's not because we
> don't like solar - it's because we were successful. The businesses have
> grown, they have matured, and they were successful," Recchia said.

>
> The popularity of solar energy has some people concerned that
> installations are becoming too large and too prevalent. Ranger Solar, a
> New York-based company, is proposing at least four 20-megawatt solar
> farms in Barton, Highgate, Ludlow and Sheldon. The projects would double
> the solar output in Vermont, and each would require hundreds of acres.

>
> Shumlin said Monday he has concerns the Ranger Solar proposal may be too
> big, too fast. "So, we all have to work together to figure out how we
> get this right. At the same time, we can't let it slow down the efforts
> that we're making right now, the success that we're having," he said.

>
> The governor also said the state cannot "move fast enough to get off oil
> and coal and move toward renewables." He said Vermonters will naturally
> disagree over the appropriate size and scope of solar projects.

>
> "There is going to be a vigorous debate in Vermont as we move from
> generation out there somewhere to solar, wind and other forms of energy
> that are generated right before our eyes. It's no different, I would
> suspect, than probably the debate that went on in general stores and
> Main Streets when the last governor from Putney, George D. Aiken, had to
> run power lines to the last mile of every community," he said. "I bet
> you there were plenty of people who thought those power lines were ugly
> and didn't understand why they were cutting the trees down . and
> replacing them with power lines."

>
> Shumlin said the debate is healthy, and the state must figure out "what
> is too big and make sure that we do this in a way that's in keeping with
> Vermont's extraordinary natural beauty."

>
> "We can do that. I'm convinced of it," he said. "Where I get concerned
> is when the public loses faith in the process that we have in place that
> not only invites that debate but helps to resolve that debate."

>
> That process, through the Public Service Board, works and should be
> maintained, Shumlin said. Local communities have their concerns
> considered as the board vets projects, he said. But some residents and
> municipalities have expressed frustration in recent years when projects
> they oppose get the green light from the PSB.

>
> "I think that if local municipalities had veto power over energy
> projects, over telecommunication projects - any of the questions where,

> ERIN MANSFIELD <<http://vtdigger.org/author/erin-mansfield/>> SEP. 20
> 2015, 11:00 AM 2 COMMENTS
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/20/uvm-aims-to-add-a-megawatt-of-solar/#comments>>
>
> The University of Vermont announced Thursday it would work with the city
> of Burlington to build solar panels on rooftops and over parking lots.
>
> The goal is to build 1 megawatt of solar - about half the size of the
> largest commercial solar farms in the state - among different projects.
> Burlington already has about 1.8 megawatts of solar among 81 different
> projects.
>
> The Burlington Electric Department is part owned by the city government.
> The utility is asking for proposals from developers willing to build the
> solar projects. The proposals are due by Nov. 15, and the department
> will follow up on the proposals they like.
>
>
> Neale Lunderville
>
> Neale Lunderville, the general manager for the Burlington Electric
> Department, said UVM is the utility's biggest customer. The idea for the
> university to do more solar projects came up during conversations about
> how the university could further its mission to protect the environment,
> Lunderville said.
>
> He said the Burlington Electric Department would most likely buy any
> power produced from the panels, whether through the state's net-metering
> law, which applies to projects of 500 kilowatts or less, or through a
> long-term contract between the university and the electric department.
>
> "In Burlington, unlike a lot of communities, we don't have a lot of
> green space that would be OK to turn into a solar array, so we need to
> be creative in Burlington," he said. "We're looking for rooftop and
> solar canopies for parking areas as ways to utilize our built
> environment in a more robust fashion."
>
> "We're not using up the green spaces we have left here," Lunderville
> said. "With the price of solar coming down, some of these solar canopies
> for parking lots, the prices are becoming more affordable. We're hoping
> that we'll get some interesting proposals back from people."
>
> Bob Vaughan, UVM's director of capital planning and management, said the
> project is still in the exploration phase. The university already has
> more than 100 kilowatts
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2012/08/30/uvm-installs134-solar-panels-at-its-spear-street-farm/>>of
>
> solar among different parts of campus, he said. This project would
> increase the university's capacity tenfold.
>
> Any tax benefits
> <<http://vtdigger.org/fullimagestory/solar-is-everywhere/>>, including the

> 30 percent federal Business Investment Tax Credit that expires at the
> end of 2016, would go to the developer because the university is a
> nonprofit, Vaughan said. It's too early to say whether the renewable
> energy credits would be sold, but all parties are in agreement on
> preserving green space.
>
> "The idea that anybody would want to propose anything like on our main
> green or on our open green space on our campus is not attractive to
> begin with," Vaughan said. "We value our green space just as much as any
> other place on campus."
>
> Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger said he supports the project as a way
> to combat climate change. He said solar would also help the utility
> manage peak loads during summer, when the sun is shining and
> Burlingtonians are running their air conditioners.
>
> "We really want to see Burlington supporting and driving that leadership
> (toward renewable energy)," Weinberger said. "I don't think there's a
> whole lot of examples of city-owned utilities out there pushing that
> kind of transformation.
>
> "I think most Vermonters think that climate change is one of the major
> societal challenges of our time, and we need to move away from fossil
> fuel-based energy systems, and renewable energy is increasingly becoming
> a viable alternative," he said.
>
> -----
> <http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/17/uvm-burlington-electric-to-partner-on-solar-projects/>
>
>
>
>
> UVM, BURLINGTON ELECTRIC TO PARTNER ON SOLAR PROJECTS
>
> PRESS RELEASE <<http://vtdigger.org/author/press-release/>> SEP. 17 2015,
> 8:57 PM LEAVE A COMMENT
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/17/uvm-burlington-electric-to-partner-on-solar-projects/#respond>>
>
> News Release - UVM, BED
> September 17, 2015
>
> Contacts:
> Jeff Wakefield, University of Vermont, 802.578.8830
>
> Mike Kanarick, Burlington Electric Department, 802.735.7962
>
> /Mayor Weinberger and President Sullivan Announce UVM-City Solar
> Partnership, Release RFP /
> BED to Facilitate Solar on UVM Properties
>
> Burlington, VT - Mayor Miro Weinberger and University of Vermont (UVM)
> President Tom Sullivan today announced a partnership between UVM and the

> City of Burlington to develop solar energy projects on UVM campus
> properties to capitalize on opportunities to make Burlington an even
> greener community. UVM and the City released a request for proposals
> (RFP) from solar generation providers that encourages a wide variety of
> projects, including roof-top installations and solar canopies over
> parking areas. The goal of the partnership is the generation of one
> megawatt of electricity. Burlington Electric Department (BED) will
> manage the RFP process, and proposals are due to BED by November 15, 2015.

>
> "Today's announcement serves as another example of both the City's
> ongoing commitment to powering our community with renewable energy and
> collaborating with UVM to make Burlington stronger," said Mayor
> Weinberger. "Burlington's future will shine more brightly as we build
> non-polluting, locally-sourced, renewable power."

>
> Burlington currently is home to 81 solar photovoltaic projects,
> generating 1.8 megawatts of power for the City. The UVM additions to
> Burlington's renewable energy sources would help ensure the availability
> of low-cost, locally-generated power during times of high use, such as
> hot summer days when demand for energy is greatest. Consequently, peak
> energy production and usage will coincide, offsetting costs and reducing
> reliance on more expensive energy sources.

>
> UVM President Sullivan stated: "UVM welcomes this community partnership
> with the City of Burlington and appreciates BED's accomplishments as a
> national leader in energy innovation. This partnership provides us with
> the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to Burlington's
> renewability, sustainability, and efficiency efforts and to being better
> stewards of our environment."

>
> BED General Manager Neale Lunderville stated: "BED is thrilled to
> partner with our largest customer to grow our City's solar portfolio.
> Community partnerships like this one present opportunities to carry out
> the Mayor's vision of adding solar generation and other renewable,
> sustainable energy sources to power our City."

>
> Solar power systems have the advantage of integrating low maintenance,
> non-moving mechanical parts, which provide quiet operation. Even more
> important, constant sunlight is not required for solar to be viable; new
> storage technology allows for power to be generated, stored, and used
> when needed.

>
> Burlington has had past success using a similar RFP process to grow
> community solar installations on City-owned facilities. In December
> 2012, the City released an RFP that has led to new solar installations,
> including a 500 kW array on the parking garage rooftop of Burlington
> International Airport and a 150 kW rooftop array at BED headquarters.
> Other projects remain under consideration.

> -----
> <http://www.vnews.com/news/newsletter/18622190-95/strafford-weighs-solar-project>

>
>

> Strafford Weighs Solar Project
>
> By Rob Wolfe
> Valley News Staff Writer
> Thursday, September 17, 2015
> (Published in print: Thursday, September 17, 2015)
>
> South Strafford - As developers seek approval to build a major solar
> array at the former Elizabeth Mine site, disagreement over its financing
> illustrates statewide trade-offs Vermonters have made to get renewable
> energy sources up and running.
>
> In order to subsidize the added cost of building on contaminated land
> near the mine, Green Mountain Power plans to sell the energy credits
> from the 5-megawatt facility out of state - a practice that the
> Selectboard opposes.
>
> More than 50 residents, as well as legislators, state officials, energy
> experts, utility representatives, developers and town leaders, convened
> Tuesday night at Barrett Memorial Hall to discuss the matter.
>
> "If we've got to pay a few more dollars on our electric bill, I would do
> that to (use the energy locally) and get it right," Selectboard Chairman
> John Freitag said at the meeting, his remarks frequently interrupted by
> applause from residents.
>
> After the Selectboard voted to send the Public Service Board a letter
> supporting the project, Freitag said, he and his colleagues learned that
> much of the credit for the energy would go out of state rather than
> toward Vermont's requirements for renewables. Selectboard members then
> voted to condition their support on 100 percent of that solar energy
> supporting in-state goals.
>
> The developers - Strafford resident Dori Wolfe of Wolfe Energy and
> Massachusetts-based Brightfields Development - do not necessarily need
> Selectboard approval to move forward; however, the consideration may
> carry weight in their petition to the Public Service Board under Section
> 248, the regulatory process that covers energy projects in Vermont.
>
> Public Service Department Commissioner Chris Recchia said the
> out-of-state sales were necessary to finance the ongoing buildup of
> Vermont's renewable infrastructure.
>
> "This is renewable power that is going into the grid that's helping to
> transform Vermont, and there's a price for that," he said.
>
> Without this financing strategy, he later said, the price to accommodate
> such statewide development would have been an extra \$50 million on
> Vermont's collective electric bill, or about a 6 percent increase in cost.
>
> Recchia asked the Selectboard to support the project unconditionally,
> and let the issue of where the power is sold "sort itself out over time"

> as the Elizabeth Mine site becomes more profitable and begins to power
> Vermont.

>

> "We're getting there," he said. "Work with us."

>

> Though Wolfe came to the forum with representatives from Brightfields
> and Green Mountain Power, they largely left the defending of the project
> to Recchia.

>

> Freitag and another Selectboard member in attendance, Toni Pippy,
> appeared unswayed at the meeting's end, though they said the board would
> take the proponents' reasoning under consideration.

>

> Looming over these discussions is the question of how Vermont will meet
> a series of upcoming energy deadlines. Under state law, according to the
> Public Service Department's website, "Starting in 2017, 55 percent of
> each retail electric utility's annual sales must be met by renewables,
> increasing by 4 percent every third year until 2032, when 75 percent of
> sales must be met by renewables."

>

> And by 2050, the department's "Comprehensive Energy Plan" calls for the
> state to meet 90 percent of its electric, heating and transportation
> energy needs using renewables.

>

> With those goals in mind, much of Tuesday night's debate concerned the
> accounting system that tracks the flow of green energy.

>

> When a solar array, for example, produces 1 megawatt-hour of
> electricity, it also produces one renewable energy certificate, or REC.
> Because electricity produced here flows onto the same interconnected New
> England grid, the consumption of RECs is how the market tracks the use
> of renewable energy. Consuming one REC - or "retiring" it, as industry
> experts would say - is equivalent to using 1 MWh of green power.

>

> The main point of discord has been whether or not Vermont should sell
> its certificates elsewhere, where they may fetch a higher price.
> Proponents of the practice argue it secures more money for Vermont's
> energy infrastructure and helps other states meet their goals, while
> opponents say it discourages development elsewhere and uses Vermont's
> prime sites for projects that do not further the state's own energy plan.

>

> Vermont Law School Professor Kevin Jones explained this system to the
> public in a detailed half-hour presentation, during which he warned that
> "unbundling" RECs from the energy they represent could lead consumers to
> believe they are buying green energy when their carbon footprints
> instead will grow.

>

> "It's something that our legislators should be concerned about, it's
> something the (Public Service Department) should be concerned about,
> it's something the general public should be concerned about," Jones said.

>

> Using proper accounting practices, Jones said, one's carbon footprint

> without RECs must be calculated using the "residual mix" of the New
> England grid's non-renewable power, which mostly is fossil fuel.
>
> The Byzantine structure of energy accounting proved confusing to many
> listeners Tuesday night, and in one instance, as Jones explained a
> concept for a second or third time, a solar contractor sitting in the
> audience jumped in to explain. People began speaking over one another.
> Above the general uproar, the phrase "colony of Massachusetts" could be
> heard.
>
> For his part, Brightfields' Executive Vice President Ronald Kelly said
> the selling of RECs would not prevent other New Englanders from building
> their own renewable infrastructure - at least in Massachusetts.
>
> In the Bay State, according to Kelly, solar credits must come from
> in-state facilities. Out-of-state solar power, while it may count toward
> non-specific renewable energy goals, does not replace in-state solar, he
> said.
>
> "If Elizabeth Mine is built, it's not going to prevent Massachusetts
> from building its own 5-MW plant," Kelly told the crowd, "and that I can
> assure you."
>
> Lawmakers such as state Rep. Jim Masland, D-Thetford, viewed RECs
> differently than did Jones.
>
> In the eyes of Masland, who oversaw some of the state's early
> renewable-energy legislation in 2005, RECs always were meant to be sold
> to finance green development.
>
> Masland said he and other legislators had been "well aware" that the
> RECs could be sold out of state; in fact, he said, the intention 10
> years ago was to enable them to be sold to Massachusetts and Connecticut.
>
> "At that time we were ahead of them in developing renewable energy, and
> we were aware that we would be taking advantage of their need to buy
> RECs," Masland said. "So we did that."
>
> "To ask that the RECs be retired immediately from this makes this
> project just not possible," Recchia told audience members.
>
> "We're paying substantially more - you all will be paying substantially
> more - than for a green-field project of this size," he added, "and the
> RECs are helping to finance that."
>
> Those on both sides appeared to agree that the Elizabeth Mine site, a
> contaminated area that underwent a \$50 million cleanup sponsored by the
> Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program, was ideal for a
> large solar array. The Superfund designation restricts the allowable
> uses for those 1,400 acres and, according to Wolfe, the project must be
> completed by 2016 before a 30 percent federal tax credit runs out.
>

- > Projects of this nature - but not quite the same scale - already are
- > appearing in nearby Vermont towns.
- >
- > In Strafford itself, easily visible from Route 132 is an 110-kilowatt
- > array at the Strafford Saddlery which, thanks to a state grant, may
- > retire all of its RECs, according to Wolfe.
- >
- > In Norwich, members of the town Energy Committee have proposed a 150-kW
- > array in the roughly 3-acre field enclosed by Route 10A and the
- > Interstate 91 on-ramp. The project, which likely would be built and
- > financed by a private installer, earned the support of the town's
- > Selectboard in July, although its energy would not go toward the town's
- > needs.
- >
- > In South Royalton, Vermont Law School announced on Tuesday a 500-kW
- > solar project that officials there anticipate will meet more than half
- > of the school's needs.
- >
- > Tunbridge Solar, a private company, will build and own the 4-acre array
- > on Gee Hill Road, and VLS will buy energy credits from the facility,
- > according to a Tuesday news release from the school. This project, too,
- > appears to respond to concerns over siting, as the panels will rest 4
- > feet above the ground to make way for grazing sheep.
- >
- > The discussion of solar siting in Vermont will continue today in
- > Montpelier, where Recchia is scheduled to share remarks with the Public
- > Service Department's Solar Siting Task Force.
- >
- > -----
- > <http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20150917/OPINION01/709179955>
- >
- > Opinion
- > <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
- > | Editorials
- > <<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION01>>
- > A solar state
- > September 17, 2015
- > Now that Rutland has achieved the distinction of becoming the solar
- > capital of New England, Vermonters should establish the goal of making
- > Vermont the nation's solar state.
- >
- > It may be a counterintuitive notion - one of the cloudiest states
- > becoming a more productive solar state than, say, Arizona. But then it
- > was not immediately evident that Rutland was a great candidate for its
- > solar achievements.
- >
- > One of the challenges that Green Mountain Power faced when it announced
- > its bid to take over Central Vermont Public Service was to assuage the
- > sensitivities of the Rutland community, which had long been the
- > corporate headquarters of CVPS. One of its initiatives was to establish
- > an Energy Innovation Center downtown and to promote downtown
- > development. Another was to establish the goal of making Rutland produce

- > more solar power per capita than any city in the region.
- >
- > Now it has done that. But as Mayor Christopher Louras noted, this
- > accomplishment is not so much about the kilowatts produced as it is
- > about the collaborations and the new directions that GMP has fostered.
- >
- > The effect of the work by GMP and others has been to stimulate the
- > economy statewide. A report from the Public Service Department released
- > earlier in the week said that the clean energy industry now supports
- > more than 16,000 jobs, creating 1,000 jobs in the last year alone. The
- > industry grew by 6.2 percent in the last year, according to the report.
- >
- > These numbers include more than the actual energy companies and their
- > workers. It includes workers supported by the industry, such as
- > accountants, public relations specialists, subcontractors. The wide
- > spin-off effect of the energy industry underscores its importance to the
- > economy. Similar spin-offs occur in other sectors. Ski areas, for
- > example, support restaurants. The construction of houses boosts business
- > for furniture stores.
- >
- > Skeptics of the clean energy boom point to the fact that the industry
- > benefits from tax incentives. But that is the point of tax incentives -
- > to ignite businesses that serve a recognized and larger social good. The
- > good of clean energy is that it replaces other forms of energy and
- > begins the economic transformation needed to combat climate change. That
- > is a necessity that must never be minimized or ignored.
- >
- > The role of GMP, meanwhile, has been an unusual one. In other parts of
- > the country (Arizona, for example), utilities are pushing to limit the
- > development of solar power (even though the solar power available to
- > Arizona could power the nation). That's because they don't want their
- > share of the energy market reduced - they see solar as a threat to them.
- >
- > In contrast, GMP views the large utilities as dinosaurs that will soon
- > be replaced by a different model of energy production. The term is
- > "distributed power," which means power generated from small sources
- > distributed throughout the landscape, rather than produced at a large,
- > central generator and sent over wires far and wide. That means large
- > solar arrays, but more and more it also means solar panels on the roof
- > of your home or of your neighborhood school or church or shopping plaza.
- > With this model of energy production, the power from the grid would
- > serve as backup to locally produced power.
- >
- > What has to happen now is for the state to team up with GMP and other
- > utilities to make Vermont the solar state. It's cloudy in winter, but
- > except on the darkest days there are photons to be harvested. For those
- > without suitable rooftops, there are community arrays to be developed.
- > Gov. Peter Shumlin has been a major booster of solar development, and
- > whoever follows him in office after next year's election needs to
- > recognize the potential for the state to serve as a clean energy
- > pioneer. GMP appears to be committed to a role showing the nation's
- > utilities that there is another way to do business. Vermont can join

> -----
> <http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20150916/NEWS02/709169867>
>
>
>
> Complaint heard about weedy Springfield solar field
> By Susan Smallheer <<mailto:susan.smallheer@rutlandherald.com>>
> Staff Writer | September 16,2015
>
> SPRINGFIELD - The Select Board agreed to put pressure on the developer
> of the North Springfield solar facility at the corner of routes 10 and
> 106 to tidy up the overgrown and weedy site.
>
> Resident John Graves complained to the board Monday night about the
> project by Dennis McPadden, saying it was in a prominent spot entering
> Springfield and gave a bad first impression.
>
> "That is a real eyesore with the weeds growing," Graves said, adding
> that a resident wouldn't be allowed to let their lawn get that overgrown
> and weedy. "This place needs to be cleaned up," he said.
>
> "Can you tell them to straighten that up? It's like they don't care,"
> Graves said.
>
> Select Board Chairman Kristi Morris said "maybe their properties could
> be better maintained," and added that the town would try to use its
> influence to have the solar facility "mowed and kept as orderly."
>
> Graves said he was perplexed why the state didn't give the towns any say
> over the building and maintenance of the solar projects.
>
> "Why doesn't the state give the towns any authority to question these
> people?" he said.
>
> Morris said that the town had recently signed a contract with McPadden
> to receive solar-generated electricity, but from a different solar
> facility in North Springfield.
>
> "We can contact Mr. McPadden. If we are purchasing power from him, we
> don't want our property looking like that," Morris said.
>
> The other McPadden solar array, a joint project with Green Peak Solar,
> is off Cemetery Road in North Springfield.
>
> But Graves' biggest concern was more than the high weeds growing up
> between the rows of solar panels. The town is virtually powerless, he
> said, on a key issue.
>
> He said he supported solar and wind generation, but towns needed to have
> some control.
>
> Also, Graves raised concern about the loss of farmland to the solar

> projects, and pointed to a proposal in nearby Ludlow where 125 acres of
> current hayfields could be converted to solar panels by a New York City
> developer, Ranger Solar LLC.

>

> "I disagree with the use of agricultural land. We really don't have
> enough of it anyway," Graves said.

>

> While the solar developer does need land, he said, he shouldn't use land
> being used by farmers.

>

> "Why don't the communities have a say?" he said.

>

> The Select Board said it wasn't a town issue, but a decision by the
> Legislature to give that authority to the Public Service Board, which
> has the control over the development of all power generation facilities
> in the state.

>

> "I have to say I agree with you, John," said Selectman Peter
> MacGillivray, adding that despite common perception, the town doesn't
> have the authority to force people to maintain their properties so it
> doesn't adversely affect the value of neighbors' properties.

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> power in this particular region (which I think is completely nuts for a
 > long list of technical reasons), and also his advocacy of a fraudulent
 > renewable energy credit trading policy (now finally overturned) and
 > finally now also with his general disregard for the details of solar
 > siting.
 >
 > There is enormous solar capacity in Vermont, and a huge amount of this
 > crucial type of generation could be sited here in a very sensitive way.
 > But Mr. Klein is basically just creating a free-for-all for developers
 > and takes a "shove it down their throats" attitude toward siting. This
 > is gradually but surely undermining public support for renewables, and
 > it is only a matter of time before he will have totally destroyed
 > majority public support for renewables.
 >
 > I don't believe his comments should be aired at length without being
 > countered by the rising tide of Vermonters who now consider his
 > "advocacy" of renewables to be a shameful sham.
 >
 > Ben Luce
 > Lyndon
 > The writer is a professor at Lyndon State College.
 > -----
 > <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/politics/2015/09/16/lobbying--clean-energy-montpelier/32517255/>
 >
 >
 >
 >
 > Tens of thousands spent on energy lobbying
 >
 > Paris Achen
 > <<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/staff/10042438/paris-achen/>>, Free
 > Press Staff Writer 7:22 p.m. EDT September 16, 2015
 >
 >
 > Advocates and industry spent tens of thousands of dollars to push
 > renewable energy bill in Montpelier.
 >
 > (Photo: GLENN RUSSELL/FREE PRESS)
 >
 >
 > STORY HIGHLIGHTS
 >
 > * Renewable energy
 > * Lobbyist disclosures
 >
 > COMMENTEMAILMORE
 >
 > Advocates and industry spent tens of thousands of dollars to push a bill
 > that established Vermont's first renewable energy standard, according to
 > lobbyist disclosures filed with the Vermont Secretary of State.
 >
 > Act 56 was designed to reduce greenhouse gases and to avoid an

> electricity rate hike associated with the state's ability to sell
> renewable energy credits to other states. The program is dubbed RESET
> (Renewable Energy Standard and Energy Transformation).
>
> According to lobbyist disclosures due Tuesday, environmental advocacy
> groups and utility companies spent considerable cash promoting the bill,
> H. 40.
>
> Vermont Public Interest Research Group alone paid its advocates more
> than \$50,000 between April 1 and the end of the legislative session, May
> 16. Not all of that amount was earmarked for lobbying for the energy
> bill, but it is a "reasonable guess" that VPIRG's advocates spent the
> most time on that bill, said Executive Director Paul Burns.
>
> "This was a big priority for VPIRG this session," Burns said of the
> energy bill.
>
> Green Mountain Power spent nearly \$50,000 on lobbying efforts during the
> same period, though it was unclear how much of that went toward the
> energy bill. Vermont Natural Resources Council spent \$10,430. Other
> supporters included Iberdrola Renewables, reporting \$5,100, AllEarth
> Renewables reporting \$3,300, and Conservation Law Foundation, reporting
> \$2,587.
>
> "Clean energy development in the state has been a major priority for
> decades, and the importance has only grown as we have seen the need to
> grapple with climate change," Burns said. "In past sessions, we were
> working on other clean energy bills. This was the session clearly was
> the one that the Legislature was going to do a renewable energy
> standard. It wasn't VPIRG that came up with the concept, but if it was
> going to happen, it was going to happen now, and we needed to be a part
> of it."
>
> Their investment paid off. The bill passed 121 to 24 in the House and 22
> to 6 in the Senate.
>
> In contrast, Vermonters for a Clean Environment spent just \$600 about
> two-thirds of which was spent opposing the energy bill, said executive
> director Annette Smith. Another opponent of the bill - Energize Vermont
> - reported zero spending as of April 1.
>
> Mark Whitworth, an Energize Vermont board member, said he lobbied for
> changes to the bill that would have placed more restrictions on sitings
> of renewable energy projects but chose not to take a salary. Whitworth
> wanted to give municipalities more power in decision making and to set
> standards for protecting natural resources during sitings.
>
> "There were a couple of times when some standards might made it into the
> bill on the Senate side," Whitworth said. "Whenever there was a threat
> that might constrain energy developers, these groups went into action
> together to twist arms," he said, referring to VPIRG and VNRC.
>

> announced today. VLS, guided by the school's Energy Clinic and
 > Sustainability Committee, selected Tunbridge Solar to install the solar
 > project.

>

> "This new solar farm brings to fruition a goal we set years ago as part
 > of the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment,"
 > Mihaly said. "The Vermont Law School community is proud to be a model of
 > sustainability for higher education institutions across the country. I
 > credit our Energy Clinic at the Institute for Energy and the Environment
 > for this achievement and congratulate the faculty and students involved
 > in the solar project."

>

> Professor Kevin Jones, deputy director of the Institute for Energy and
 > the Environment, has worked on the solar project with student clinicians
 > since last fall and selected Tunbridge Solar after evaluating seven
 > proposals from a competitive solicitation on the school's behalf in
 > December 2014. Per the agreement, Tunbridge Solar will build and own the
 > 4-acre project, and VLS will buy all net-metering and renewable energy
 > credits. Further, VLS will retire all renewable energy credits in order
 > to ensure that the solar energy from the project reduces the campus' and
 > Vermont's carbon footprint.

>

> The project will be constructed with the same top-rated SolarWorld
 > panels used on the two arrays on the VLS campus. SolarWorld is the
 > largest U.S. solar manufacturer.

>

> "The solar project will enable us to lower our greenhouse gas emissions,
 > to reduce our-and Vermont's-carbon footprint," Jones said. "It's a win
 > for our sustainability efforts at VLS and a win for the greater
 > community. Our student clinicians have gained invaluable experience
 > working on the project, and we're supporting the local economy by
 > working with a local company that hires local contractors."

>

> Aaron Kelly '16 of Tunbridge Solar worked to site the project to
 > complement the agrarian landscape and allow sheep to graze under the array.

>

> "The solar panels will be elevated four feet above the ground to enable
 > sheep to graze beneath the array while it's producing renewable energy,"
 > said Kelly, who is working toward a Master of Energy Regulation and Law
 > (MERL) at VLS. "We have taken a thoughtful approach to designing this
 > project, and we are proud to be working with a number of talented and
 > experienced local contractors to bring this new solar array into reality."

>

> For more information about the solar project or the Energy Clinic at
 > VLS, call Kevin Jones at 802-831-1054 or email
 > energyclinic@vermontlaw.edu <<mailto:energyclinic@vermontlaw.edu>>.

>

> The Institute for Energy and the Environment at Vermont Law School
 > provides accessible resources on contemporary energy law and policy and
 > is modeled on the fundamentals of a successful public policy consulting
 > firm. The IEE distributes scholarly, technical, and practical
 > publications; provides forums and conferences for professional education

> and issue development; and serves as a center for graduate research on
> energy issues, with environmental awareness. IEE research associates are
> selected from students in the energy and environmental programs at
> Vermont Law School, top-ranked in the nation for environmental law. For
> more information about the Institute for Energy and the Environment,
> email jthomas@vermontlaw.edu <<mailto:jthomas@vermontlaw.edu>> or call
> 802-831-1151.

> -----
> http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28818376/nearly-entire-water-board-resigns-pownal

>

>

>

>

> Nearly entire water board resigns in Pownal

>

>

> Former chairman cites acrimony over solar and finances for leaving

>

> By Edward Damon

>

> edamon@berkshireagle.com <<mailto:edamon@berkshireagle.com>> @BE_EDamon

> on Twitter

>

> POSTED: 09/15/2015 06:04:59 PM EDT0 COMMENTS

> <http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28818376/nearly-entire-water-board-resigns-pownal#disqus_thread>

>

> POWNAL - Four members of a local water system's board, including the
> chairman, have all resigned.

>

> Ray Bub, chairman for Pownal Fire District No. 2's Prudential Board,
> said he and others have resigned in light of acrimony over a proposed
> solar array and accusations from residents that the board mismanaged the
> district's finances.

>

> "We're just disgusted at being blamed for something we're trying to do
> that's good for the water system," Bub said in an interview Tuesday.

>

> Bub pointed to the Aug. 17 meeting where residents interrupted a
> presentation from a solar developer and called for a vote on the issue.

>

> "We don't want to work for that kind of attitude," Bub said.

>

> "Let them take over and see how they do," he added, alluding to
> opponents telling the press that residents are willing to serve on the
> board for free.

>

> Bub and members Doug Roberts and Alex DeSamsonow submitted letters of
> resignation at Monday's meeting at the Solomon Wright Public Library.
> Brian Quinn submitted his letter on Aug. 20. Member Walt Moreau, who
> owns and rents out a home within the district boundaries, resigned Aug.
> 5 after it was discovered that, under the bylaws, a member must reside

- > on the district full-time.
- >
- > The district's bylaws state the Selectboard now must appoint temporary
- > members to the board, according to Bub, and new members will be
- > nominated by residents at the district's annual meeting in November.
- >
- > "We are looking forward to a new volunteer board coming in and getting
- > the water district back on track with input from all the residents,"
- > read a statement issued by residents Tuesday. "We encourage
- > transparency, good governance and community involvement in the future
- > water board."
- >
- > The board had proposed a 150-kilowatt array on a 5.4-acre field that's
- > home to the district's well head and pump house, located on Route 346
- > about a quarter of a mile north of Main Street.
- >
- > Members said the project by Green Lantern Group, LLC of Waterbury would
- > save the district some \$3,600 a year and prevent their raising water
- > rates, currently \$115 per quarter.
- >
- > But opponents were worried the solar panels could contaminate the water
- > supply and lower property values. They also took issue with members
- > having their water bills forgiven and a stipend of \$30 for each meeting
- > attended, which they say added up to over \$20,000 over several years.
- >
- > The project was struck down last month by a vote of 12-31.
- >
- > But Bub said there was no science to back up opponents claims. The type
- > of solar panels with the most heavy metals, such as gallium and cadmium,
- > wouldn't be well suited for Vermont's climate. And water in the aquifer
- > is some 70 feet below ground, he said, protected by clay beds.
- >
- > Bub also noted train tracks, an abandoned factory and a paved road are
- > all above the same aquifer, as well as some opponent's houses.
- >
- > "The now former members of the board drink the water themselves," Bub
- > said. "They never would have proposed this if there was any danger to
- > the water supply."
- >
- > But residents remain unconvinced.
- >
- > "Residents prefer to err on the side of caution when it comes to their
- > drinking water," they said in the statement. "They did not want to
- > become the 20 year experiment."
- > -----
- > <http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/15/gmp-declares-victory-on-merger-promise-to-make-rutland-city-a-solar-capital-2/>
- >
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- >
- > GMP DECLARES VICTORY ON MERGER PROMISE TO MAKE RUTLAND CITY A SOLAR

> CAPITAL
>
> ERIN MANSFIELD <<http://vtdigger.org/author/erin-mansfield/>> SEP. 15
> 2015, 8:47 PM LEAVE A COMMENT
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>
> on email
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/15/gmp-declares-victory-on-merger-promise-to-make-rutland-city-a-solar-capital-2/#>>
>
> Rutland Mayor Christopher Louras accepts a declaration of his city as
> the Solar Capital of New England from Mary Powell, president and CEO of
> Green Mountain Power. Photo by Erin Mansfield/VTDigger
>
> RUTLAND - Green Mountain Power announced Tuesday that the company has
> surpassed its mission to make this city the Solar Capital of New England.
>
> Rutland, with a population of about 16,000, now has 7.87 megawatts of
> solar among 38 projects in the city. They range from less than 1
> kilowatt to 2,500 kilowatts and serve more than 100 people and businesses.
>
> The city has soared past its 2012 goal to build 6.25 megawatts of solar
> by 2017. The state's largest utility says the new figure means the city
> has the most solar power per capita in New England.
>
> Green Mountain Power made the announcement at an event at a
> solar-powered home. Attendees included U.S. Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt.,
> Gov. Peter Shumlin, local aldermen, state representatives and dozens of
> people who work in the energy industry.
>
> "There are metrics that have been established, and those metrics have
> been met," Rutland Mayor Chris Louras said of the solar city designation
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/02/christopher-louras-rutland-taking-leadership-in-vermonts-climate-economy/>>.

>
> Louras said he values solar in part because it makes the city more
> resilient in the event of a natural disaster.
>
> In September 2014, the city finished the project that was a partnership
> with Green Mountain Power and groSolar. The groups built a 2.5-megawatt
> project on a former landfill
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2014/08/13/old-rutland-landfill-site-new-solar-microgrid/>>
> on
> Gleason Road, just behind the Rutland High School football field.
>
> The array has 7,700 panels and batteries that can store 4 megawatts of
> energy that's not being used. In the event of an emergency, the city can
> use the battery-stored energy to power Rutland High, which served as an
> emergency shelter during Tropical Storm Irene.
>
> Mary Powell, the president and chief executive officer of Green Mountain
> Power, said the solar projects that brought Rutland over the goal were
> built through collaboration among government, community organizations
> and Green Mountain Power.
>
> "I would say none of [this achievement] is attributable to the
> three-phase power that runs down Route 7," Powell said, calling her
> company obsessed with its customers. "I think this is really a
> Vermont-driven culture."
>
> The push to make Rutland the state's solar city was also a proposed
> economic development tool submitted as part of the 2012 merger agreement
> when Green Mountain Power absorbed Central Vermont Public Service, or
> CVPS, in Rutland Town.
>
> The utility wrote in a 2012 plan
> <http://www.greenmountainpower.com/upload/photos/369Rutland_Solar_City_Implementation_Plan.pdf>
> that
> it would recruit solar developers, but also "encourage developers to
> open local offices here, hire local labor, and make long-term
> commitments to Rutland's downtown area."
>
> "Individual contributions to the redevelopment effort will cumulatively
> help revitalize the local economy, contribute new and sustainable jobs,
> and begin the re-occupation of existing commercial spaces that have been
> vacant for too long," the plan said.
>
> The downtown area's street-level offices surpassed 90 percent occupancy
> in 2014, and won acclaim for two locally owned women's clothing stores.
> Business offices now include solar developers such as SunCommon,
> SameSun, groSolar, and NRG Energy, a Fortune 500 company.
>
> "Businesses are basically taking advantage of the resurgence and
> enthusiasm about Rutland and coupling that with saving on energy costs,"
> said Tom Donohue, chief executive officer of the Rutland Regional
> Chamber of Commerce. "It's more about the solar product right now and

> more about the industry."
>
> Most of the energy being produced as part of the 7.87-megawatt total
> <<http://rutlandvtbusiness.com/locating-in-rutland/solar-array-sites/>> comes
> from nonresidential projects, including Green Mountain Power, city-owned
> projects and panels that serve large institutions, such as the College
> of St. Joseph and the Rutland Regional Medical Center
> <<http://vtdigger.org/2013/02/21/rutland-regional-medical-center-to-host-150-kilowatt-green-mountain-power-solar-farm/>>.
>
> There are a handful of residential roof-mounted arrays, including the
> home of Robert and Janet McClallen, who hosted Tuesday's news
> conference. Residential customers also benefit from the West
> Rutland-based NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, which performs \$100
> energy audits that often end with homeowners weatherizing and installing
> solar.
>
> For people who could not install solar on their roofs for affordability
> or structural reasons, NRG Energy built the first group net-metered
> solar array in the country in Rutland in 2014. The 150-kilowatt array
> now serves 50 customers, including Louras, who save \$5 per month on
> their Green Mountain Power electric bills.
> -----
>
> <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2015/09/15/vermont-city-claims-title-solar-capital-new-england/72343428/>
>
>
>
> Rutland claims 'solar capital of New England' title
>
> WILSON RING8:16 p.m. EDT September 15, 2015
>
> (Photo: Wilson Ring/AP)
>
> COMMENTEMAILMORE
>
> RUTLAND The city of Rutland is assuming the mantle as the "solar capital
> of New England."
>
> Officials with Green Mountain Power, Vermont's biggest utility, have
> been working for years to change the way the city of 16,500 produces and
> uses electricity.
>
> They announced the new designation Tuesday, saying a survey they
> conducted found that the city produces more electricity per capita from
> the sun than any other in New England. It follows the recent completion
> of the 2.5-megawatt Stafford Hill solar project atop an old landfill
> near the high school.
>
> The 7,722 solar panels brought the city's total solar power capacity to

- > Dailey Precast LLC.
- >
- > According to the PSB, Cement Plant Solar has designated Robert and
- > Charles Grant as the group administrators responsible for all
- > communication. Meters will be added to the group or removed from it only
- > under agreement between Cement Plant Solar and group members.
- >
- > According to the PSB, the project will span roughly 4 acres on an
- > approximately 10-acre parcel that has historically been used for
- > concrete and logging operations. The project is expected to consist of
- > solar panels ground-mounted "on a rack system, inverters, two new
- > utility poles, overhead and underground utilities, and transformers." It
- > will also involve extending an existing gravel road, a concrete
- > equipment pad and shed, and perimeter fencing.
- >
- > The PSB stated the project's operation and maintenance must be
- > consistent with the plans and evidence submitted to the PSB. The Board
- > must approve any substantial change to the project. Cement Plant Solar,
- > the petitioner, will be required to limit construction of the facility
- > to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 8 a.m.
- > and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction will be allowed on Sundays or
- > state or federal holidays. Cement Plant Solar also must obtain all
- > necessary permits and approvals before site preparation or construction
- > begins. The net-metering system's installation must be completed within
- > one year.
- >
- > According to the PSB, the project will not have any negative effect on
- > aesthetics, historic sites or "rare and irreplaceable natural areas." It
- > will be set back more than 50 feet from existing property boundaries and
- > more than 100 feet from Route 100.
- > -----
- > <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/kyocera-suncommon-and-kendall-sustainable-infrastructure-introduce-innovative-community-solar-array-program-in-vermont-2015-09-15>
- >
- >
- > PRESS RELEASE <<http://www.marketwatch.com/search?mp=2007&rs=true>>
- >
- >
- > KYOCERA, SunCommon and Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure Introduce
- > Innovative Community Solar Array Program in Vermont
- >
- > Published: Sept 15, 2015 11:05 a.m. ET
- >
- > <<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/kyocera-suncommon-and-kendall-sustainable-infrastructure-introduce-innovative-community-solar-array-program-in-vermont-2015-09-15/print>>
- >
- >
- > Program expands solar power access to a wider audience
- >
- > SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Sep 15, 2015 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Kyocera Solar, Inc.

>
 <<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://www.kyocerasolar.com/&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=Kyocera+Solar%2c+Inc.&index=1&md5=4901adc6f7111a8ab0c98186c22158dc>>
 > announced
 > today a partnership for an innovative Community Solar Array (CSA)
 > Program in Vermont that offers a cost-effective way to participate in
 > solar. Approximately 50 projects averaging 200kW each will enable
 > consumers to virtually purchase about 13 megawatts of solar power
 > without installing individual rooftop systems.
 >
 > The CSA Program is a group effort coordinated by Kendall Sustainable
 > Infrastructure
 >
 <<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://kendallinvestments.com/strategies/ksi/&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=Kendall+Sustainable+Infrastructure&index=2&md5=a438dd764f59c326b7a9f9d06b5bc047>>
 > (KSI),
 > an impact investment firm and principal sponsor; Kyocera, a leading
 > solar manufacturer providing solar panels and additional capital;
 > and SunCommon
 >
 <<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://suncommon.com&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=SunCommon&index=3&md5=25961153eeb5403d899056798262a208>>,
 >
 > Vermont's largest residential solar company heading project development,
 > EPC and ongoing support.
 >
 > Under the new CSA Program, landowners within an electrical service
 > territory can arrange to dedicate a portion of their property to
 > generating clean energy - a new "cash crop" helping farmers and Vermont
 > landowners stay on their land. Each acre of solar panels generates
 > enough electricity to power about 30 homes.
 >
 > Participants enroll to virtually purchase power generated by solar
 > arrays within their service territories. Solar power is fed into the
 > grid, and participants purchase an amount of grid power equal to that
 > generated by the arrays. The partnership expects to construct 50 CSAs,
 > with nearly a dozen online or expected to be operational by year-end and
 > the remainder in 2016.
 >
 > "This Community Solar Array Program offers a tremendous opportunity for
 > Vermonters to benefit from solar energy, even if their rooftops don't
 > provide ideal conditions," said Hitoshi Atari, President, Kyocera Solar,
 > Inc. "With our partners, we're able to implement best practices,
 > including integration of residential solar, flexible participation terms
 > and deep community engagement."
 >
 > "With the help of Vermont's supportive solar policies, we can offer
 > Community Solar with no up-front purchase cost," said SunCommon
 > co-president Duane Peterson. "CSA participants simply sign up for the
 > program for a monthly payment that's actually less than their former
 > power bill. It turns out that doing the right thing while saving money

> is a popular offering."

>

> "This pioneering program combines mature aspects of the power and solar industries with innovation, and is the right opportunity to put our impact investors' capital to work building clean energy," said John Chaimanis, Managing Director of Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure.

> "SunCommon has put together an excellent program in Vermont and is a detail oriented community partner; combined with world-class solar power equipment and sophisticated financing, our capital is making a direct impact both for Vermont ratepayers and the global climate."

>

> For more information, click here

> <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://americas.kyocera.com/press-releases/press-releases_20150914.htm&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=here&index=4&md5=93df636faf0b9e6538dd568851c905a5>.

>

> *About the Program Participants*

>

> *Kyocera Corporation*

>

<<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://global.kyocera.com/&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=Kyocera+Corporation&index=5&md5=137668ab25d6d862dbafc15e4ba05530>>of

>

> Kyoto, Japan, recorded consolidated sales of \$12.7 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2015. The company has a 40-year tradition of innovation in solar energy research, development and manufacturing, with a U.S. customer base served by *Kyocera Solar, Inc.*

>

<<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://www.kyocerasolar.com/&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=Kyocera+Solar%2c+Inc.&index=6&md5=62fb221b96646bcbb18a7437647f62fe>> of

> Scottsdale, AZ.

>

> *SunCommon*

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<<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://www.suncommon.com&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=SunCommon&index=7&md5=c026437180408f52ae23c90afe994118>>is

>

> a Vermont Benefit Corporation founded on the belief that everyone deserves a healthy environment and safer world - and that clean energy is where it starts. Now the state's largest residential solar business, SunCommon is a Certified BCorp committed to the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

>

> *Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure, LLC*

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<<http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http://kendallinvestments.com/strategies/ksi/&esheet=51180865&newsitemid=20150915005844&lan=en-US&anchor=Kendall+Sustainable+Infrastructure%2c+LLC&index=8&md5=f6afc23a56266ff1b67c65457a36ed9e>>(KSI)

>

> is an investment firm affiliated with Kendall Investments focused on building, financing and owning sustainable infrastructure projects and

> renewable energy assets. The firm works closely with investors,
> developers, product suppliers and other parties to build world-class
> renewable energy facilities that have positive, long-term financial,
> social and environmental impacts.
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> SOURCE: Kyocera Solar, Inc.
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> LPI Communications for Kyocera
> Leasa Ireland, 310-750-7082
> leasa@lpicommunications.com <<mailto:leasa@lpicommunications.com>>
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> http://solarindustrymag.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.15678
> Solar And EVs Seem Like A Match Made In Heaven, But The Devil Is In The
> Details
> in E-Features
> <http://solarindustrymag.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?cat.2626>
> By Nora Caley on Wednesday 16 September 2015
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> Vol. 2 | Issue 57 | September 17, 2015
>
> It seems like a perfect combination: solar power and electric vehicles
> (EVs). Simply set up some charging stations that are powered by solar
> panels, and the EV driver can enjoy an emissions-free recharge. After
> all, solar costs are decreasing, and EVs are gaining in popularity, so
> why not combine the two?
>
> Several charging station providers and solar companies say it is indeed
> possible to have solar supply at least some of the electricity to power
> plug-in vehicles, but there are a number of hurdles to a wide rollout of
> solar-powered EV charging stations.
>
>
> "It's a perfect matchup when you consider all the developments with
> battery storage and you consider where PV is going as those costs come
> down and the performances go up," says Robert P. Boisvert, executive
> vice president of GOe3 LLC.
>
> Scottsdale, Ariz.-based GOe3 is building a network of EV charging
> stations on interstate highways. The focus is on connecting cities and
> eliminating owners' range anxiety - the fear of not being able to reach
> a charging station before the batteries run dry.
>
> "EV drivers are charging at home 70 percent of the time," Boisvert says.

- > "The real need is on interstates. You are not going to care if there is
- > a charging station two blocks from your house."
- >
- > Not every EV site is suitable for solar. The company has plans to build
- > 1,000 charging stations over the next five years. Of these, 10% of them
- > might be solar.
- >
- > "Each site requires its own analysis," Boisvert says. "It depends on the
- > location, how much sun they get, peak demand charges. Most of what we
- > focus on are sites that have relatively high power requirements, so
- > solar makes sense."
- >
- > The interstate locations will likely be travel center locations or
- > places of interest. The chargers will be DC fast-charging stations, as
- > opposed to the Level 2 stations that take longer. The DC fast-charging
- > stations would not need separate inverters.
- >
- > "Instead of having to buy another inverter for solar arrays, we can use
- > the one inherent in our charging stations," he explains.
- >
- > So far, GOe3 has built seven charging stations. None are solar, but
- > solar might be in the works for a planned location in Arizona.
- >
- > Solar can make sense in some charging stations in the future, says Josh
- > Castonguay, director of generation and innovation for Green Mountain
- > Power in Vermont. "I think you will definitely see charging incorporated
- > with solar, no question, in certain locations," he says.
- >
- > The more ambitious your solar EV charging requirements are, the more
- > space will be needed.
- >
- > "If you're trying to cover a little bit of charging, you need a few
- > panels," Castonguay says. "If you want to cover all your charging, you
- > would need to include batteries, as well - for at night - or limit the
- > charging only to solar hours."
- >
- > Also, the space would have to be a good solar site - one that is not
- > shaded. One complication is that EV chargers are often near commercial
- > buildings, which cast long shadows. Nevertheless, there could be
- > opportunities for combining solar and EV charging. Providing solar EV
- > charging during peak demand hours could take a lot of pressure off the grid.
- >
- > Green Mountain Power recently announced a partnership with NRG EVgo to
- > build 12 Freedom Stations in Vermont. The first one opened in Rutland,
- > Vt., this year. The station can provide approximately 80% of a battery
- > charge in 25 minutes when using the DC fast-charging option. The Freedom
- > Chargers will also have Level 2 capabilities that provide up to 24 miles
- > of charge per hour.
- >
- > So far, these are not solar, but that could happen in the future,
- > Castonguay says. "Ideally, we will see locations with rooftop solar
- > installing a charger, as well, along with an energy storage capability,"

> he says.

>

> In San Diego, Envision Solar announced

> <http://solarindustrymag.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.15591>

> in

> August that it agreed to a partnership with ChargePoint, which operates
> an EV charging network in the U.S. and Canada. Both companies will offer
> ChargePoint chargers on Envision Solar's solar-powered EV charging
> products. The partners say the combination will enable EV owners to
> drive on sunshine.

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> Pete Antos-Ketcham Joins Energize Vermont as Executive Director

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> Antos-Ketcham Brings 22 Years of Natural Resource Management to
> the Statewide Non-profit

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> <<http://energizevermont.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=40084d4d56aa6021153649ac1&id=04811713d8&e=bdab6878c6>>Huntington,

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> VT - Energize Vermont is pleased to announce that Pete Antos-Ketcham,
> formerly of the Green Mountain Club (GMC), has joined the organization
> as its new Executive Director. Antos-Ketcham succeeds Mark Whitworth.

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> While Executive Director, Whitworth led many of the organization's
> initiatives including lobbying for effective climate change policies,
> environmental preservation, and sensible deployment of renewables.
> Whitworth will continue to carry out policy analysis for Energize
> Vermont and will serve on its Board of Directors.

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> Pete Antos-Ketcham comes to Energize Vermont with over 22 years in
> natural resource and non-profit management. Antos-Ketcham is leaving his
> position as GMC's Director of Land and Facilities Management. While at

> GMC, he oversaw the construction of the club's new Visitor Center in
 > Waterbury Center, Vermont. The Visitor Center consumes no fossil fuels
 > and employs appropriately-scaled renewables to produce more electricity
 > than it uses. It demonstrates an approach to an energy future that
 > doesn't require massive energy sprawl.

>

> Antos-Ketcham said, "I look forward to continuing the great work Mark
 > has done. He has been a clear voice advocating responses to climate
 > change that respect our communities and preserve our natural resources.

>

> "People are worried about climate change and they are concerned that
 > Vermont's climate change response has gone very wrong. They wonder what
 > has happened to the traditional guardians of Vermont's natural resources
 > heritage. Why are the conservation groups not promoting real
 > conservation? Why aren't natural resource groups protecting our natural
 > resources? Why is no one representing the real interests of the public?

>

> "Energize Vermont offers an alternative for the many people who are
 > disturbed by the conduct of these old-line organizations. Energize
 > Vermont has no industry moguls on its board and has not compromised its
 > mission in exchange for large donations.

>

> "Our first priority in responding to climate change has to be the
 > preservation of our irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Industrializing our
 > mountains, forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands may be profitable
 > for a few, but it is jeopardizing the ability of countless species to
 > adapt to a changing climate. Energy developers are destroying our
 > environment and our cultural heritage for meager amounts of intermittent
 > electricity. I will advocate sensible energy policies that bring our
 > communities together-policies that emphasize conservation, efficiency,
 > and thoughtful siting of Vermont-scale renewables."

>

> Outgoing Executive Director, Mark Whitworth said, "We look forward to
 > Pete's leadership of Energize Vermont. His many years of experience with
 > the Green Mountain Club, his advocacy for effective climate change
 > response, and his passion for preserving Vermont's landscape, make him
 > ideally suited to Energize Vermont's mission to promote common-sense
 > renewable energy solutions."

>

> Board member and former Executive Director Lukas Snelling said, "We
 > couldn't be happier with the appointment of Antos-Ketcham to lead the
 > organization. Pete comes to us with deep experience in natural resource
 > management and is greatly respected in the environmental community for
 > the work he has done. Pete will continue the organization's growth and
 > work with his fellow Vermonters toward an energy future that emphasizes
 > sustainability, conservation, adaptation, and resilience."

>

> Pete Antos-Ketcham is a resident of Starksboro, where he lives with his
 > wife and two children. He graduated from UVM with a B.S. in
 > Environmental Studies. He has served six years on the ATC (Appalachian
 > Trail Conservancy) Stewardship Council, the Board of Directors for the
 > RMC (Randolph Mountain Club) and as an Emergency Medical Technician for

> Stowe Rescue, Stowe Mountain Rescue and Huntington First Response.
>
> /Energize Vermont is a non-profit education and advocacy organization
> that promotes renewable energy solutions that are in harmony with the
> irreplaceable character of Vermont, and that contribute to the
> well-being of all her people. This mission is achieved by researching,
> collecting, and analyzing information from all sources; and
> disseminating it to the public, community leaders, legislators, media,
> and regulators for the purpose of ensuring informed decisions for
> long-term stewardship of our communities./
>
> For more information about Energize Vermont and the organization's
> mission, visit energizevermont.org
> <[http://energizevermont.us1.list-](http://energizevermont.us1.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=40084d4d56aa6021153649ac1&id=1e29dc3e95&e=bdab6878c6)
> [manage1.com/track/click?u=40084d4d56aa6021153649ac1&id=1e29dc3e95&e=bdab6878c6](http://energizevermont.us1.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=40084d4d56aa6021153649ac1&id=1e29dc3e95&e=bdab6878c6)>.

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> Annette Smith
> Executive Director
> Vermonters for a Clean Environment
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Chen, Zachary

From: *redacted*
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:15 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update Oct. 7, 2015 - Jim Kenyon: Town an Afterthought in Windsor Solar Plans
Attachments: 8302 PFD.pdf; ATT00001.htm

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update Oct. 7, 2015 - Jim Kenyon: Town an Afterthought in Windsor Solar Plans
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:25:15 -0500
From: *redacted*
To: *redacted*

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Wed, 7 Oct 2015 13:19:35 -0400
Subject: VCE Solar Update Oct. 7, 2015 - Jim Kenyon: Town an Afterthought in Windsor Solar Plans
To: vce@vce.org

--Attached: Proposal for Decision in Chelsea Solar, Bennington upper project
--PSB Site Visit and Public Hearing Oct. 19 for 4.99 MW solar project in Hartford
<http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/orders/2015/2015-10/8580%20PHCmemo%26schedORD.pdf>

<<http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/orders/2015/2015-10/8580%20PHCmemo&schedORD.pdf>>
—Richmond VT GMP Solar PSB Public Hearing Sept. 24, 2015
https://youtu.be/lBxKUu_CrZ0
— No posting yet for the third meeting of the solar siting task force
<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

<http://www.vnews.com/opinion/featuredvoices/jimkenyon/18905568-95/jim-kenyon-town-an-afterthought-in-windsor-solar-plans>

Jim Kenyon: Town an Afterthought in Windsor Solar Plans

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

(Published in print: Wednesday, October 7, 2015)

On Aug. 28, 2014, state officials met behind closed doors in Montpelier to talk about the “potential for a large scale solar installation at the Southeast Correctional Facility in Windsor.”

For the next 10 months, the proposed public-private partnership with Green Mountain Power, the state’s largest utility, remained one of Montpelier’s better kept secrets.

Town officials in Windsor didn’t hear about the proposal until this summer. State Rep. Donna Sweaney, D-Windsor, wasn’t privy to the behind-the-scenes discussions, either, even though she is chairwoman of the House Committee on Government Operations, which by its very name suggests she should have been clued in.

I’m not surprised that the state and GMP wanted to keep their talks hush-hush.

When you’re planning to mar the Windsor countryside with 19,000 solar panels, the fewer people who know about it, the better.

In June, GMP and groSolar, a White River Junction-based company that designs and builds solar arrays, finally went public. The 4.25-megawatt array could power as many as 1,200 homes, and would be one of the largest solar projects in the state.

The 19,000 solar panels would be spread across 35 acres of former prison farmland. Since the state owns 900 acres around the Southeast State Correctional Facility, maybe the thinking was that no one in Windsor would notice if a small portion was sacrificed on the altar of Almighty Solar.

Apparently, it escaped their attention that the vast open fields and forestland were the nesting grounds of several uncommon bird species, including the golden-winged warbler. Or that the large tract of state-owned land with panoramic views was a natural asset that birdwatchers, hikers, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts have enjoyed for decades.

After initially being caught off guard, some people in Windsor quickly came together to organize the opposition. John MacGovern, John Mayo, Mike Quinn and Cassie George were among the residents who formed a grass-roots organization called Protect Your Land.

In August, I attended one of the group’s meetings at MacGovern’s house, a couple of miles away from the proposed solar site. Everyone made it clear that they recognized the need to develop renewable energy sources. But they didn’t appreciate not hearing what the state, GMP and groSolar had planned at the prison farm, as it’s known around Windsor, until the deal was nearly done.

Protect Your Land argued that Vermont communities should have more say in deciding where solar arrays go. The group pointed out that the way it currently works in Vermont, GMP only had to get approval from the state Public Service Board, not the town.

“This is a statewide issue,” MacGovern told me. “Communities need to be involved in a significant way.”

MacGovern, 63, was a four-term state lawmaker in Massachusetts before he moved to Windsor in 1999, so he knows how politics work. (Although he hasn’t been quite as successful in Vermont, losing bids as a GOP candidate for the state Senate and U.S. Senate.)

With a project of this magnitude, MacGovern was sure there must be a paper trail. In August, he filed public-record requests with the state Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Buildings and General Services, the two arms of state government most involved in the project. He asked for all documents, starting Jan. 1, 2014, relating to GMP and groSolar’s plans to construct a solar array on the Windsor State Prison grounds.

“We’re trying to find out how this whole thing started,” said MacGovern, who agreed to share the documents with me.

So far, he’s received more than 700 pages, many of which are copies of emails exchanged between key players in the deal. That includes former House Speaker Mike Obuchowski, who is now commissioner of Buildings and General Services, and Louis Porter, commissioner of Fish & Wildlife. (The reasons why their departments are doing the heavy lifting on the Windsor project is a topic for another day.)

GMP Director of Government Affairs Robert Dostis, a former legislator, and Bob Griffin, a now-retired vice president with the utility, were also part of the discussions, along with groSolar Executive Vice President Rod Viens.

But no one from Windsor.

“For the purpose of transparency, that’s not OK,” said Sweaney when I brought the emails to her attention this week.

State officials had ample opportunities in the 10 months to invite Windsor to the table. Sweaney was only a short walk away at the Statehouse. Town Manager Tom Marsh had also made a trip to Montpelier during the 2015 legislative session to meet with Sweaney and Obuchowski about the state’s future plans for the prison farm.

Somehow, the GMP proposal didn’t come up.

“That’s the part I find disingenuous,” said Marsh.

Windsor Selectboard Chairman Justin Ciccarelli told me, "We should have been involved from day one. We were kept in the dark until they needed us."

On Tuesday, I talked with GMP spokesperson Kristin Carlson. Shouldn't Sweaney, at least, have been made aware of what was happening?

"That's a fair point," said Carlson. "A lot of people were working on the project. We thought she had been brought in, and clearly she hadn't."

After reading the batch of documents that MacGovern received on Monday, I talked with Obuchowski. He sounded apologetic.

"We were so busy putting together the deal, along with our other duties, that we didn't reach out as much as we should have," he told me.

Public-private partnerships are all the rage. But when the state is doing business with big business behind closed doors, it can undermine public trust in government. And really makes people angry.

Call it solar disarray.

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Jim Kenyon can be reached at jkenyon@vnews.com <<mailto:jkenyon@vnews.com>>.

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510opinion-green-energy-views-can-coexist>
Home <<http://addisonindependent.com/>>

Opinion: Green energy, views can coexist

Posted on October 5, 2015 |

* Opinion

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/section/opinion>>

By Peter Rothschild

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/reporter-author-name/peter-rothschild>>

Rothschild graphic.png

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Vermonters can feel proud that we are out in front on many environmental issues including climate change. But as the push for more renewable energy continues, choices among types of renewable energy have been made that may result in the unnecessary scarring of thousands of acres of our landscape. Mercenary armies of solar developers, abetted by special

interests, have flocked to Vermont to reap financial rewards from subsidies and Investment Tax Credits.

While there are solar developers who are sensitive to the wishes of communities in which their installations might be hosted, there are those that purport to have "good neighbor policies" which in practice they have not followed. Horrendous conduct by some developers have fanned the flames of discontent so that many new commercial solar energy projects are facing push-back from communities in which these projects are to be sited.

Increasing our solar energy capacity has come at a cost of the degradation of our scenic environment, a schism between state government and municipalities, and a distortion of political process in Montpelier. An unbiased observer must admit that all is not well with the roll-out of renewable energy in our state as we cannot seem to find the right balance between disfiguring our land and responding to climate change.

So if a majority of Vermonters respect the environment, why is there so much conflict over the development of renewable sources of energy that are necessary to get us off carbon-based energy sources threatening to cook the planet? What are the circumstances and issues raising the ire of citizens and municipalities impacted by solar projects? How did this all come to be? What can be done about it?

1) For over forty years Act 250 protected Vermont and Vermonters from the effects of development through an application process that addresses the environmental and community impacts of projects that exceed a threshold in size. But when it comes to energy generation Act 250 is trumped by Section 248, and this difference in the project approval process created our tug-of-war over solar. The root of the problem is that Section 248 was intended to deal with very large public utility energy generation and is inappropriate for regulating small-scale distributed energy projects. The Public Service Board (PSB) is empowered by law in Section 248 to override town plans or zoning laws by stating it is in "the public good" to go forward with an energy generation project that is out of compliance with regulations voted upon by a municipality's citizens or which may be seen as obnoxious by those around it. As the number of solar projects proliferate, this issue alone is sufficient to create a struggle between the state and its local governments since the state is usurping power that used to belong to municipalities. By overriding local zoning laws, Section 248 has removed a property owner's protection against a neighbor's behavior that could negatively impact his or her property values.

2) In response to issues with the previous renewable energy law, the state legislature recently passed Act 56 (H.40), which permits a setback limit of only 25 feet from a neighbor's property line for ground-mounted solar arrays ten feet tall and covering one acre of land. In my town, a small shed must be setback 75 feet from a property line. The concept that a monstrous commercial solar project should be allowed a lesser

setback than a tiny shed is an affront to common sense.

3) Screening requirements for solar installations prior to Act 56 were nonexistent. The jury is still out on how the PSB will react to towns' setting their own screening requirements as are now allowed. But the many loopholes in this law make it likely that poorly sited and screened projects may still get PSB approval.

4) Many solar developers have done a pathetic job at fulfilling their commitments to screen their projects from neighbors and the community, and there is nothing to suggest that they will correct their bad behavior. Completed projects with virtually no screening are not uncommon, and there's one where six foot tall trees were planted 50 feet apart as a token gesture towards screening.

5) Current legislation permits developers of 150 kW solar projects, aka CSA's, to avoid the more onerous approval processes required of larger solar projects. This special treatment allows for a much faster approval time, smaller setback limits, and lack of proper decommissioning sureties and has resulted in numbers of 150 kW projects that often produce more public anger than their relatively small number of kilowatts is worth.

In summary, the improperly regulated solar expansion threatens the esthetic character of towns, and puts property values of homes near poorly sited or screened projects in jeopardy. It is only natural for people to fight to preserve the value of what is likely their largest investment. When folks who want solar-at-any-cost confronted the position of people who felt their homes were being threatened by solar, the battle began, and unfortunately our legislators did next to nothing in the 2015 session to correct the problem.

How were things allowed to get like this?

In response to climate change and its relationship to carbon-based sources of energy, Vermonters responded in a very positive way by adopting a schedule for replacing fossil-fuel energy sources with renewable energy. In their desire to "do the right thing", Vermonters unwittingly ceded control of their towns and esthetic environment to politicians and special interests who were willing to ride the crest of citizens' environmental concern. In 2011 when the Comprehensive Energy Plan was passed and included the goal of reaching 90 percent renewable energy by 2050, it seemed like a good thing. But by 2012 project siting problems were already obvious, and "The Governor's Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission" was created. The results of that commission's work were limited, unimpressive, and not adhered to.

Along the way, our government in Montpelier seems to have developed a preference for solar over wind and hydro projects. Having politicians picking winners and losers in areas of technology rarely ends well, and in this case raises the question of why there is an emphasis on solar when we live in a state with scant hours of sunshine (Vermont has 2,295

hours of sunshine annually, second lowest of any state in the country).

In my view, much of our situation is political. We have a number of instances in which legislators have moved into positions in state agencies. In 2013 Governor Shumlin appointed Margaret Cheney to the Public Service Board. Ms. Cheney previously was the Vice Chair of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee and is now in a position to approve projects engendered by legislation she helped write. Ms. Cheney is also the wife of Rep. Peter Welch, who is pushing in Congress for the renewal of solar subsidies. In addition, industry lobbyists have had an undue negative impact on policy.

This situation is best represented by an iron triangle involving state legislators, state agencies, industry lobbyists aligned with a powerful environmental lobby, and wealthy investors seeking a subsidized rate of return. The iron triangle is a unique relationship between the bureaucracy, the legislature, and lobbyists that results in the mutual benefit of all three of them. It is only fair to acknowledge that many of the people working in our state bureaucracy are very bright, hard-working and decent public servants, but they are part of the iron triangle. It is what it is.

State Legislature

Representative Tony Klein, Chairman of the Vermont House Committee on Natural Resource and Energy, has put in many years of hard work on energy related matters. However it is a bit troubling that as early as 2007 he was recognized and honored by Renewable Energy Vermont (REV), the solar and wind industry mouthpiece and key lobbying organization. Mr. Klein is primarily responsible for the creation of H.40 which became Act 56, doubling down on the pro-solar policies in place via previous legislation. In spite of promises Mr. Klein made during the past legislative session, his committee did not pass a bill regarding the siting and screening of solar projects.

Senator Chris Bray, is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. His committee did little to change H.40 created in the house, but in March of this year he did initiate a joint Senate-House public hearing on renewable energy siting. Unfortunately the voices of the public were allowed to be drowned out by those in the solar industry. Of the 56 people who spoke at the hearing, twenty-one of them came from SunCommon alone.

Special Interest Groups

REV (Renewable Energy Vermont), a nonprofit trade organization, is the renewables industry major lobbying entity. It is a huge force in bending state energy policy in its favor. Like the big-tobacco lobbies, REV pushes its agenda while dismissing negative outcomes to the community at large. REV has a seat on the newly formed Solar Siting Task Force headed by Chris Recchia, Commissioner of the Department of Public Service.

VPIRG, the not-for-profit Vermont Public Interest Group, is the state's largest consumer and environmental organization. VPIRG's approach to solar energy is virtually the same as REV's, "solar everywhere at any cost." VPIRG is headed by Paul Burns whose wife, Alyssa Schuren serves as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation Agency of Natural Resources. VPIRG is where SunCommon was born. It frequently serves as the training ground for future SunCommon employees. Duane Peterson, Co-President of SunCommon, is a Trustee of VPIRG. Matthew Rubin is also a Trustee of VPIRG, and he serves on the SunCommon Board of Advisors and is a Board Member of REV. There are times at which employees of VPIRG and SunCommon seem indistinguishable.

It would be wise if we Vermonters realize the dangers of special interests operating in Montpelier and hold our legislators accountable for the energy policies they enable.

So what can be done to get us back on track to achieve our renewable energy goals without social and environmental degradation? Here are a few ideas:

- Compel each municipality to provide an amount of renewable energy in proportion with its population. This would not only avoid the problems of overburdening certain towns, but it would also be in better alignment with the state's goals for a distributed energy grid. More energy would be produced close to where it is consumed.
- If municipalities are made responsible for providing their share of the state's renewable energy, it should be left to municipal governments to create siting and screening regulations they deem necessary and appropriate.
- If a municipality wishes to produce more renewable energy than its required share, it should be remunerated in a way that brings additional funds into the town.
- Treat the application approval process the same for all renewable energy projects over 50 kW.
- The legislature and state agencies should perform an annual cost-benefit analysis of emerging technologies, such as HVDC cabling. High Voltage Direct Current cabling could bring into Vermont 400 MW of power generated by wind and hydro in upstate New York and Canada at a cost about half of what we pay for the most efficient solar energy while sparing the disfigurement of 4,000 acres of the Vermont landscape.
- In order to stop the current solar gold rush, we should consider a moratorium on new solar installations until the Solar Siting Task Force has delivered its recommendations this coming January and until the legislature passes legislation that corrects most of the defects in our existing energy policy.

<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/solar-farm-might-launch-at-alburgh-missile-site/Content?oid=2933544>

Solar Farm Might Launch at Alburgh Missile Site

By MARK DAVIS

<<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/ArticleArchives?author=2266653>>

@DAVIS7D <<http://twitter.com/Davis7D>>

click to enlargeFROM A HISTORY OF THE 556TH STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON

<<http://media1.fdncms.com/sevendaysvt/imager/u/original/2933543/development1-1-8e49800cde443598.jpg>>

* FROM /A HISTORY OF THE 556TH STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON/

Small towns across Vermont are accustomed to looking after parks, libraries, old meeting halls and fire stations. But at the northwestern tip of the state, officials in Alburgh have been struggling to find a use for a peculiar piece of infrastructure.

For decades, the town has owned an underground missile silo that is 17 stories deep. At the height of the Cold War, it hosted an 81-foot intercontinental ballistic missile aimed at the Soviet Union and a five-man crew that was ready and willing to launch it.

Town officials had planned in recent months to put the nine-acre silo site on the auction block and to open the bidding at \$50,000. They worried, though, there might be a shortage of buyers for an obsolete military relic.

But it now appears the former hot spot could find a new life as a home for renewable energy: A Jericho businessman has submitted a proposal to turn it into a solar farm.

"It's not a done deal yet, but it sounds promising, that's for sure," selectboard chair Steve Aubin said.

Nestled on a spit of land between Lake Champlain and the Canadian border, the silo site doesn't look like much. A single chain, two feet off the ground, spans the entrance that is no longer guarded. Beyond it, on a weedy lot, two hulking metal Quonset huts stand sentry over concrete floors littered with metal sheets and tubes. The name of the half-mile-long strip of pavement that leads to the site — Missile Base Road — hints at the ominous history buried underground. A historical marker at the adjacent Alburgh Welcome Center spells it out: "First Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Site East of the Mississippi River."

Most of America's missile bases have been located in rural swaths of the West and Midwest. But in the early 1960s, as the perceived Soviet threat reached its peak, the Department of Defense decided to install 12 Atlas missiles at sites around the former Plattsburgh Air Force base, then one of the largest military facilities on the East Coast. From there, the

135-ton missiles wouldn't have far to go via the Arctic Circle to deliver nuclear warheads to the Soviet Union.

Ten of the silos were built in upstate New York: Vermont got two — in Alburgh and Swanton, where local farmers sold some of their land to the military. The silo designs were all identical.

Constructing the underground structures was dangerous work. According to the Plattsburgh /Press Republican/, a falling bucket plunged through the Alburgh silo and killed a 28-year-old worker from Gouverneur, N.Y. At least three other men died while working in the 12 silos.

Old-timers in Alburgh remember the day in 1962 when an Atlas missile rolled into town on a huge flatbed truck, as dozens of people lined the streets. Some utility poles along Route 2 had to be temporarily removed to make way.

Some locals worried that hosting the silo would cause the Soviets to target the area with their own missiles, according to media reports at the time. But most welcomed the influx of jobs and money that came with the project.

"It's difficult to go back to that day and time," said Jeff Stephens, an amateur historian who coauthored a book about the 12 silos: /A History of the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron/. "This was the day the Reds were out to get us. Either you're an American or commie. There was a lot of paranoia and fear. It was a frenzy. 'Oh, my gosh, we've got to do something. We have to make sure we are protected and can retaliate.'"

Once the silos were constructed, their crews worked in an underground launch-control center. They accessed it via a spiral staircase from an above-ground entrance protected by huge blast doors. A tunnel attached the control center to the much deeper silo.

Though each silo cost as much as \$18 million to build, their lifespans were short — and today they would probably be held up as a classic example of military waste. By 1967, rocket scientists had come up with a larger, more sophisticated missile, the Titan, that wouldn't fit in the 12 silos. The outdated missiles were taken away, and the local sites, once the focus of so much intrigue, fell dormant overnight. When their sump pumps turned off, water flooded the empty silos and command centers.

In Alburgh, the military welded shut the nine-ton silo doors, removed equipment from the Quonset huts, and gave the site to the town. Local officials eventually decided it would make a fine home for the Alburgh Highway Department.

Most of the other sites met similarly ignominious fates.

In Swanton, Chevalier Drilling Co. bought the Atlas site, stripped most of the metal and other materials from the silo, and sold the remnants of the \$14 million facility for scrap.

Other sites have remained untouched, though a few private owners have been more ambitious. In Champlain, Redford and Lewis, N.Y., owners have transformed the silos into livable homes. In Willsboro, N.Y., an artist bought a site and lives in one of the Quonset huts but has not attempted to restore the underground facilities.

The silos fascinate a small but passionate group of buffs, including Stephens, who says they shed important light on the era. "When you look at history, there's a romantic undertone," Stephens said. "Everyone goes, 'Wasn't that the perfect time?' The answer is, 'No.' These were mechanical beasts, and they were here to do a job."

The beasts have a certain allure, though. In Alburgh, volunteer firefighter and certified scuba diver Bill Gett admitted he has schemed for years about how to bust into the silo and dive to its murky bottom.

Gett, who runs an auto repair shop, said that he has studied designs and walked the site, and though the main entrance is sealed shut, he believes he has found a way inside.

He asked a former Alburgh selectman, a friend, for permission. "Don't you even think about it," the man said, Getts recalled. "You dive that, I kick your ass."

A few years ago, Gett got a phone call from Gerald Fitzpatrick, who had just bought the silo in Champlain, N.Y., and wanted someone to explore it before he started pumping the water out.

Gett rushed over that day — and dove in. He made it a little more than halfway to the bottom before turning back. He described the 52-foot diameter hole as "dark and eerie."

"Visibility was an inch if you were lucky," Gett said. "Even with dive lights, it didn't matter, it was too thick."

Officials in tiny Alburgh, with an annual budget of \$570,000, have long talked about selling the silo to raise money and get the property back on the tax rolls. The town is struggling economically: Two gas stations and a bank closed in recent years, and a general store is the only downtown commercial enterprise.

A few years ago, the highway department moved to a new facility across town.

Last summer, as the selectboard prepared to go to auction, Will Veve came calling about the solar project. He said he had been quietly scouring Vermont for properties that developers usually shun — brownfields. Veve figured it would be easier to get community support for a project that sits on land that would otherwise be difficult to develop.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources lists the Alburgh silo site as a

brownfield, as a result of minor contamination of some grass and groundwater around it. ANR investigators ascribed no blame for the contamination but noted that former workers regularly dumped solvents on the ground around the silo.

Working with his brother, Victor, Veve has proposed building a 500-kilowatt solar field, with about 2,000 solar panels — enough to power roughly 100 homes. As part of the deal, Alburgh would receive a monthly lease payment and cheap electricity for town-owned buildings.

"We like to look and say, 'What's the maximum public good?'" Veve said.

Veve, a 38-year-old University of Vermont graduate, acknowledged that he has no experience in solar projects. His current venture — which he declined to discuss in any detail — is a video-production company called Verde Media Group.

In recent years, Verde Media Group announced a new reality show, "Green Rusher," which proposed to follow people involved in the legal marijuana business. It has not been made — the website has been taken down, and its social media pages haven't generated any activity since February — but Verde said it's "in pre-production." Verde Media's quarterly report suggests it owns a subsidiary, Beautyject Inc., which is "the first company to offer needle-free technology adapted to the beauty care and cosmetic markets."

According to Verde Media Group's most recent corporate filing, it has \$49,000 in assets and \$1.6 million in liabilities and lost \$69,000 in the most recent fiscal quarter. Veve is listed as the company's largest shareholder.

Now launching a solar business, he has hired consultants and is talking about the permit process with ANR. The agency verified Veve's exploratory work and was scheduled to send officials to inspect the missile site this week.

Veve said he hopes Alburgh will qualify as one of ANR's net-metered projects, which allow small renewable-energy operations to sell power back to the main electric grid.

Sporting a trimmed beard and stylish eyeglasses, Veve has appeared at a few selectboard meetings, and its members have been supportive. "So far this is only the real offer that came along," Aubin conceded.

Last week, the selectboard unanimously voted to authorize the town attorney to start formal negotiations with Veve, who hopes to construct the facility in 2016.

While Veve said his proposed solar array would fit comfortably on the site's nine acres, he has no plans to do anything with the underground facilities. He has little interest in their history.

That has given some silo aficionados hope that it might be pumped out and opened up.

Gett promised he'd be first in line.

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20151006/NEWS01/710069895>

Brandon eyed as part of massive solar development

By Dan Colton <mailto:dan.colton@rutlandherald.com>

Staff Writer | October 06, 2015

BRANDON — State officials say a solar power company wants to construct a large solar field in Brandon as part of a statewide mega-development push.

Officials with the Public Service Department — the state body tasked with representing the public's interest in energy projects — said Ranger Solar LLC's 20-megawatt project far exceeds the electrical generation from other solar projects in Vermont.

"To put it in perspective, the largest project that's on the ground in Vermont has a capacity of 2.2 megawatts," said Jon Copans, PSD deputy commissioner. "So it's 10 times larger than the largest project on the ground."

Florence Solar LLC, a subsidiary of Ranger Solar LLC, is one organization from Ranger Solar's limited-liability portfolio. The Florence branch was created solely for the Brandon project, according to Ranger Solar documents.

The company is interested in six sites across the state, including an undisclosed Brandon location being pursued by Florence Solar.

Ranger Solar's power-purchase petition to the Public Service Department does not detail the precise location or size of the proposed Brandon solar field.

Adam Cohen, Ranger Solar LLC's president, declined to comment Monday when asked for project specifics.

Details for a similar Ranger Solar site, in Ludlow, require 125 acres for its solar array, said Howard Barton, Ludlow Select Board chairman.

Barton said a representative from the solar company met with and briefed the board last month.

But Brandon town officials said they haven't heard anything about the Ranger Solar petition.

"That I have not heard," Selectman Seth Hopkins said Monday.

Brandon isn't without its share of solar company courtships, although

the town doesn't have a solar field.

Select Board Chairman Doug Bailey said Monday that a 5-acre parcel of land in the town's industrial park is being eyed by several smaller-scale developers, but like Hopkins, Bailey said he hasn't heard a word regarding the Ranger project.

Bailey said the board is open to building photovoltaic infrastructure, at least at a smaller scale.

"The town is looking to go green and generate a bit of revenue," Bailey said.

Ranger Solar has filed preliminary information with ISO-New England, the New England power grid operator. It imports and transmits power to Vermont's 17 electric distribution companies, such as Green Mountain Power.

Last month, ISO-New England said it received six confidential requests to link into the region's electrical grid. The proposed Brandon development would connect to VELCO's Pittsford-Florence electrical substation.

Kerrick Johnson, spokesman for VELCO — which operates the Florence-Pittsford substation, among others — said that substation can withstand a large influx of power associated with large developments.

Ranger Solar still has to wade through several layers of oversight and permitting.

Susan Hudson, clerk of the quasi-judicial Public Service Board, said last week Ranger Solar has not filed for a certificate of public good permit, or CPG, which is required to begin construction.

Before a CPG permit, a 45-day comment and local review period must be completed, Copans said. The review process has not opened for the Brandon project.

"That's why information is a bit sparse," he said.

Vermont's new renewable energy legislation, Act 56, requires electric utility companies to generate 75 percent of all power from renewable sources by 2032.

"A 20-megawatt (array) would only help Vermont utilities meet this goal if the renewable energy credits are purchased or retained and retired by one of Vermont's facilities," Copans said.

He said RECs can be sold to surrounding states to help achieve their renewable standards.

Chris Recchia, commissioner of the Public Service Department, said the state would have to adapt to the large-scale proposal, taking a special

approach.

"I think we can deal with it," Recchia said in an interview last month.
"It's certainly a different animal."

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151006/NEWS01/710069939>

Solar project antes up

By Gordon Dritschilo <<mailto:gordon.dritschilo@rutlandherald.com>>

Staff Writer | October 06, 2015

GroSolar expects to begin work on its solar project on the former poor farms property later this year, but will start paying for the property now.

The solar developer made an agreement with the city in 2013 to lease the property and build an almost 1 megawatt solar array there. The project got all its permits last year, and then nothing happened. In an email last week to the Board of Aldermen, City Attorney Charles Romeo wrote that the city had reached out to the developer on the status of the project and gotten them to begin making lease payments.

"Despite the lease payments not being due until the project goes online, they have offered to pay the city the rents which have accrued since 12/30," he wrote — Dec. 30 of last year being when the company reported the project would commence.

Romeo said the lease payments total \$16,692 a year, though the \$5,000 the company paid to option the property would be applied to the first year's payments.

The letter goes on to indicate city officials may have considered breaking the lease due to a lack of movement on the project.

"Given that the lease does not set forth a specific timeframe in which to begin construction ... I do not see a potential default at this time," Romeo wrote.

Board of Aldermen President William Notte said there had been no detailed discussion, just a notion floated by Aldermen Ed Larson, who asked Romeo to look into the situation. Notte said he was not especially surprised by the delays to the project.

"Perhaps this is unfair — I'd be surprised if a GMP-driven one sat this long, but this is a smaller company with more hoops to jump through," he said. "I don't want to imply they haven't been good partners with the city, but I think it was a fair question of Alderman Larson to ask."

Larson said he wanted clarification on the city's ability to end the lease because he did not think the company should be able to sit on the property indefinitely without making payments to the city.

"If the lease had expired, technically, I'm sure there are a multitude of other firms out there that would like to lease that property," he said.

Rod Viens, GroSolar's executive vice president, said the company had hoped to start construction back in the spring but had some trouble securing financing for the project and was stretched because it had a number of similar projects underway around the state.

"We expect to get started on the site in the next three or four weeks, clearing brush on the site," he said, adding that the project should come online in February or March. "It's a little later than we wanted. We're trying to balance our construction schedule with permits and financing."

Viens said the company had no issue with beginning the lease payments.

“We wanted to make sure the city was kept whole,” he said. “We like to be a good business partner and we were fine with that.”

http://www.reformer.com/latestnews/ci_28921262/new-solar-array-kurn-hattin-property

Here comes the sun: Whitney Blake Company, Kurn Hattin christen solar array

By Domenic Poli

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POSTED: 10/04/2015 09:56:45 PM EDT 0 COMMENTS

<http://www.reformer.com/latestnews/ci_28921262/new-solar-array-kurn-hattin-property#disqus_thread>|

UPDATED: ABOUT 12 HOURS AGO

Jahnney Mane and Riley Daniels cuts a ribbon in front of the new solar array for the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children on Friday, Oct. 2.

<<http://www.reformer.com/portlet/article/html/imageDisplay.jsp?contentItemRelationshipId=7120677>>

Jahnney Mane and Riley Daniels cuts a ribbon in front of the new solar array for the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children on Friday, Oct. 2.

(Kristopher Radder Reformer Staff)

WESTMINSTER — Kurn Hattin Homes for Children has been changing lives since 1894.

Its campus is well-known and sits peacefully off Interstate 91. But travel just beyond the academic buildings and dormitories and you'll now find a steep gravel road, which leads to a new solar array made possible through a collaboration of the Whitney Blake Company and financial partner New England Kurn Hattin Homes, Inc. It was constructed by Integrated Solar. People associated with all interested parties met at the site at 12:30 p.m. on Oct. 2 for a ribbon-cutting at the new array.

Katrina Wilson, Integrated Solar's vice president of operation and sales, spoke to the crowd, which included recently retired Kurn Hattin Executive Director Connie Sanderson and her replacement, Stephen Harrison. Wilson later told the Reformer the new array takes in 200.88 direct-current kilowatts that are turned into 144 alternating-current kilowatts, which is what is used to power homes. Those alternating-current kilowatts, Wilson said, will produce 256,000 kilowatt hours, which is 38 percent of Kurn Hattin's consumption.

Wilson explained this first phase of the project will save Kurn Hattin \$144,000 over the course of 25 years — or \$5,760 per year. Wilson said the school will save \$25,000 a year in the second phase.

"This is just a win-win," she said.

Wilson said permitting for the array took eight months, which was followed by one month of groundwork and three weeks of installation. She said the array sports 648 panels, which have 310 watts apiece. The panels sit on more than an acre of land, though seven acres were cleared for the project.

According to Wilson, Integrated Solar installed a separate array for the Whitney Blake Company a year ago.

"Whitney Blake is a local company with ties to the school. Hardy Merrill brought the concept and knowledge of how to get it done to (the late)

Tom (Fahner), Connie and the Kurn Hattin Board. The rest is history," Wilson said at the site, reading a statement prepared by colleague Andy Cay. "Kurn Hattin desired to save operating costs, limit the impact of future electricity price increases and pursue renewable technologies. Whitney Blake was a willing financial partner that helped make these desires a reality.

"This kind of transaction has become commonplace in Vermont as non-profit municipalities and schools have sought to fund solar projects," she read.

Harrison told the Reformer the array is an exciting way to start off his tenure as Kurn Hattin's executive director.

A newly constructed solar array for the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children could save thousands of dollars in energy cost each year.
<<http://www.reformer.com/portlet/article/html/imageDisplay.jsp?contentItemRelationshipId=7120678>>
A newly constructed solar array for the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children could save thousands of dollars in energy cost each year. (Kristopher Radder Reformer Staff)
Contact Domenic Poli at 802-254-2311, ext. 277.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/06/mark-whitworth-vermont-needs-turnaround-in-energy-policy/>

MARK WHITWORTH: VERMONT NEEDS TURNAROUND IN ENERGY POLICY

OCT. 6, 2015, 7:05 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 11 COMMENTS

<<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/06/mark-whitworth-vermont-needs-turnaround-in-energy-policy/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Mark Whitworth, who is on the board of directors of Energize Vermont, where he was formerly executive director. Visit [EnergizeVermont.org](http://energizevermont.org/) <<http://energizevermont.org/>> to see a map of Vermont's Energy Rebellion./

Vermont has adopted some ambitious energy goals. The state could have engaged its communities in achieving these goals, but it did not. Instead, it has turned things over to energy developers, many of whom are running roughshod over our communities. They are poisoning the well of public opinion, turning community after community against renewable energy and against state government itself.

I am not going out on a limb by declaring that Vermont will fail to meet its energy goals. The state's policies are anti-environmental and anti-democratic. They empower the developers and disempower communities. They guarantee that there will be a backlash that will capsize the entire energy program. The reaction to the "shove it down their throats 'til they like it" strategy is going to be a huge factor in the 2016 elections.

You might get away with shoving one project down the throat of one community. But Vermont's energy plan relies on distributed electricity generation in all of our communities. Can you shove projects down all their throats? Our state government thinks so.

Poorly sited energy projects and poor treatment by developers have sparked an open rebellion in dozens of communities. These communities resent the state-sanctioned wrecking crews that cut forests, compromise wetlands, abuse agricultural lands, ignore municipal plans, defy town governments, and bully the neighbors. More communities will rebel as the wrecking crews, following scent of free government money, find new places to run amok.

The Northeast Kingdom town of Morgan just joined the rebellion. Their selectboard held an informational meeting to discuss a plan for a 500kW solar facility on a hillside that overlooks Seymour Lake. At the end of the meeting, residents and property owners voted 62-7 to oppose the project. They felt like they were being pushed around and lied to — they didn't like it.

A smart developer would have engaged Morgan in a discussion about project size, siting, screening, and community participation in the project. It may well be that the town would have welcomed such a project as a true community effort and a source of municipal pride.

For over 40 years, Act 250 has protected the Vermont landscape, elevated the importance of municipal and regional planning, and accorded respect to our citizens and communities. We have never needed it more.

But, the developer was David Blittersdorf and that's not how he operates. He told the people in Morgan that he would not respect their vote, would not "buy a hundred trees" to screen the project, and that he might decide to put industrial wind turbines on his recently purchased Morgan ridgeline. He also told them that he had an agreement to sell electricity from the Morgan project to Jay Peak. The Caledonian Record reports that Blittersdorf has no such agreement.

Mr. Blittersdorf's reputation preceded him to Morgan. He is known for his campaign contributions and for being one of the prime beneficiaries of the state's energy policies. He is known for erecting a wind measurement tower in nearby Irasburg without bothering to apply for a permit. He is known for advocating the depopulation of rural areas (like Morgan) and the destruction of 200 miles of Vermont ridgeline to accommodate industrial wind turbines.

Blittersdorf's history of being a bad neighbor is also well known. He abused the neighbors of his Georgia Mountain wind project by blasting fly-rock onto their properties, obtaining a court order to keep them from using their own land, and endangering them with illegal blasting. Adding insult to injury, Blittersdorf intruded upon an online support group for sick turbine neighbors, where he mocked, and taunted them. On his own Facebook page, he described retrofitting his turbines with "trunk monkeys" and posted a video of the beatings they would administer to people who opposed his projects.

Can you blame the folks in Morgan for being suspicious of David Blittersdorf?

If your town has land and power lines, then you can expect a visit from the wrecking crew. When the wrecking crew comes to your town, you may discover that they've been conspiring for months with the state to surprise you with their project. For some reason, they prefer to surprise your community with a bad project rather than cooperate with you to develop a good one. It is a sad irony that so many of these bad projects contain the word "community" in their names.

What needs to happen in order for us to turn our energy program around?
Three things:

First, Gov. Shumlin has to make good on his promise to protect towns. In 2012, the governor told Kristen Carlson (then at WCAX), "I have always said and I will always say I believe that no energy project should be built in a town in Vermont where the residents of that community don't vote affirmatively to host it. We shouldn't send them into towns that don't want them." Since the governor will always say this, he should say it now. And he should call off the wrecking crews.

Second, we need to replace legislators who promote "shove it down their throats." Check the record. If your legislator doesn't respect our communities, then you need a new legislator. Now is the perfect time to start looking for candidates.

Third, energy siting is a land-use issue and it should be subject to Act 250. For over 40 years, Act 250 has protected the Vermont landscape, elevated the importance of municipal and regional planning, and accorded respect to our citizens and communities. We have never needed it more.

Vermont is making a mess of energy. Vermont is making a mess of its overall response to climate change. It doesn't have to be this way.

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151004/OPINION06/710049959/0/NEWS>

Opinion

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The risk and reward of solar incentives

October 04, 2015

There is a knowledge gap in Vermont and the country about tax incentives. When we ask how effective a specific incentive is, do we have a good way to find the answer?

A broad range of incentives for solar power installation began to come into place in the late 1990s, starting with the net-metering law. The law established that a homeowner or business could install power generation, such as solar panels, and connect these panels to the electric grid. Any excess power would be fed onto the grid, and the person or business would receive a credit at an established rate.

Fast forward to today, and Vermonters are installing solar panels at a rapid pace, and several solar installation businesses have started up or moved into the state in the last three years. These actions are arguably the result of tax incentives and a rapid drop in the costs of solar panels.

But in most cases, it is incredibly complicated to draw a straight line between a particular incentive and an intended outcome. Are solar panel installations increasing because of tax credits? Is it just state tax credits, or federal credits, or both? Or is it because of the drop in installation costs? Or because of the access to net-metering, where a solar panel owner gets credit for power generated from the sun? The best answer we've gotten right now is probably some of all of the above.

Having a stronger answer to those questions would help us design better incentives that bring out the behavior we want. At their best, tax incentives will have measurable outcomes and continual analysis that will lead to adjustments making them better and more effective. In some cases, the analysis will lead to the conclusion that the incentive is not worth it.

Many critics of solar power say it is uneconomical if government support dries up. At some level this is true, but it's also true that the hundreds of incentives for solar and other green energy sources across the country have done much to drive the cost of solar down.

Incentives — such as tax credits, loans and subsidies — are put in place to encourage companies and people to do something they wouldn't otherwise do.

In 1953, solar power generated from a 230-watt panel cost \$1,785 a watt. By 1977, that cost was still above \$1,000 a watt. By 2012, that power cost \$1.30 per watt, and in 2015, lab-tested 230-watt panels are making

power more than five times more efficiently at a cost below 60 cents a watt.

Is all that change due to incentives? No — but without incentives it would not have happened so fast. The incentives drove demand, which drove research and investment. And the solar panel train is rolling faster, now fueled more by private companies and rising demand in places such as China than by government incentives.

Beyond assessing the effectiveness of incentives, the issue becomes deciding when an incentive has outlived its usefulness. Some, like net-metering, likely should stay in place with some adjustments. It makes sense to have individuals and businesses be able to generate their own power and sell the excess. It may not make sense beyond a certain point to require a price for that excess power that is above market rates.

In other cases, it may be wise to carry on the incentive, even when the business would take a similar action without the incentive — for example, in workforce training and investment where the incentive money leverages private money.

But all too often, incentives become codified and simply outlast their purpose, or don't even really work as intended. Some opponents of incentives frame them as a case of the government picking winners and losers. This can result from flat-out favoritism, or through hastily-written laws. Many federal and state incentives in the form of tax law are the result of effective lobbying.

This risk — the risk that a dollar might go to a useless incentive — needs to be addressed with a systemic way of assessing and updating incentives. By closing the knowledge gap and making continual adjustments, we can encourage the behavior and actions we want and need.

Vermont's solar panel rush has led to some unintended consequences and some resistance. It's led as well to widespread benefits — and these benefits and consequences need to be part of the conversation going forward.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/05/eileen-rodgers-central-planning-comes-to-your-neighborhood/>

EILEEN RODGERS: CENTRAL PLANNING COMES TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

OCT. 5, 2015, 6:55 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 12 COMMENTS

<<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/05/eileen-rodgers-central-planning-comes-to-your-neighborhood/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Elaine Rodgers, who is the communications director for the Burlington Republican Committee./

Along with plotting to place wind turbines on 200 miles of ridge lines and scheming to occupy thousands of acres of our fields with solar panels, the central planners in Vermont are busying themselves with projects that are guaranteed to squeeze our cars off the roads.

Right now, in the North End of Burlington, the first stage of a pilot project for the North Avenue Corridor promises to reduce vehicular

traffic to two lanes where there are now four. The new configuration will feature a northbound lane, a southbound lane, a turning lane and bike paths on either side.

The guys at the top know what they're doing and they are not shy about making it clear to the rest of us. In fact, they are confident that they occupy the moral high ground, as well.

The same state and federal subsidies that go to fund projects that can't make it on their own, are those payouts that make living in Vermont so expensive for the rest of us.

Climate change has been a very convenient phenomenon. It has given a sense of validity to all sorts of projects the big guys support. Energy from the wind and sun will take care of our electricity needs and our transportation needs will be met with ... bicycles!!

As an addendum, cars must go.

So says the CEO of AllEarth Renewables, David Blittersdorf. But getting rid of the car won't be so hard because people won't need them. According to Blittersdorf, rural life will disappear as people are rounded up into dense cities (they call them human settlements) where all businesses (should there be any employers left) will be happily located, as well.

For whose purpose are these alternative energy and alternative transportation projects advanced? Certainly not for the benefit of the current Vermont homeowner or commuter. The same state and federal subsidies that go to fund projects that can't make it on their own, are those payouts that make living in Vermont so expensive for the rest of us.

Saying that you dislike the idea of the North Avenue Corridor pilot project should make you proud. It's true there are an awful lot of other people who don't share your common sense. But they are the same people who don't want you to know that Vermont already emits less CO2 than any of the other 49 states ... or that, by the way, there hasn't been a smidgen of global warming over the past 18 years.

<http://timesargus.com/article/20151007/OPINION02/151009985>

Opinion <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
| Letters <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION02>>
Energy choices ahead
October 07, 2015

Vermont needs a competitive, winning energy policy. Every winning team has to recruit good players. But our "management" wants only "players" (wind, solar) who perform a quarter of the time but take up our precious resources such as mountaintops and open fields all of the time. And

there is no room for doing it wrong, either. Ridgeline roads and massive concrete pads will remain for years to come, even after the renewable source has proven to be uneconomical without taxpayer subsidies. The sight of open fields converted to black solar panels does not bring out Vermont pride in our beautiful state.

The renewable industry insists on this landscape makeover because Vermont lacks other in-state options. Yet Vermont Yankee, a compact, well-operated, zero-smog nuclear power plant once made a third of our power. This same industry, and its friends in Montpelier, made it feel extremely unwelcome. They succeeded to get rid of their best energy player. But it is too late to change that decision, no matter how ill-conceived it was. Vermont can, at a relatively low cost, contract for more nuclear power from New England power plants. Also, it can soon get reliable, low-cost power from Canada, through the new cables that will run beneath Lake Champlain and across Vermont. We should demand a good power contract as part of the "toll" for using our land and waters. Every nuclear and Canadian hydro kilowatt is cheaper, more 24/7 reliable, and less destructive than clearing farmland and mountaintops. These choices are better than covering Vermont with ugly, intrusive, expensive energy factories that require taxpayer subsidies. Montpelier should evaluate cost-effective solutions, not just politically correct ones.

Dick Trudell
Grand Isle

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151007/OPINION02/151009982>

Opinion

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| Letters

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Renewables benefit elite

October 07, 2015

The green movement in Vermont is guided by fear and greed. To keep this movement, money is used to soften and control people with and around the rural communities which renewables focus upon. The rural communities are the easiest to disharmonize, small in numbers, little money, and not well organized, sleeping communities.

The big flash in the pan is our state's goal of 90 percent or 100 percent renewable producing electricity by 2050.

This make no sense. Where are we at in honest figures in both goals set and what the state uses? The other part is the goal or gold rush of the solar projects along Route 7. Greed to push these projects into communities who have little say, and only able to make comments. What is this all about, controlled power with no input from those who live next to or nearby renewable projects?

Out-of-ountry owners of Green Mountain Power have control over our state's Legislature, in-state electrical company, and take no real responsibilities for damages to our environmental, social and economic systems which are very unjust. Environmental groups and citizen legislators have been bought with free federal and state money, money we pay for by taxes. The laws are written and overseen to only benefit the few elite who run this from afar.

FRED PERSON
Starksboro

<http://timesargus.com/article/20151005/OPINION02/710059947>

Opinion <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
| Letters <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION02>>
October 05, 2015
For a fad

Tuesday's commentary about electric energy, by David Blittersdorf, should boggle the mind of average rate payers. This ideologue is quick to assault Joe Benning, who exposed Blittersdorf's radical speech to the Addison County Democrats where he envisions a future of mass construction of solar and wind sites, destructive of our physical surroundings and even worse, advocates that the 10-acre home site in the country is all but eliminated; because to meet Act 56 goals we will all be forced to move into dense city living and thus must eliminate automobiles (refer to bit.ly/vtenergyfuture <<http://bit.ly/vtenergyfuture>>). Blittersdorf wants to mandate all Vermont-produced wind and solar output be force-purchased by Vermont retailers. After all, he says, this will keep dollars in Vermont. Not so, since about 80 percent of kilowatt cost is the cost of the retail utility and it is already foreign owned. Not only that, out-of-state millionaires own the current wind sites.

This guy is not fact based. For someone trying to change the entire culture of the state against common sense, his reasoning is tragically weak and superficial. He fails to mention our potential use of cheap hydro Quebec power, or other sources of clean energy that are in abundance. He says we are spewing carbon. This is nuts since we are one of the cleanest states in the nation. According to him, destroying our ridgelines and overlaying prime agricultural land for solar is the only alternative for energy.

As a native Vermonter, I have had to accept Act 250 and its useful protection of the land, no billboards, no houses built over a certain elevation, reasoned growth and so forth. Bittersdorf is arrogant enough to want to cast out this decades-old land stewardship for his own benefit, for a fad. It's for his benefit and the benefit of Vermont legislators under his spell, and for no other, since we don't need even one excessively costly wind or solar site. Act 56 needs revision and our Legislature needs to come to its senses and re-evaluate what its bad energy laws are doing to us. None of the so-called clean wind and solar sites are clean, since renewable energy credits are sold to polluters for cash and thus there is no improvement on carbon dioxide pollution. Blittersdorf's plan majors in hypocrisy.

Mike Pollica
Plainfield

<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20151006/OPINION04/710069947/0/-tbecues-twenty-hresults.aspx>

Opinion

<<http://www.timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

|Commentary

<<http://www.timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION04>>

Jones: The cost of our prosperity

October 06,2015

My friend Ed is in his 70s and he's rebuilding his house near Spruce Mountain. To make his life easier in old age, he is laying a new slab and will live on one level. An engineer, Ed claims he can live off the grid using solar panels to charge his impending electric vehicle.

While proclaiming the best of efficiency intentions, Ed admits that his new situation is "not massively" reducing his carbon consumption. The new structure is built with a lot of local materials, but the foam, concrete and roofing have very large carbon and resource footprints. It will surely save some fuel over the next few years, and will be much nicer to live in, but in the last analysis, he admits that "the planet can probably not afford me."

Ed is demonstrating the dueling perceptions that are shared by many of our "green" neighbors spread across the Vermont hillsides. While loving his life upon the land, he is beginning to recognize that his lifestyle exerts a cost upon the earth that will not be sustainable. Until recently, few of us were able to recognize these costs, but now many of us are starting to soberly include them in our personal and collective future planning. We recognize these costs will fall heavily on our children. The emerging debt will be paid in climate disruptions and financial dislocations that, at the moment, are not discussed in polite company. Truth be told, however, these disruptions are about to upset the entire economic system underlying the suburban and rural sprawl which defines a middle class lifestyle.

To explain how this disruption is coming about, I fear I am going to have to take a short dive into economic history. Basically, our entire system of profligate energy use, and our belief in the need for constant economic growth, developed hand in hand. For most of human history, our only energy to do work involved human and animal muscle power (some of it was supplemented by wind in the sails and watermills, but not a lot). Then, a bit over the 200 years ago, we began to create a technological infrastructure powered by steam fires using cheap coal and oil. Rapidly the factories of the Industrial Revolution began to produce trains, then autos, home furnaces and soon a cornucopia of consumer products running on cheap energy. Such exploding new wealth generated a new science — economics — based on an assumption of an endless supply of future productive earnings driven by eternal access to cheap fuel. This, in turn, fed public faith in the promise of increasing collective wealth provided by constant economic "growth."

In this new world of constant growth we could all participate in the

feast of ever increasing consumption purchased with ever increasing debt. We believed that debt was guaranteed to be paid back through ever increasing oil-fueled productivity. As people became more prosperous in the years following World War II, this debt-driven consumer economy allowed them to move out of the industrial cities onto the beautiful countryside. Suburban and rural sprawl soon defined our middle-class lives.

By the mid-'70s, this "rural sprawl" had transformed once rural Vermont farm towns such as Calais, East Montpelier and Plainfield into suburban bedroom communities. Folks from Montpelier and Barre, along with immigrating flatlanders, spread across the hillsides in order to live "close to the land." The idyllic setting of their homes compensated for the hassles of driving long distances and finding parking in the small cities.

But about 15 years ago, social and environmental critics like Bill McKibben noted that there really was a huge long-term cost to this prosperity. They predicted that the world would soon suffer the pervasive costs of climate change and resource depletion (what they called "peak oil"). The economic shocks following 9/11, the Wall Street meltdown of 2008 and catastrophic hurricanes left us feeling kind of rocky. Human beings tend to live in denial that we're approaching an economic and climatic tipping point. Even in the face of the evidence, we usually default to a belief set that assumes tomorrow will look pretty much like yesterday.

Naomi Klein's recent book "This Changes Everything" starkly calls out our consumerist denial over the climate catastrophe. Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, is calling out the takeover of our government by the oligarchs. Their arguments are connected: The "economic growth" demanded by our "free market" debt economy requires constant increased use of fossil fuels. More fossil fuel use means more global warming. More money spent on producing energy means less money to pay back our debts. It's a vicious cycle. The longer we practice our business-as-usual approach to the future, the harder it's going to be to escape this cycle as conditions worsen.

The future isn't all doom and gloom, however. Vermont is privileged to be small enough, and its people educated enough, to make rational choices more quickly than bigger places with deeply entrenched infrastructure and economic ties. Now is the time to imagine how we can shelter ourselves from the overhang of coming energy and economic challenges.

I believe we can build a new Vermont economy based on shared resources of transportation and energy that will ultimately save the \$2 billion we now currently send out of state for oil products. I believe we can fashion a more co-operative economy that could keep our wealth working here in our state, rather than disappearing down the Wall Street sewer. We can do a lot with our local resources — but we first need to reimagine our rural-sprawl lifestyle, and focus on building a more resilient world that will feed and nurture our children, and theirs.

Dan Jones is a managing partner of Net Zero Vermont Ventures and former chairman of the Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee. He lives in Montpelier.

<https://vtdigger.org/2015/10/06/celebrating-a-month-of-energy-events-in-october/>

CELEBRATING A MONTH OF ENERGY EVENTS IN OCTOBER

OCT. 6, 2015, 11:31 AM BY PRESS RELEASE

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News Release — Renewable Energy Vermont

Oct. 2, 2015

Contact:

Gabrielle Stebbins, Executive Director

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Montpelier, VT — October marks another great month for progress on renewable energy throughout Vermont. Fresh off of the release of a report by the Public Service Department illustrating rapid renewable energy sector growth, with 6.2% job growth between the first quarters of 2014 and 2015 compared to 1.8% statewide average, Vermont is poised for more good news to follow with multiple events this month. Events include:

Saturday, October 3: “Georgia Mountain Community Wind” Tours, Georgia/Milton

Following up on the success of last year’s tours that drew over 600 visitors GMCW is hosting tours from 1pm to 4pm at their 10MW wind farm. To date in 2015, GMCW is producing at 36% capacity factor, making it one of the most productive wind projects in the region. Park at the Husky facility at 288 North Rd. in Milton and take a free shuttle bus from 1-4.

Tuesday, October 6: Al Gore at UVM, Burlington

The 45th Vice-President of the United States who has transitioned into one of the world’s most notable climate change activists speaks at University of Vermont’s Ira Allen Chapel as part of their Energy Action Seminar Series.

Thursday-Friday, October 8 & 9: RE2015: “Leading the Energy REvolution”, Burlington

The region’s largest and most comprehensive annual conference and exhibition focused on all things energy related is again hosted by Renewable Energy Vermont, Vermont’s non-profit renewable energy trade association. The two day event, being held at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Burlington, features over 25 conference sessions with more than 65 expert speakers from throughout Vermont and the

region. Topics covered include: wind, solar, bioenergy technologies, transportation, heat-pumps, energy efficiency and renewable energy policy. Conference sessions will look at hurdles to implementing renewables as well as untapped opportunities, technological innovations and tools for financing renewable energy. For more information visit www.revconference.org <<http://www.revconference.org/>>

Tuesday, October 13: "Renewable Energy and the Aesthetics of Vermont" Artists Panel, Shelburne

After years of limited, polarizing discussion pitting our desire for local sustainability against a changing local aesthetic landscape, Of Land & Local hosts a panel to discuss ways artists might forge a deeper and more constructive level of conversation as our values of sustainability move us away from reliance on traditional fuels and change the aesthetic of the Vermont working landscape through increased, visible renewable energy projects. Hosted at Shelburne Farms Coach Barn at 6:30 pm. Free but registration is required.

<http://www.burlingtoncityarts.org/Event/land-and-local-panel-discussion-new-working-landscape-renewable-energy-and-aesthetics-vermont>

Wednesday, October 21: "National Bioenergy Day" In celebration of National Bioenergy Day, Renewable Energy Vermont and local businesses showcase various Modern Wood Boiler systems throughout the state. Go to www.revermont.org <<http://www.revermont.org/>> for more details.

Five Public Hearings on the draft Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, 6 – 8 pm

Wednesday, October 7: Moore Community Room, Lyndon State College, Lyndonville

Tuesday, October 13: Essex High School Cafeteria, Essex

Wednesday, October 21: Noble Hall at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier

Monday, October 26: Bellows Falls High School Auditorium, Bellows Falls

Thursday, October 29: CVPS/Leahy Community Health Education Center, Rutland

The Public Service Department has released the draft Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) and is holding five Public Hearings. All hearings are from 6 – 8 PM. Plan is available

here: http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/psd/files/Pubs_Plans_Reports/State_Plans/Comp_Energy_Plan/2015/CEP_Public_Review_Draft_092215.pdf

<http://granitegeek.concordmonitor.com/2015/10/05/study-nh-has-put-up-just-01-of-feasible-commercial-solar-power/>

Study: NH has put up just .01% of feasible commercial solar power

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Proposal for Decision

Docket No. 8302

Hearing at
Montpelier, Vermont
July 16, 2015

Petition of Chelsea Solar LLC for a certificate of)
public good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing)
the installation and operation of a 2.0 MW solar)
electric generation facility at 500 Apple Hill Road,)
Bennington, Vermont)

Order entered:

PRESENT: Michael E. Tousley, Esq., Hearing Officer

APPEARANCES: Michael Melone, *pro se*
Thomas Melone, *pro se*
for Chelsea Solar LLC

Jeanne Elias, Esq.
for Vermont Department of Public Service

Donald Einhorn, Esq.
for Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

Libby Harris, *pro se*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This case involves a petition filed by Chelsea Solar LLC ("Chelsea" or "Petitioner") requesting a certificate of public good ("CPG") under 30 V.S.A. § 248 for the proposed construction and operation of a 2.0 MW solar electric generation facility at 500 Apple Hill Road, Bennington, Vermont (the proposed "Project"). In this proposal for decision, I recommend that the Vermont Public Service Board ("Board") approve the Project subject to the conditions described below.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On June 19, 2014, Chelsea filed a petition with the Board including supporting testimony and exhibits requesting a CPG under 30 V.S.A. § 248 to install and operate a 2.0 MW AC solar electric generating facility at 500 Apple Hill Road, Bennington, Vermont.

On August 25, 2014, I held a prehearing conference. Appearances were entered by Jeanne Elias, Esq., for the Vermont Department of Public Service ("Department" or "DPS"); Donald Einhorn, Esq., for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources ("ANR"); Michael Melone, *pro se* for Chelsea; and Peter M. Lawrence, Esq., for Libby Harris, the Estate of David Sholes, Teresa Sholes, and the Apple Hill Homeowners Association (the "Landowners").

On August 4, 2014, the Landowners filed a motion to intervene. At the prehearing conference I denied the motion to intervene without prejudice because it did not meet the criteria of Board Rule 2.209.¹

On August 28, 2014, I issued a Prehearing Conference Memorandum and Scheduling Order. That Order established dates for the site visit and public hearing, as well as deadlines for filing motions to intervene as well as any responses. The Order also established October 10, 2014, as the deadline for the parties to file either a stipulation or proposed litigation schedules.²

1. Docket 8302, Order of 8/28/14 at 1.

2. Docket 8302, Order of 8/28/14 at 2.

On October 14, 2014, I issued a procedural order establishing February 11, 2015, as the date for a technical hearing.³

On October 16, 2014, I conducted a site visit and public hearing. Seven individuals provided comments on the proposed Project during the public hearing. The comments received at the public hearing are summarized later in this proposal for decision.

On December 29, 2014, Chelsea requested that the deadline for the Project's commissioning set in its standard offer contract be extended ten months from June 19, 2015, to April 19, 2016. On January 8, 2015, the Board approved that request.

On January 9, 2015, Chelsea filed a request to extend the deadline for filing a stipulation among the parties to January 20, 2015, and represented that the other parties agreed to the extension. On the same day, I granted the requested extension to the stipulation deadline.

On January 21, 2015, Chelsea filed a partial memorandum of understanding ("MOU") between Chelsea and ANR ("First ANR MOU").

On January 22, 2015, the Department requested a second extension of the stipulation deadline until January 27, 2015, in order to permit the DPS to complete its review of the matter. The DPS represented that Chelsea and ANR agreed to the second extension.

On January 26, 2015, I granted this second requested extension.

January 27, 2015, passed without the filing of a stipulation.

On January 29, 2015, I conducted a status conference via telephone. At the status conference, the parties acknowledged the need for filing additional testimony which would not be available until July or August, and requested that the February 11 technical hearing be cancelled.

On February 3, 2015, I vacated the remaining schedule for the proceeding, cancelling the February 11 technical hearing.

On March 12, 2015, Chelsea filed a proposed schedule.

On March 16, 2015, I issued a Second Scheduling Order adopting the schedule proposed by Chelsea.

3. Docket 8302, Order of 10/14/14 at 2.

On March 23, 2015, Ms. Harris filed a motion to intervene.⁴

On March 25, 2015, Chelsea filed a response opposing Ms. Harris's motion to intervene.

On April 16, 2015, I granted Ms. Harris permissive intervenor status limited to the issues of orderly development, aesthetics, wind, and noise on the condition that the evidence to be presented on those topics would be provided by individuals capable of being qualified as experts in those areas.⁵

On May 18, 2015, Ms. Harris filed a motion requesting that the Board order Chelsea to pay the projected expenses associated with her retention of expert witnesses.

On May 20, 2015, Chelsea filed a response opposing Ms. Harris's motion for expert witness funding.

On June 9, 2015, the Board denied Ms. Harris's motion.⁶

On June 17, 2015, Chelsea filed a second partial MOU with ANR ("Second ANR MOU") and a second partial MOU with the DPS ("Second DPS MOU").⁷

On July 9, 2015, Ms. Harris requested that the technical hearing be rescheduled from July 16, 2015, to July 14, 2015.⁸

On July 16, 2015, a technical hearing was held in the Board's hearing room in Montpelier, Vermont.

4. The deadline for motions to intervene was October 31, 2014.

5. Docket 8302, Order of 4/16/15 at 5.

6. Docket 8302, Order of 6/9/15 at 1.

7. On February 10, 2015, Chelsea e-mailed a first partial MOU with the DPS ("First DPS MOU") to the Clerk of the Board. This electronic copy of the First DPS MOU did not include a signature page. The e-mail was not followed up by a hard copy filing of the First DPS MOU. In the Second DPS MOU, which was signed and filed, the parties state that they had entered into the First DPS MOU on February 9, 2015. At the July 16, 2015, technical hearing, the First DPS MOU was entered into the record as exhibit CS-MOU-3 without objection.

8. Specifically, Ms. Harris requested that the technical hearing be rescheduled to be coincident with a technical hearing that had been scheduled on that date in Docket 8454, which is the Board's investigation into a petition filed by Apple Hill Solar LLC. Ms. Harris's request was untimely inasmuch as there was insufficient time to effectuate notice of a July 14 hearing date. Ultimately, her request was overcome by events because the Apple Hill Solar LLC technical hearing was cancelled. *Petition of Apple Hill Solar LLC*, Docket 8454, Order of 7/8/15 at 2.

On July 28, 2015, Chelsea filed a draft of a proposed Order in this matter, representing that the Department and ANR agreed to waive their rights to submit comments on a proposal for decision provided the Board's Order is consistent with the draft submitted by Chelsea.⁹

On August 7, 2015, Chelsea and Ms. Harris each filed post-hearing briefs. Ms. Harris's brief (the "Harris Brief") requested that the Board "deny Chelsea Solar's CPG or stay its decision until the Apple Hill docket has been completed."¹⁰ On that same date, the Department filed notice stating that "having reached a Memorandum of Understanding with the Petitioner, supporting the project . . . [the Department] will not be filing a post hearing brief with the Board in this matter."¹¹

On August 13, 2015, Chelsea filed a brief replying to the Harris Brief in which it requested that the Board not delay its final Order in this Docket.

Summary of Public Comments Received During the Public Hearing

Seven individuals commented on the proposed Project during the October 16, 2014, public hearing at the Bennington Fire House. Concerns raised by the speakers about the Project included the potential noise and wind impacts of the Project, the Project's impact on traffic on Apple Hill Road, and aesthetic impacts, both general and specific, as to the view of the Project from the new Welcome Center on U.S. Route 7. Other speakers expressed concerns about the potential impacts on surrounding property values, the potential effect of the Project on deer wintering areas, the limited economic benefit of the Project to the community, the rapid pace of solar deployment in the state, the highly visible nature of the Project site, and the site's proximity to U.S. Route 7. Still other speakers were concerned about the potential impacts on certain wildlife habitat, whether Project decommissioning could be assured, and the industrial nature of the Project in an otherwise rural setting. A member of the Bennington County Regional

9. Letter from Michael Melone to Susan M. Hudson, Clerk of the Board, dated July 28, 2015.

10. Harris Brief at 15.

11. Letter from Jeanne Elias, Esq., to Susan M. Hudson, Clerk of the Board, dated August 7, 2015.

Commission also commented that he was in favor of the Project because of its proposed placement in a non-agricultural setting that does not include significant wildlife habitat.

III. FINDINGS

Based on the evidence of record, I hereby report the following proposed findings to the Board in accordance with 30 V.S.A. § 8(c).

Background and Project Description

1. Chelsea Solar LLC is a Vermont limited liability company with offices located at 70 Maple Street, Middlebury, Vermont. Petition at 1.
2. Chelsea proposes to develop and operate a 2.0 MW AC solar photovoltaic electric generation facility, located on an approximately 27.3-acre parcel of land along U.S. Route 7 in Bennington, Vermont. The property is currently vacant, and has no recent residential, commercial, or agricultural use. Brad Wilson, Chelsea ("Wilson") pf. at 2.
3. The Project would occupy 14.85 acres of the approximately 27-acre tract located just north of the Vermont Welcome Center at the U.S. Route 7/VT Route 279 interchange in Bennington, Vermont. The Project site is bounded on the south and west by the highway system, on the north by a shared property line with three residential properties, and on the east by a parcel of land formerly used as an apple orchard. The nearest neighbor's property line is approximately 175 feet north of the Project fence. At present, the Project site is almost entirely wooded with northern hardwood species, and is accessed via Apple Hill Road. Wilson pf. at 2; Mark Kane, Chelsea ("Kane") pf. at 3-5; exh. CS-MK-2 .
4. The photovoltaic array would be set back approximately 200 feet from the eastern edge of U.S. Route 7. Exh. CS-MK-2 at 3.
5. The most significant component of the Project would be the approximately 2.8 MW (DC) of 72-cell polysilicon photovoltaic solar modules. These solar modules would be of the common, commercially available type, and would serve as the electricity generation element of

the facility. The solar modules would be mounted above the ground upon a steel fixed-tilt racking system. This racking system would elevate the solar modules above the ground (18 inches of ground clearance at the lowest point, 9 feet at the highest point) and would orient the modules due south at a tilt angle of 30 degrees. Wilson pf. at 3-4.

6. The racking would remain in a fixed position and would be supported by a steel H-beam that is encased in a cylinder of cement grout material. The grout material would be poured in place within 8-inch diameter borings that are 11.5-feet deep. An auger/drill machine would drill these borings in the soil and rock ground foundation. Soil tailings from the borings would be distributed on-site, while rock tailings from the borings would be disposed of at an off-site waste facility per Vermont state regulations for construction byproducts. This type of design does not utilize hammer or vibratory machinery. Wilson pf. supp. at 5.

7. Direct current combiner/disconnect cabinets would collect the output of the solar module strings into larger cabling runs that would travel to an equipment skid near the center of the Project. All cabling runs within the Project would be installed in underground conduit. Wilson pf. at 4.

8. A central equipment skid would serve as the location for transformer, monitoring, communications, and protection equipment. Most of the equipment on the central skid would be at most 8 feet aboveground, but some camera and weather-sensor equipment may be up to 12 feet aboveground. Wilson pf. at 4.

9. The foundation for the central equipment skid would consist of concrete sonotubes approximately 18 inches in diameter, with a burial depth of approximately 8 feet, and would support the equipment skid at a height of approximately 12 inches above grade. Wilson pf. at 20; exh. CS-ECOS-4.

10. At the central equipment skid, the electric output of the solar modules would be collected, inverted from direct current to alternating current, and stepped-up to 12.47 kV for delivery into Green Mountain Power Corporation's ("GMP") distribution grid. Wilson pf. at 4.

11. The medium voltage transformer that would service the Project would contain a biodegradable coolant oil, and the Project would include the construction of a secondary containment structure for this transformer consistent with the specifications contained in the First

ANR MOU and described in exhibit CS-ECOS-10. Wilson pf. supp. at 7-8; exh. CS-ECOS-10; exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 8.

12. A concrete pad would be constructed to support the pad-mounted interconnection equipment – a metering cabinet and a recloser cabinet – required by GMP. This pad would be approximately 13 feet in length by 10 feet in width with a burial depth of approximately 18 inches. The pad would support the equipment cabinets at a height of approximately 6 inches above grade. The concrete pad would be located at the interconnection equipment location near the western edge of the Project site. Wilson pf. at 20; exh. CS-ECOS-4 at 4.

13. A 14-foot-wide gravel permanent access driveway would be constructed from Apple Hill Road at the Project's northeastern corner to the center of the Project. It would be used for operations and maintenance ("O&M") traffic, as well as emergency vehicle access during Project operation. Wilson pf. supp. at 2-3; exh. CS-ECOS-4.

14. A 12-foot-wide gravel temporary access driveway would extend approximately 750 feet to connect Willow Road with the southern boundary of the Project footprint. It would be used for site clearing, site preparation, and construction traffic for the Project. Wilson pf. supp. at 2-3; exh. CS-ECOS-4.

15. No site clearing, site preparation, or construction traffic would utilize the permanent Apple Hill Road driveway, and no Project O&M traffic would utilize the temporary Willow Road driveway. Wilson pf. supp. at 2-3; exh. CS-ECOS-4.

16. The Project footprint would be surrounded by 7-foot-high knotted-mesh fencing. This fence would serve as a security barrier to keep unintended visitors outside of the Project. A one-foot gap between the bottom of the fence material and the ground would allow for smaller wildlife to traverse the Project area. Wilson pf. at 18-19.

17. Outside the fence, but on the Petitioner's property, the Project would interconnect with an overhead GMP distribution line along Willow Road to the south of the Project. Wilson pf. at 5; exh. CS-ECOS-4.

18. If constructed, the Project would sell all electricity generated through a standard-offer purchase power agreement ("PPA") with VEPP, Inc. The agreement allows the sale of electricity for a period of 25 years. Wilson pf. at 5.

19. Project construction and commissioning would take approximately five months. Wilson pf. at 6.

20. Project construction would occur in four major phases: (1) site preparation; (2) array construction; (3) facility wiring; and (4) system commissioning. Wilson pf. at 6.

21. Site preparation for the Project would consist of: construction mobilization; survey/staking; clearing; stabilization; grading; compaction; installation of the aggregate access road; installation of the perimeter security fence; and trenching for the underground conduit. This would be done in four stages of five acres or less each so as to minimize the amount of non-stabilized surface at any one time. Cleared vegetation would be chipped on-site and stored in two staging areas before being shipped off-site and disposed of at an appropriate nearby disposal facility. Surface grading would include approximately 900 cubic yards of cut and 1,500 cubic yards of fill, with the excess 600 cubic yards being made up of aggregate material for the temporary access driveway. Surface grading would not significantly alter existing site topography. Surface grading would be used to install the access driveway and stormwater management features. Site preparation may take up to one month to complete. Wilson pf. at 6-7.

22. Following site preparation, array construction would commence. Steel H-beams to support the solar racking would be pile-driven into the ground and steel racking would be installed upon the H-beams. Solar modules would then be installed upon the racking. Direct current disconnect/recombiner cabinets would be installed, and conduit for underground cable would be put into place. A foundation for the central equipment skid would be prepared, and the skid installed into place. Array construction includes the physical installation of the majority of the solar-generation equipment and may take up to two months to complete. Wilson pf. at 7; exh. CS-ECOS-9.

23. Following array construction, facility wiring would commence. During this phase, all wiring and cabling between the solar modules and GMP's distribution circuit would be installed. Protective devices, such as fuses, switches, and breakers, would also be installed during this phase. This phase may take up to one month to complete. Wilson pf. at 6-7.

24. The final construction phase would be system commissioning. During this phase, the solar facility would be tested and calibrated for safe operation. Any required pre-operational

certifications would be obtained during this phase. Only after successful testing and complete certification would the Project be ready to enter operation. Also during this phase, final landscaping and groundcover-stabilization activities would occur. This phase may take up to one month to complete. Wilson pf. at 7-8.

25. Chelsea proposes hours of construction between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday with no construction taking place during evenings, nighttime, weekends, or state or federal holidays. Wilson pf. at 7.

26. Once operational, the Project would require little on-site Petitioner staff presence. Generally, the Project equipment is designed to function automatically and autonomously. There is no regular on-site staff proposed for the Project. However, periodic equipment and landscaping maintenance would be required, and the Project would experience 2-3 site visits per month, on average, by a single truck crew to perform these maintenance duties. Once per year, a water truck crew would wash the solar modules with water only; no chemicals, cleaners, or solvents would be used. Unscheduled maintenance or repair trips to the site may occur, as needed. Wilson pf. at 8-9.

27. The Project would utilize monitoring and communications equipment to provide a real-time stream of data regarding system performance to off-site personnel. This system would report on weather data, solar production, equipment efficiency, and operating conditions. The system would send out trouble alarms for all equipment, allowing the Petitioner to dispatch repair personnel immediately in the event of a problem. The monitoring system would incorporate two network video cameras, allowing the Petitioner to view Project conditions from off-site. Wilson pf. at 9.

28. In addition to the perimeter fence, Project site security would include motion-sensitive infrared video security cameras. These cameras would be operated and monitored by a national security systems provider. If motion is detected, the cameras would provide a video feed to a national monitoring center. If the video evidence suggests an unauthorized visitor on-site, the Petitioner would be contacted. If necessary, the security provider may contact the local police or sheriff with the Petitioner's permission. As an additional safety measure, all electrical boxes on-site would be locked, limiting access to authorized users. Wilson pf. at 9.

29. The Petitioner would maintain the vegetation and landscaping of the property in a manner consistent with town and neighbor standards. Landscaping and groundcover vegetation would be periodically maintained to achieve a neat and groomed appearance. The Project would benefit from keeping groundcover trimmed low and maintaining investments in installed landscaping. Wilson pf. at 10.

Discussion

As required by 30 V.S.A. § 8007(b), the Board has implemented procedures governing the application and review of renewable energy projects with a plant capacity that is greater than 150 kW and is 2.2 MW or less by adopting standards and procedures for such projects which include the conditional waiver of several Section 248 criteria.¹² Because the Project is a standard offer renewable energy project and would have a plant capacity not to exceed 2.2 MW, the Project meets the requirements for conditional waivers of certain Section 248 criteria pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8007(b) and the Section 8007(b) Order. These criteria are identified in the findings below.

Ms. Harris argues that the Project should not be approved because the Project will not meet the Board's "requirement that contiguous projects shall be served by separate roads and infrastructure" because the Project will share roads and infrastructure with the Apple Hill Solar LLC project being reviewed in Docket 8454 ("Apple Hill").¹³ Ms. Harris further "moves to stay the issuance of the CPG in this Chelsea Solar docket until after the PSB completes review of the second Apple Hill Solar project."¹⁴

I recommend that the Board deny Ms. Harris's motion to defer issuing a decision in this case. Chelsea filed this petition on June 19, 2014. As highlighted in the procedural history, there have been several significant delays in processing this petition including the extension of the Project's standard offer contract commissioning deadline by ten months. The original scheduling

12. *In Re: Simplified Procedures for Renewable Energy Plants with a Capacity Between 150 kW and 2.2 MW*, Order of 8/31/10 ("Section 8007(b) Order").

13. *See* Docket 8454, Petition of 3/5/15.

14. Harris Brief at 2.

order in this Docket projected a technical hearing in February 2015. Apple Hill was filed on March 5, 2015. Had Chelsea proceeded without delays, a final order would have been issued in this case well before consideration of the Apple Hill petition, possibly before Apple Hill was even filed.

The evidence in this Docket has established that Chelsea is a stand-alone project served by separate roads and infrastructure. A decision in this Docket has been long-delayed and should be made as soon as possible. Ms. Harris relies upon information submitted in the Apple Hill Docket to support her argument for a delay.¹⁵ However, there was no evidence presented in this Docket that the Chelsea Solar Project will share any roads or infrastructure. Therefore, I recommend that the Board deny Ms. Harris's motion to stay this decision and not further delay a decision in this Docket.

Review of Project Under the Section 248 Criteria

Orderly Development of the Region

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(1)]

Findings

30. The Project will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region, with due consideration having been given to the recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions, the recommendations of the municipal legislative bodies, and the land conservation measures contained in the plan of any affected municipality. This finding is supported by findings 31 through 34 below.

31. There are extensive public and conservation land holdings in the Town of Bennington, including portions of the Green Mountain National Forest, as well as significant areas of private conservation easements and recreation parks. The Project site is not located on or near an identified conservation area. Kane pf. at 5; exh CS-MK-3.

32. The Project site is zoned and identified in the 2010 Bennington Town Plan as part of the Rural Conservation District. The language describing this district states that while sensitivity to

15. *Id.* at 5-6.

environmental and visual impacts for land use development is important, development is not precluded. Kane pf. at 5; exh CS-MK-3.

33. The Town of Bennington has a Parks and Open Space Plan (2007). The property on which the Project site is proposed is not a candidate for open space protection or land conservation. Kane pf. at 5; exh CS-MK-3.

34. The Bennington Regional Plan (2007) considers the future land use of the region and advances regional goals. It states that "rural development must not be widely scattered throughout the countryside, but should occur as relatively compact and cohesive units that serve to reinforce, rather than replace the region's rural character." The Project site is at the edge of developed highway infrastructure and the Project has been designed compactly. Kane pf. at 6; exh. CS-MK-4; exh. CS-MK-5.

Need for Present and Future Demand for Services

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(2)]

Findings

35. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, this criterion is conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

System Stability and Reliability

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(3)]

Findings

36. The Project will not have an adverse impact on system stability and reliability. This finding is supported by findings 37 and 38, below.

37. GMP has completed a system impact study that investigated the impacts of the Project's interconnection to the GMP distribution system and identified the system upgrades necessary to maintain stability and reliability. Wilson pf. at 11-12; exh. CS-ECOS-5.

38. The Petitioner must enter into an Interconnection Agreement with GMP before the Project would be allowed to interconnect to GMP's distribution system. Completion of the

upgrades identified in GMP's system impact study at the Petitioner's expense would be a requirement of the Interconnection Agreement. Wilson pf. at 11-12.

Discussion

Pursuant to Board Rule 5.500, I recommend that the Board require that, prior to commencing operation of the Project, Chelsea must: (1) enter into an Interconnection Agreement with GMP that conforms to the requirements of Board Rule 5.500; and (2) be responsible for the cost of GMP's electric system upgrades reasonably necessary to implement interconnection for the Project, including those identified in exhibit CS-ECOS-5, and such other costs appropriately submitted to Chelsea. Subject to these conditions, I recommend that the Board conclude that the Project would not adversely affect system stability and reliability.

Economic Benefit to the State

[30 V.S.A. §248(b)(4)]

Findings

39. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, this criterion is conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

Aesthetics, Historic Sites, Air and Water Purity, the Natural Environment, and Public Health and Safety

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5)]

Findings

40. Subject to the conditions described below, the proposed Project will not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics, historic sites, air and water purity, the natural environment, the use of natural resources, and public health and safety, with due consideration having been given to the criteria specified in 10 V.S.A. §§ 1424a(d) and 6086(a)(1) through (8) and (9)(K), and greenhouse gas impacts. This finding is supported by findings 41 through 131, below, which give due consideration to the criteria specified in 10 V.S.A. § 1424a(d) and 10 V.S.A. §§ 6086(a)(1) through (8) and (9)(K).

Outstanding Resource Waters

[10 V.S.A. § 1424a(d); 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(8)]

Findings

41. The Project will not result in an undue adverse effect on any outstanding resource water as defined by 10 V.S.A. § 1424a(d) or 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(8), as the Project is not located on or in the vicinity of any segment of such waters. Dori Barton, Chelsea ("Barton") pf. at 3; Barton pf. supp. at 3; Scott Michael Mapes, Chelsea ("Mapes") pf. at 7.

Water Pollution

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)]

Findings

42. The Project will not result in undue water pollution. This finding is supported by findings 43 and 44, below, and the findings under criteria 10 V.S.A. §§ 6086(a)(1)(B)–(a)(4).

43. Chelsea would use a non-toxic, bio-based coolant – FR3 or equivalent – for the Project transformer. To provide secondary containment for the cooling oil should the transformer housing fail and leak, a secondary containment system would be built sufficient to accommodate 110% of the transformer coolant volume, plus 5 inches of freeboard for rain. The specifications of the secondary containment system are set forth in the First ANR MOU. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 8; exh. CS-ECPS-10.

44. Chelsea's O&M contractor would perform periodic inspections of the secondary oil containment system and maintain the system in good working order for the life of the Project. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 8.

Air Pollution, Sound, Wind, and Greenhouse Gas Impacts

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)]

Findings

45. The Project will not result in undue air pollution, sound, wind, or greenhouse gas emissions. This finding is supported by findings 46 through 64, below.

46. Any air emissions from the Project would be related to limited vehicle and equipment emissions and dust, and would be present mostly during construction of the Project. Mapes pf. at 5-6.

47. Undue generation of dust is not anticipated for the following reasons: (1) the construction entrance and Project access drive would be stabilized; (2) the access drive would be a gravel surface; (3) while there would be extensive tree and brush clearing, that activity would be conducted in accordance with the Project's Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control ("EPSC") plan phasing and Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation ("DEC") Construction General Permit 3-9020; (4) there would be limited soil disturbance associated with installation of the solar panel support structures as these would be pile-driven; (5) the installation of the perimeter security fence would involve limited soil disturbance as the fence posts would be pile-driven or augured; (6) there would be only limited, temporary soil disturbance associated with the installation of underground conduit; (7) water would be applied as needed during the construction phase; and (8) during construction-phase activities the Petitioner would implement best management practices ("BMPs") as detailed in the Project's EPSC plan and as required by the Project's coverage under the DEC Stormwater Construction General Permit 3-9020. Mapes pf. at 5-6; exh. CS-SMM-2.

48. Emissions from delivery vehicles and construction equipment would be of short duration and minimal impact. Tr. 7/16/15 at 39 (Mapes).

49. There would be no burning or other emissions during either construction or operation of the Project. The Project would not produce air pollutants during operation. Wilson pf. supp. at 8.

50. Chelsea proposes hours of construction between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday with no construction taking place during evenings, nighttime, weekends, or state or federal holidays. Wilson pf. at 7.

51. The only Project equipment that would generate sound are the inverters and the medium voltage transformer. The inverters would generate a maximum of 50 decibels at a distance of 10 feet, and the transformer would generate a maximum of 60 decibels at a distance of 10 feet. This equipment would only be in use during sunlit hours. Wilson pf. at 21.

52. The Town of Bennington Noise Standards by Time of Day (the "Bennington Standards") limit the sound pressure level at the receiving property line for residential and commercial or industrial properties during the day and at night as follows:

Receiving Property	Time of Day	
	6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m	10:00 p.m to 6:00 a.m.
Residential	60 dBA	45 dBA
Commercial/Industrial	70 dBA	55 dBA

When a sound exceeds the dBA sound level specified above, it is a violation of the Bennington Standards. Exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-2, exhibit B.

53. Chelsea sponsored a noise study performed by Rincon Consultants of Ventura, California (the "Rincon Study"). The Rincon Study relied upon a Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") model and noise volume levels recorded by the Vermont Agency of Transportation ("VTrans") along U.S. Route 7 and VT Route 279 to estimate the current sound levels at 17 locations around the Project site and to model the potential sound levels at those locations after the Project was constructed. The Rincon Study concluded that during operations the Project would not generate significant sound levels that would violate the Bennington Standards. Exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-2, exhibit B.

54. The primary sound source at the Project site is from the nearby highway traffic. The Rincon Study determined that traffic noise would increase up to 3.6 dBA due to the removal of the trees at the Project site. The resultant sound level, including both traffic noise and the sound coming from Project equipment, would remain below the Bennington Standards and within the normal sound levels for a rural area. The Rincon Study further concluded that "surrounding residential units would not be exposed to unusual or unacceptable noise levels in excess of criteria and no substantial noise effect is anticipated to be caused by the removal of trees from the proposed project site." Exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-2, exhibit B at 5.

55. The FHWA's Traffic Noise and Noise Barrier Design Handbook projects that the removal of a forested area similar in size in proximity to a highway may raise noise levels between 5 and 10 dBA. Exh. Harris-1; tr. 7/16/15 at 52 (Harris).

56. The Rincon Study projected that the highest sound level, including both traffic noise and Project equipment, within the Project area after tree removal would be 46.1 dBA and hence would not exceed the 60 dBA Bennington Standard. Exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-2, exhibit B.

57. The average annual wind speed in Bennington is approximately 4.5 meters per second and, as such, is among the least windy areas in Vermont, where average annual wind speeds may reach up to 10 meters per second. Exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-2, exhibit C.

58. Residential properties within one-quarter mile of the Project site were built without any windscreen from trees, unlike the residences adjacent to the forested Project area. Tr. 7/16/15 at 56 (Wilson).

59. An in-depth, site-specific wind analysis at the Project site would take at least six months, and hiring an anemometry consultant would have a significant cost. Tr. 7/16/15 at 54 (Wilson).

60. After assessing: (1) the low average wind speed for the Bennington area, (2) the proximity to the Project site of other residences without forested windscreens, and (3) the time and cost of conducting a site-specific wind analysis, Chelsea determined that while there might be some adverse impact created by the wind after the site was deforested, that adverse impact would not be undue. Therefore, Chelsea decided not to commission a wind study. Tr. 7/16/15 at 56-57 (Wilson).

61. Chelsea agrees to provide ANR with the following Project "as-built" information within 60 days of the commissioning date of the Project to assist ANR with compiling and analyzing greenhouse gas impacts:

- a. Solar panel manufacturer and model;
- b. Solar panel cell technology (e.g., mono-Si, multi-Si, CdTe, etc.);
- c. Rated solar panel output (in watts);
- d. Number of solar panels installed;
- e. Array mounting type (fixed, 1-axis tracking, 2-axis tracking, ground, roof, other);
- f. For fixed or 1-axis tracking, panel orientation and mounting angle;
- g. Rack system manufacturer and model;
- h. Rack system components, including the number of aluminum rails, steel mounting posts, etc.;
- i. Number and type of any other mounting components (e.g., concrete ballasts and foundation blocks);

- j. Manufacturer, model, and number of inverters;
- k. Manufacturer, model, and number of transformers;
- l. Mass of concrete used (for ballasts, foundations, mounting pads, etc.);
- m. Percent of Portland cement composition of concrete;
- n. Description, quantity, and source of any recycled materials used (e.g., recycled content concrete, recycled aluminum racking, etc.);
- o. Amount (length) and gauge of wiring used for Project;
- p. Components for connection to grid (circuit boxes, circuit breaker panels, metering equipment, etc.);
- q. Distance (e.g., truck miles traveled) for transport of system components to site; and
- r. Distance to grid connection.

Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 4.

62. By January 30 of each year, ANR may request that Chelsea provide ANR with an annual report for the previous calendar year of operations that would contain the information set out below which would be used to assist ANR with compiling and analyzing greenhouse gas impacts. Chelsea would have 60 days from the date of ANR's request to supply the information. Should ANR not request the information set out below by January 30, Chelsea would not have any obligation to provide an annual report from the previous year of operations. The information to be provided includes the following:

- a. Electric generation in kWh for the prior year, broken down by month; and
- b. Any information about the replacement of PV panels, inverters, transformers, or a complete racking system. In instances of failure and replacement of equipment (e.g., PV panels, inverters, etc.), Chelsea would provide descriptions of both the failed and replacement components at the same level of detail as required by the "as-built" reporting requirements of finding 61, above. This provision does not require Chelsea to provide information about *de minimis* replacement of system components (e.g., replacement of racking system hardware), or information regarding regular maintenance activities.

Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 5.

63. Should ANR not request the information in finding 62, above, in any two consecutive years after Project commissioning, Chelsea's reporting obligations would automatically cease. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 6.

64. ANR and Chelsea, by mutual agreement, may cancel Chelsea's reporting obligations at any time. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 7.

Discussion

There has been considerable public comment related to the potential sound and wind impacts of the Project. These concerns are also reflected in the Harris Brief and in the discovery conducted by the Department in this case, as well as in the evidence addressed in this proceeding. While the assessment of the potential sound impacts of projects is a regular part of the Board's review of Section 248 projects under the air pollution criterion, assessing potential wind impacts is not. The Harris Brief treats sound and wind as aesthetic impacts. As it is the Board's practice to assess sound under the air pollution criterion, I have reported the findings related to both sound and wind here and discuss them here under this criterion for the Board's consideration.

The Rincon Study, placed into evidence by Chelsea, relied upon a robust set of sound volume readings recorded by VTrans in 2012 to project current sound levels at various locations around the site using an FHWA model and to further project the potential impact of clear cutting the Project site on those locations using the same model. As noted in the Harris Brief,¹⁶ the Rincon Study did not conduct ambient sound measurements at the Harris property or anywhere around the Project site. Nonetheless, the Rincon Study did rely on actual ambient sound measurements done by VTrans to project sound levels at various other locations around the Project site using a FHWA sound propagation model. The VTrans data documents the predominance of the nearby traffic, on local roads, notably Route 7, as the primary sound source.

The Harris Brief characterizes the Rincon Study as reflective of a lack of due diligence. I disagree. Both Chelsea and Ms. Harris have cited the FHWA in this proceeding as a source of expertise in measuring sound; using the FHWA model to analyze the 2012 VTrans sound

16. Harris Brief at 9 and 12.

measurements in relation to locations around the Project site reflects an application of accepted methods for sound analysis and was not unreasonable. Relying upon FHWA's model, the Rincon Study found that the sound created by the Project, both additional traffic noise caused by cutting down trees and Project equipment sound, did not breach the Bennington Standards. I therefore recommend that the Board conclude that the potential increase in sound is not an adverse Project impact.

There was also concern from the public and Ms. Harris about the effect that clear-cutting the Project site would have on wind at local residences. The premise of this concern was that trees serve as a windscreen and removing trees would increase the wind speed at the residences. Chelsea responded to this concern by assessing the available local data which indicates that annual wind speeds in the Bennington area are relatively low. Further, Chelsea noted that several other homes were built in the area unshielded by the trees at the Project site. Based on this data, as well as an assessment of the cost and time delay associated with conducting a site-specific wind study, Chelsea decided not to conduct a wind study.

Based on my review of the record I have concluded that no persuasive evidence was presented to substantiate the concern that clear-cutting the Project site would create an adverse wind impact. Thus, given relatively low wind speeds in the Bennington area and the lack of data to support a concern about wind impacts, I recommend that the Board find that cutting down the trees will not create an adverse wind impact.

Ms. Harris also raised a concern about carbon sequestration in her brief, an issue that had not previously been addressed during this Docket's extended proceedings. Ms. Harris argues that "[t]he evaluation of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions must include the contribution that the forest Chelsea Solar proposes to cut is making in terms of carbon sequestration."¹⁷

Section 248(b)(5) requires that the Board give "due consideration" to "greenhouse gas impacts." There is no specific statutory requirement to conduct a carbon sequestration assessment or a carbon balancing test. Section 248(a)(3)(E) provides that ANR "shall appear as a party" in Section 248 proceedings and "shall provide evidence and recommendations concerning

17. Harris Brief at 14.

any findings to be made under subdivision (b)(5)." The findings above and the two ANR MOUs reflect both Chelsea's due diligence in addressing greenhouse gas impacts and ANR's fulfillment of its statutory duties by including extensive greenhouse gas emission data requirements upon which I recommend the Board condition approval of a CPG.

As a matter of straight-forward logic, I recognize that cutting down approximately 15 acres of forest to construct the Project means that 15 acres of forest would cease to exist and therefore will cease to sequester carbon. As a matter of simple logic, I further recognize that the operation of the Project – a solar generation facility – would likely have a lower carbon impact than electrical power generated by fossil-fuel. However, based on the record developed by the parties in this proceeding, there is no evidentiary basis for me to determine, one way or another, whether the Project would have a detrimental greenhouse gas impact due to the clearing of 15 acres of trees. Nor does the language of Section 248(b)(5) require that such a determination be made to satisfy the requirement that the Board give "due consideration" to greenhouse gas impacts. For these reasons, I recommend that the Board find there would be no adverse impact from the Project related to greenhouse gas emissions.

Headwaters

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(A)]

Findings

65. The Project will not result in an undue, adverse impact to any of Vermont's headwaters. This finding is based on findings 66 through 69, below.

66. The Project is located within a headwater as defined by 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(A) because the Project site is in a drainage area of less than 20 square miles. However, the Project is not characterized by other features that define headwaters. It is not characterized by steep slopes or shallow soils, is not above 1,500 feet in elevation, is not in a watershed of a public water supply as designated by ANR, and is not in an area supplying significant amounts of recharge water to aquifers. Mapes pf. at 7.

67. ANR Geographic Information System ("GIS") databases and site observations show that runoff from the site drains to a VTrans storm-system network at the U.S. Route 7 and VT Route 279 interchange. This water eventually discharges to an unnamed tributary of Furnace Brook,

which eventually flows into Furnace Brook roughly a quarter mile from the Project. Furnace Brook then flows into the Walloomsac River. This headwater sub-watershed is less than one square mile at the point where the Project runoff would discharge to the VTrans storm-system network. Mapes pf. at 7.

68. Despite the size of the sub-watershed, the Project would meet any health and DEC regulations regarding the reduction of the quality of ground or surface waters flowing through lands defined as a headwater. According to Chelsea, the conditions contained in DEC's Stormwater Construction General Permit 3-9020, under which the Project would be covered, would ensure that ground- and surface-water quality are not affected by the Project's construction activities. Mapes pf. at 7; exh. CS-SMM-2.

69. The Project's transformer would use Envirotemp FR3, a bio-based coolant, or an equivalent, and would be constructed with a secondary spill containment system. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 8.

Waste Disposal

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(B)]

Findings

70. The Project will meet applicable health and Vermont DEC regulations regarding the disposal of wastes and would not involve the injection of waste materials into groundwater or wells. This finding is supported by findings 71 through 79, below.

71. The Project would meet applicable health and DEC regulations regarding the disposal of wastes. Mapes pf. at 8.

72. The Project does not involve disposal of wastes or injection of any material into groundwater or wells. Mapes pf. at 8.

73. The Project does not involve any domestic waste or potable water supply needs. Therefore, according to Chelsea, the Project does not require a state Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal Permit. Mapes pf. at 8.

74. There would be brush and tree clearing, and solid wastes generated would be processed and/or recycled in accordance with Vermont solid waste management rules. Mapes pf. at 8.

75. According to Chelsea, due to the nature and size of the new development and the resulting new impervious surface created (less than one acre), the Project would not require

coverage under the DEC Stormwater Operational Phase General Permit 3-9015. However, the Project has been designed with appropriate operational phase stormwater BMPs to provide flow mitigation and water quality treatment practices given the change in site characteristics from pre- to post-development. Mapes pf. at 8; exh. CS-SMM-5.

76. Because earth disturbances during construction would include tree and brush clearing and would be greater than one acre, Chelsea would seek coverage under DEC Stormwater Construction General Permit 3-9020. Mapes pf. at 9; exh. CS-SMM-7.

77. The majority of the soils for the Project area are mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as either very stony Georgia loam (67C) or very stony Stockbridge loam (65C). There is a small mapped section of Galway-Farmington complex (41C). These soils are moderately to very deep and are moderately to well-drained and tend not to be erodible when exposed for lengthy periods of time. Exhibit CS-SMM-4.

78. However, to lessen the chance of any erosion, all disturbed areas would be promptly stabilized with temporary or final measures within 7 days of initial disturbance, and no more than 5 acres would be disturbed at any one time. Provided Chelsea follows both this protocol and the requirements of the DEC Stormwater Construction General Permit 3-9020, the site should experience little to no erosion. Mapes pf. at 9; exhs. CS-SMM-2, CS-SMM-5, CS-SMM-7, and CS-ECOS-4.

79. Chelsea has agreed to perform post-construction, as-built, field verification of all impervious surfaces associated with both the solar array and the GMP line that would interconnect with the Project ("GMP Line Extension") and report the total new impervious surface area to DEC's Stormwater Management Program. If the Stormwater Program determines that the total impervious surface area associated with the Project, in combination with the total impervious surface area of any other project deemed by the Stormwater Program to be part of a common plan of development as defined in the DEC's stormwater rules, results in a total amount of impervious surfaces greater than one acre, Chelsea would obtain an operational stormwater discharge permit and the Project would be retrofitted with required stormwater treatment practices pursuant to the Vermont Stormwater Management Manual, Volume I. Exh. CS-MOU-2 at ¶ 4.

Water Conservation
[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(C)]

Findings

80. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, this criterion is conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

Floodways
[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(D)]

Findings

81. The Project will have no undue adverse effects on floodways. The Project is not located in a floodway or floodway fringe. The Project is located outside of and at an elevation above a mapped Special Flood Hazard Area for Bennington. Mapes pf. at 10.

Streams
[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(E)]

Findings

82. The Project will not result in an undue, adverse impact to any streams. This finding is supported by findings 83 and 84, below, and the findings under the criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(G) and 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(4).

83. The Project would not be on or adjacent to the bank of any perennial stream. The closest mapped stream is approximately 1600 feet to the west of the Project area. GIS databases and site observations show that runoff from the site drains to a VTrans storm-system network at the U.S. Route 7 and VT Route 279 interchange which eventually discharges to an unnamed tributary of Furnace Brook which eventually flows into Furnace Brook roughly a quarter mile away from the Project. Furnace Brook then flows into the Walloomsac. Given the scope and nature of construction-phase activities, the associated implementation of the Project's EPSC plan, and the state of the completed Project, no impacts are expected to occur to those identified watercourses as a result of the Project. Mapes pf. at 11; Barton pf. at 2.

84. The GMP Line Extension would be located adjacent to or near a stream. The stream assessment for this part of the Project involved both a remote review of the United States

Geological Survey topographic maps, the Vermont Hydrography Dataset (streams, rivers, waterbodies), 2-foot contours derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency Bennington Light Detection and Ranging Study (2012), and a field investigation on May 11, 2015. There are a series of small tributaries to the Walloomsac River within the proposed interconnection route. However, the proposed interconnection route would result in minimal clearing of trees along Hewitt and Willow Roads. Poles would be installed within the existing road fill slope and would not result in any new disturbance to stream riparian zones. Barton 2d. pf. supp. at 2-3; exh. CS-DB-5.

Shorelines

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(F)]

Findings

85. Neither the Project site nor the GMP Line Extension are located on or in proximity to a shoreline. Therefore, the Project will not have an undue adverse impact on shorelines. Barton pf. at 3; Mapes pf. at 11; Barton 2d. pf. supp. at 3.

Wetlands

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(G)]

Findings

86. The Project will not have an undue adverse effect on wetlands. This finding is supported by findings 87 through 90, below.

87. There are no Class II wetlands or 50-foot wetland buffer resources within the Project site. Barton pf. at 4.

88. With respect to the GMP Line Extension, five wetlands were identified, delineated and mapped along the proposed route. Barton 2d. pf. supp at 4-5.

89. For the purposes of pole layout along the GMP Line Extension, each of the five wetlands was assumed to be Class II and included a 50-foot buffer. The proposed placement would result in three poles within the wetland buffer zones of three wetlands. The Project was thus designed to avoid direct wetland impacts. The poles would be installed within the existing road fill slope resulting in minimal disturbance to wetland buffer areas. The proposed

interconnection would not involve extensive tree clearing and GMP concluded that no wetlands permit would be required. Barton 2d. pf. supp. at 4-5.

90. Chelsea has agreed that if any wetlands permit is required by DEC's Wetlands Program, neither Chelsea nor GMP would commence construction of the GMP Line Extension prior to obtaining any such wetlands permit. All GMP Line Extension construction would be performed in accordance with any such permit. Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶ 4.

Sufficiency of Water and Burden on Existing Water Supply

[10 V.S.A. §§ 6086(a)(2) & (3)]

Findings

91. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, these criteria are conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

Soil Erosion

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(4)]

Findings

92. The Project will not cause unreasonable soil erosion or a reduction in the capacity of the land to hold water so that a dangerous or unhealthy condition may result. This finding is supported by findings 93 through 95, below.

93. There are no streams or wetlands located on the Project site. Any of these features located off-site, including the route of the GMP Line Extension, would be sufficiently protected by the implementation of a comprehensive EPSC plan. The EPSC Plan, at a minimum, would include: (1) installing and maintaining silt fencing in down-gradient of areas of earth disturbance, and (2) stabilizing all earth disturbances with temporary BMPs. Maps pf. at 12-14; exhs. CS-ECOS-4, CS-SMM-2, and CS-SMM-7.

94. Permanent stabilization would be achieved with native grass seed upon completion of construction activities. During Project operations, service vehicles would access the Project site from the existing driveway off Apple Hill Road. This access would be improved and stabilized with a stone construction entrance to prevent the tracking of sediment off-site. Any tracked

sediments found on Apple Hill Road would be routinely swept up. To control dust during construction-phase activities, water would be applied as needed. Mapes pf. at 12.

95. During construction-phase activities, Chelsea would implement BMPs as detailed in the Project EPSC plan and as required by Stormwater Construction General Permit 3-9020. Mapes pf. at 12-14; exhs. CS-ECOS-4, CS-SMM-2, and CS-SMM-7.

Transportation Systems

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(5)]

Findings

96. The Project will not cause unreasonable congestion or unsafe conditions with respect to transportation systems. This finding is supported by findings 97 through 101, below.

97. Construction traffic for the Project would access the Project site via a temporary construction access driveway along the southern boundary of the property to connect the Project site to Willow Road. Wilson pf. supp. at 1.

98. Construction traffic is estimated to be low volume and would not cause congestion or affect regular traffic patterns. Wilson pf. at 15.

99. No Project O&M traffic would use the temporary construction access driveway or Willow Road. Wilson pf. supp. at 1.

100. A permanent access driveway would be constructed along the northeastern corner of the property to connect the Project site to Apple Hill Road. The permanent access driveway would be used for O&M traffic as well as emergency vehicle access. Wilson pf. supp. at 1.

101. O&M traffic is estimated to amount to approximately four pickup-truck trips per month. Wilson pf. supp. at 3.

Educational Services

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(6)]

Findings

102. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, this criterion is conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

Municipal Services
[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(7)]

Findings

103. The Project will not place an unreasonable burden on the ability of the affected municipality to provide municipal or government services. The Project does not require any municipal sewer or water services. The Project would not require above-average use of municipal police, fire, or rescue services. Wilson pf. at 16.

Aesthetics, Historic Sites, and Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Areas
[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)]

Findings

104. The Project will not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics or on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, nor will the Project have an undue adverse effect on historic sites or rare and irreplaceable natural areas. This finding is supported by findings 105 through 123, below.

Aesthetics

105. The Project is located on 14.85 acres of an approximately 27-acre tract just north of the U.S. Route 7/VT Route 279 interchange in Bennington, Vermont. The Project site is bounded on the southern and western edges by the highway system, on the north by a shared property line with three residential properties, and on the east by a parcel of land formerly used as an apple orchard which is currently undeveloped. The nearest neighbor is 175 feet north of the Project fenceline. Kane pf. at 3-5; exh. CS-MK-2.

106. At present, the Project site is almost entirely wooded with northern hardwood species and is accessed via Apple Hill Road. The site gently slopes at an 8% grade from the northeast corner to the southwest corner, falling approximately 94 feet over this distance. While the grade is gently sloping, the topography exhibits some slight undulations. Apple Hill Road, which provides access to the Project site, is set within and at the northern edge of the forested hillside, which limits views from the road of the Project site to the south. Kane pf. at 3-5; exh. CS-MK-2.

107. The area surrounding the site is dominated by extensive highway infrastructure, including the Vermont Welcome Center, as well as nearby industrial and commercial development. The northbound lanes of U.S. Route 7 define the western edge of the Project. The site sits within a broader valley terminated to the west by the foothills of the Green Mountains and to the east by rolling hillsides. Exh. CS-MK-2 at 4 and Figure 1.

108. The roadways associated with the U.S. Route 7/VT Route 279 interchange are highly traveled. The VTrans route logs indicate that approximately 9,000 vehicles pass through the interchange each day. Kane pf. at 4.

109. The Bennington Battle Monument is approximately 1.2 miles south of the Project site. The Monument's observation level has four narrow viewing windows at compass bearings of 340°, 070°, 160°, and 250°. The Project site would be located between two windows at a bearing of 020° and would likely be only minimally visible from the Monument. Visibility of the Project site from the Monument grounds is also highly limited due to the presence of both structures and trees in the foreground. Kane pf. at 12; exh. CS-DIS-DEPT-1 at Response 11.

110. The visibility of the Project site is limited by the nature of the terrain, the preservation and addition of landscaping on the periphery of the site, and by the fact that the surrounding land is used primarily by people in vehicles. Along with the Vermont Welcome Center, other areas within the viewshed are accessible only by vehicle. In fact, the nature of the roadways – on/off ramps, merge lanes – makes it a highly fluid, mobile visual environment. The view duration would be low, nonetheless the number of potential observers would likely be high, given the location. The extent of visibility would not be large, but the clearing associated with the Project would be noticeable. In due consideration of those factors and using the Quechee Test, the Project would create an adverse impact with respect to the visual resources of the area. Kane pf. at 4; exh. CS-MK-2.

111. The broader landscape in which the Project site is situated is generally scenic, despite the presence of the adjacent roadways and nearby commercial and industrial development. The presence of the Project would not undermine the broader landscape's visibility or degrade its scenic visual quality. Though potentially visible to a large number of people, the direct view of

the Project components would be largely screened by retained vegetation and mitigating plantings on the periphery of the site. Kane pf. at 4-5; exh. CS-MK-2.

112. The Bennington Town Plan, Bennington Scenic Resource Inventory, and Bennington Regional Plan identify many areas of the community as scenic, but the Project site is not part of those areas. Review of the current town and regional plans reveals no written standards intended to preserve the scenic beauty of the Project site or area. The Project site is not specifically identified as a scenic area or designated for land conservation, and no standards exist which prohibit development of the parcel. Kane pf. at 5.

113. The tree clearing needed to accommodate the placement of the array may result in the visibility of the back side of the northern-most panels of the Project from the three adjacent residential properties. Within this area, the array would be about 290 feet away from the closest residential structure and set well below it in grade. Existing vegetation would intervene between that residential structure and the array. Kane pf. supp. at 3-4; exh. CS-MK-7.

114. Chelsea agreed to reduce the visibility of the Project from the residences to the north by: (1) adjusting the Project fence line by moving it further south; (2) reducing the amount of large tree and vegetative clearing along the northern fenceline; and (3) planting additional, mitigating native deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs. A specific quantity for this supplemental mitigation planting would be determined after clearing of the site is completed. This zone for potential supplemental mitigation plantings would extend along the entire northern edge of the property, including areas uphill of the access road from the Apple Hill neighborhood to the north and east. Kane pf. supp. at 4-5; exh. CS-MK-7.

115. Chelsea also agreed to mitigate the view on the eastern edge of the Project site. This eastern mitigation zone would extend from where the access road enters the property at the northeast corner of the parcel, southward to the point where the parcel heads further east. The pattern and density of landscaping in this zone would be determined based on the post-clearing condition. Kane pf. supp. at 5; exh. CS-MK-7.

116. In the Second DPS MOU, Chelsea agreed that:

- a. The central equipment skid would be of a dark grey color;

- b. The Supplemental Mitigation Plan described at Figure 2 of exhibit CS-MK-7 would be adhered to for the life of the Project; and
- c. A post-construction aesthetics review would be conducted by Chelsea's aesthetics expert and the Department's aesthetics expert to determine what areas along the Project's northern boundary, if any, require additional vegetative screening.

Exh. CS-MOU-4.

117. The Project would be the most visible from the south at the highway interchange and the Vermont Welcome Center. SE Group prepared a visual simulation of the currently proposed design as seen from the south. The retention of vegetation along the southern portion of the property effectively screens views of the Project from the Vermont Welcome Center. Kane pf. supp. at 5-6; exh. CS-MK-7.

118. The Vermont Welcome Center is south of the Route 7 northbound on-ramp and lower in elevation than the Project site. The topography, elevation changes, and existing vegetation make it unlikely that the GMP Line Extension would be visible from the Vermont Welcome Center or its parking area. VT Route 279 is further south and west of the GMP Line Extension. In addition to being slightly lower in elevation, dense vegetation along the southwest corner of the Project property make it unlikely that the GMP Line Extension would be visible from VT Route 279. If some poles would be visible, they would appear largely backed by retained trees when observed from the south or west. This would significantly reduce their visual presence in the landscape. Kane 2d. pf. supp. at 5-6; exhs. CS-SUP-MK-2, CS-SUP-MK-3, and CS-SUP-MK-4.

119. An aesthetics assessment was also conducted of the GMP Line Extension that is proposed along the southern edge of Willow Road. Both sides of the roadway are predominantly wooded and the grade rises slightly to the south. The final appearance of the GMP Line Extension to a viewer on the lightly-traveled Willow Road would be visually consistent with typical roadside line infrastructure commonly seen in and around the area. Kane 2d. pf. supp. at 5; exhs. CS-SUP-MK-3 and CS-SUP-MK-4.

120. The GMP Line Extension would expand the Project's overall visual impact but does not create an unduly adverse condition with respect to the scenic beauty of the area. Kane 2d. pf. supp. at 7-8.

Discussion

In determining whether a proposed project would have an undue adverse impact on aesthetics, the Board is guided by the so-called Quechee Test. The Board has previously summarized the Quechee Test as follows:

Pursuant to this procedure, first a determination must be made as to whether a project would have an adverse impact on aesthetics and the scenic and natural beauty. In order to find that it would have an adverse impact, a project must be out of character with its surroundings. Specific factors used in making this evaluation include the nature of the project's surroundings, the compatibility of the project's design with those surroundings, the suitability of the project's colors and materials with the immediate environment, the visibility of the project, and the impact of the project on open space.

The next step in the two-part test, once a conclusion as to the adverse effect of the project has been reached, is to determine whether the adverse effect of the project is "undue." The adverse effect is considered undue when a positive finding is reached regarding any one of the following factors:

1. Does the project violate a clear, written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic beauty of the area?
2. Have the applicants failed to take generally available mitigating steps which a reasonable person would take to improve the harmony of the project with its surroundings?
3. Does the project offend the sensibilities of the average person? Is it offensive or shocking because it is out of character with its surroundings or significantly diminishes the scenic qualities of the area?¹⁸

In addition to this guidance from the Quechee Test, the Board's consideration of aesthetics under Section 248 is "significantly informed by overall societal benefits of the project."¹⁹

In the current proceeding, Chelsea states that the Project would result in an adverse aesthetic impact. I agree that there would be an adverse impact due to the Project's scale and

18. *Amended Petition of UPC Vermont Wind*, Docket 7156, Order of 8/8/07 at 64-65.

19. *In Re: Northern Loop Project*, Docket 6792, Order of 7/17/03 at 28.

proximity to the Vermont Welcome Center and the heavily-traveled U.S. Route 7/VT Route 279 highway complex, and its proposed placement in a densely-forested and undeveloped 27-acre parcel that currently shields nearby residences from the highway complex. Accordingly, the Board must determine whether that adverse impact would also be undue.

The first step in evaluating whether the Project would have an undue adverse aesthetic impact is to determine whether the Project would violate a clear, written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic beauty of the area. A review of the Bennington Town Plan and the Bennington Regional Plan does not reveal any such standards that the Project would violate. I therefore recommend to the Board that it find that the Project would not violate any clear, written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic beauty of the area.

The second step in evaluating whether the Project would have an undue adverse aesthetic impact is to determine whether Chelsea has taken generally available mitigating steps which a reasonable person would take to improve the harmony of the Project with its surroundings. Subject to three conditions, I recommend that the Board find that Chelsea meets this requirement.

Chelsea asserts that the placement, design, and low profile of the Project, in conjunction with the proposed vegetative screening plan, constitute appropriate mitigation for the Project's visual impacts. Chelsea, consistent with prior solar facilities approved by the Board, has proposed undergrounding Project wiring and has selected neutral tones for Project infrastructure to the extent possible. Additionally, the proposed vegetative screening plan would help ameliorate the views of the public traveling on nearby highways as they pass by the Project's western and southern edges. Finally, the supplemental mitigation plan described in exhibit CS-MK- 7 reflects Chelsea's agreement to conduct a post-construction review to determine whether further plantings along the Project's northern and eastern edges are required to screen the Project from the view of its residential neighbors.

In order to further mitigate aesthetic impacts from the Project, I recommend that the Board explicitly impose the following conditions set forth in the Second DPS MOU (finding 115) and in Chelsea's additional agreement (finding 116) to mitigate the view on the eastern edge of the Project site:

- (1) Chelsea shall ensure that the central equipment skid is of a dark grey color;
- (2) Chelsea shall comply with the Supplemental Mitigation Plan described at Figure 2 of exhibit CS-MK-7 for the life of the Project; and
- (3) A post-construction aesthetics review shall be conducted by Chelsea's aesthetics expert and the Department's aesthetics expert to determine what areas along the Project's northern and eastern boundaries, if any, require additional vegetative screening. Chelsea shall consult with the property owners along the northern edge of the Project and the Town of Bennington for the purpose of obtaining their input on the final landscaping design.

The final step under the Quechee Test is to determine whether the Project would be shocking or offensive to the average person. Given (1) the limited duration of views from public vantage points when passing the Project site while driving the U.S. Route 7/VT Route 297 highway complex, (2) the highly constrained and distant view from the Bennington Battle Monument, (3) the mitigation proposed by Chelsea which would mitigate the view from the highway complex including the Vermont Welcome Center, and (4) the conditions set forth above, I recommend that the Board find that the Project would not offend the sensibilities of the average person.

Historic Sites

Findings

121. The Project will not have an undue adverse effect on historic or archaeological sites or resources. Mapes pf. at 14.

Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Areas

Findings

122. The Project site is not considered a significant natural community or rare and irreplaceable natural areas ("RINA"). Barton pf. supp. at 3.

123. The GMP Line Extension also would not have an undue adverse impact on any RINA. No RINA are present within the proposed route. Moreover, pole placement for the proposed interconnection route would be approximately 10 feet from the traveled edge of Willow and

Hewitt Roads. This area is characterized as mowed road shoulder and existing fill slope. Barton 2d. pf. supp at 5-6.

Wildlife, Including Necessary Wildlife Habitat and Endangered Species

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)(A)]

Findings

124. The Project will not destroy or significantly imperil any necessary wildlife habitat or any endangered species. This finding is supported by findings 125 through 129, below.

125. Arrowwood Environmental ("AE") conducted a Rare, Threatened, or Endangered ("RTE") plant survey of the Project area on August 14, 2014. The following rare or uncommon species were found during the inventory: Arrow-Leaved American Aster (*Symphotrichum Urophyllum*), Nimblewill Muhly (*Muhlenbergia Schreberi*), Spreading Sedge (*Carex Laxiculmis*) and Rough-Leaved Goldenrod (*Solidago Patula*). Barton pf. supp. at 2; exh. CS-DB-3.

126. AE worked with ANR and Chelsea to develop a mitigation strategy that would minimize impacts from the proposed Project to the Arrow-Leaved American Aster on the site. This strategy involved the establishment of two conservation areas centered around the largest concentrations of rare plants found on the site. Permission from ANR was obtained to transplant the Arrow-Leaved American Aster plants in the fall of 2014 into the conservation areas. On October 15, 2014, two AE personnel conducted the transplanting. Barton 2d. pf. supp. at 3; exh. CS-DB-4.

127. In response to the presence at the Project site of Arrow-Leaved American Aster (*Symphotrichum Urophyllum*), an S1-ranked very rare species, and Nimblewill Muhly (*Muhlenbergia Schreberi*), an S2-ranked rare species, Chelsea has agreed to follow the protocol in the First ANR MOU, quoted below, to mitigate Project impacts so that such impacts are not unduly adverse.

1. Prior to site preparation or construction of the Project:

(a) Petitioner shall establish, and designate, two Conservation Areas in the areas shown on the Site Plan included as Attachment C to the Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plant Mitigation Report dated November 11, 2014 (Plant Report), and admitted into evidence in this proceeding. The Conservation Areas shall encompass the entire polygons of the areas shown in the southwest (to be

designated Conservation Area 1) and southeast (to be designated Conservation Area 2) corners of the property on the Site Plan. In other words, the Conservation Area polygons shall include the totality of the contiguous diagonal line markings shown on the Site Plan and illustrated in various colors designating the RTE survey information for "S3 - Uncommon", "S1 - Very Rare," and "Proposed Mitigation area" in the southwest and southeast corners of the property.

(b) The Conservation Areas shall be identified with GPS coordinates, as shall the three 2' by 2' transplant plots identified in the Plant Report. The GPS coordinates shall be provided to ANR's Natural Heritage Inventory program, and the locations of the transplant plots shall be added to, and clearly shown on, a larger scale version of the Site Plan (or a current aerial photo), which shall also to [sic] be provided to ANR.

(c) The Arrow-Leaved American Aster plants located in the area of the proposed solar arrays shall be transplanted to the transplant plots in a manner, under conditions, and within a date range, approved in advance by ANR.

(d) Petitioner shall carry out the activities (tree and shrub removal) as described in the Plant Report for establishment of the Conservation Areas, taking care not to damage or disturb the Arrow-Leaved American Aster plants existing in, or transplanted to, those areas. All equipment shall be cleaned of soil and plant material prior to entry into the Conservation Areas in order to minimize the spread of invasive species by reducing the transportation and introduction of seeds and plant material.

(e) Prior to site clearing and construction, Petitioner shall place a temporary perimeter fence, consisting of an orange snow fence, or similar fencing, to ensure that construction workers and machinery avoid the Conservation Areas. Petitioner shall have a representative of Arrowwood Environmental inspect the fencing prior to construction, to confirm it is appropriately located, secured, and clearly visible. The Arrowwood Environmental representative shall also brief the construction crew on the locations of, and need for avoidance of, the Conservation Areas prior to commencement of construction and site preparation activities.

(f) The temporary perimeter fencing shall be removed upon completion of all construction activities.

(g) The Nimblewill Muhly plant populations identified in the northeast corner of the easterly-most [sic] portion of the property shall also be fenced off and avoided during construction and site preparation activities, utilizing the same protocols in subpart 1.e, above. The temporary fencing shall also be removed upon completion of all construction activities.

2. Monitoring of Conservation Areas:

(a) The Conservation Areas shall be monitored by Arrowwood Environmental for a period of three years from completion of construction to document survivorship of the transplanted plants as further described in the Plant Report.

(b) The Conservation Areas, and surrounding 50' zone, shall be inspected by Arrowwood Environmental at least one time per year for a period of three years from completion of construction to monitor and control any invasive plants within the Conservation Areas and the surrounding 50' zone. All invasive plants shall be removed from these areas. The use of herbicides is not permitted without express written approval of ANR. Mechanical removal is allowed.

(c) An annual report detailing the activities identified in subparts 2.a and 2.b, above, shall be submitted to ANR's Natural Heritage Inventory program by December 31 of each year during the three-year monitoring period.

(d) Representatives of ANR's Natural Heritage Inventory program shall be permitted to access the Conservation Areas, at reasonable hours, in order to independently inspect the conditions of those areas and the plants growing therein during the life of the Project.

3. During operation of the Project:

(a) Petitioner shall make its operations and maintenance contractors aware of the Conservation Areas. All operations and maintenance activities shall be conducted in a manner that avoids damage or harm to the Arrow-Leaved American Aster plants, and other plants noted in the Plant Report. The Conservation Areas shall be mowed at least once every three years. All mowing in these areas shall take place after October 15.

(b) All equipment shall be cleaned of soil and plant material prior to entry into the Conservation Areas in order to minimize the spread of invasive species by reducing the transportation and introduction of seeds and plant material.

4. During decommissioning of the Project:

(a) Prior to decommissioning activities, Petitioner shall place a temporary perimeter fence, consisting of an orange snow fence, or similar fencing, to ensure that construction workers and machinery avoid the Conservation Areas. Petitioner shall have a qualified botanist inspect the fencing prior to decommissioning, to confirm it is appropriately located, secured, and clearly visible. The qualified botanist shall also brief the decommissioning crew on the locations of, and need

for avoidance of, the Conservation Areas prior to commencement of decommissioning activities. All decommissioning activities shall avoid the Conservation areas.

(b) The temporary perimeter fencing shall be removed upon completion of all decommissioning activities.

Exh. CS-MOU-1 at ¶3; exh. CS-DIS-ANR-1.

128. With respect to the GMP Line Extension, the RTE survey will be conducted during the summer of 2015 pursuant to the protocol set forth in paragraph 5 of the Second ANR MOU. Chelsea has agreed to complete the RTE survey and to implement appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, if warranted, prior to commencing any work on the GMP Line Extension. Barton 2d. pf. supp. at 6; exhs. CS-DB-5 and CS-MOU-2 at ¶5.

129. The Project area does not contain necessary wildlife habitat, and is not in close proximity to any necessary wildlife habitat. Barton pf. at 4; exh. CS-DB-2.

Discussion

I recommend that the Board condition its approval on Chelsea's compliance with the First ANR MOU and the Second ANR MOU. Subject to these conditions, I recommend that the Board conclude that the Project would not adversely affect endangered species.

Development Affecting Public Investments

[10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(9)(K)]

Findings

130. The Project will not unnecessarily or unreasonably endanger any public or quasi-public investment in any facility, service, or lands, and it would not materially jeopardize the function, efficiency, or safety of, or the public's use or enjoyment of, or access to any facility, service, or lands. This finding is supported by the findings under 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(5), above, and finding 131, below.

131. Existing adjacent public investments are limited to the U.S. Route 7/VT Route 279 interchange including the Vermont Welcome Center and GMP's overhead distribution circuit. There are no Project impacts that would endanger or interfere with the highway complex including the Vermont Welcome Center. Per the system impact study performed by GMP, there

would be no adverse effects to GMP's distribution system as a result of the Project's interconnection provided certain system upgrades are implemented. Wilson pf. at 22; exh. CS-ECOS-5.

Public Health and Safety
[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5)]

Findings

132. The Project will not have an undue adverse effect on the health, safety, or welfare of the public and would not unnecessarily or unreasonably endanger the public or adjoining landowners. This finding is supported by findings 133 through 136, below, and the findings under 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(5), above.

133. The Project would not present any unique risks to the public and would not have an undue adverse effect on public health and safety. The Project would not create any adverse environmental effects or generate any waste or other emissions that would be harmful to the public health and safety. Wilson pf. at 13.

134. The Project is designed to follow all applicable safety codes and would include safety and security measures designed to discourage access to the site by unauthorized members of the public. Wilson pf. at 13.

135. The Project would utilize monitoring and communications equipment to provide a real-time stream of data regarding system performance to off-site personnel. This system would report on weather data, solar production, equipment efficiency, and operating conditions. The system would send out trouble alarms for all equipment, allowing the Petitioner to dispatch repair personnel immediately in the event of a problem. The monitoring system would incorporate two network video cameras, allowing the Petitioner to view Project conditions from off-site. Wilson pf. at 9.

136. In addition to the perimeter fence, Project site security would include motion-sensitive infrared video security cameras. These cameras would be operated and monitored by a national security systems provider. If motion is detected, the cameras would provide a video feed to a national monitoring center. If the video evidence suggests an unauthorized visitor on-site, the Petitioner would be contacted. If necessary, with the Petitioner's permission, the security

provider may contact the local police or sheriff. As an additional safety measure, all electrical boxes on-site would be locked, limiting access to authorized users. Wilson pf. at 9.

Least-Cost Integrated Resource Plan

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(6)]

Findings

137. The Board has not required non-utilities to have a least-cost integrated resource plan. Therefore, this criterion is inapplicable.

Compliance With Twenty-Year Electric Plan

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(7)]

Findings

138. Pursuant to the Section 8007(b) Order, this criterion is conditionally waived for the Project, and no party presented any testimony that would warrant rescinding that waiver in this proceeding.

Waste-to-Energy Facility

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(9)]

Findings

139. The proposed Project does not involve construction of a waste-to-energy facility. Therefore, this criterion is inapplicable.

Existing or Planned Transmission Facilities

[30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(10)]

Findings

140. The Project can be served economically by existing or planned transmission facilities without undue adverse effects on Vermont utilities or customers. Per the system impact study performed by GMP, some network upgrades would be necessary before the Project could interconnect to the GMP distribution network. Those upgrades would be performed entirely at the cost of the Petitioner. Wilson pf. at 15; exh. CS-ECOS-5.

IV. DECOMMISSIONING PLAN AND FUND

Findings

141. Chelsea has developed a decommissioning plan and fund for decommissioning the Project at the end of its useful life. *See* exh. CS-ECOS-6.

142. The decommissioning plan provides for the complete decommissioning, removal, and disposal of Project infrastructure in accordance with any necessary permits and then-applicable regulations. Exh. CS-ECOS-6.

143. The decommissioning plan for the Project provides details and a cost estimate for removal of the solar facility and rehabilitation of the Project property back to its pre-project condition. The PPA for the Project has a term of twenty-five years. At the end of the PPA term, the Petitioner will determine whether: (i) it is financially viable to continue to operate the Project as is; or (ii) a Section 248 amendment should be filed to repower the Project with new solar modules and equipment at that time; or (iii) the Project should be decommissioned. The decommissioning plan also addresses decommissioning in the event of Project abandonment. A detailed cost estimate totaling \$151,500 is included in the decommissioning plan. The Petitioner has agreed to establish a decommissioning fund in this amount, prior to Project construction, naming the Public Service Board as beneficiary. *Wilson* pf. at 16-17; exh. CS-ECOS-6.

144. The decommissioning fund would initially be funded by an irrevocable standby letter of credit ("LC") that includes an auto-extension provision (i.e., "evergreen clause"), and would be issued by an A-rated financial institution solely for the benefit of the Board, or a security deposit to be held in a federally insured bank in the United States. No other entity, including Chelsea, shall have the ability to demand payment under the LC or withdraw funds from the deposit without the consent of the Board. Documentation that demonstrates the establishment of the fund would be filed with the Board prior to commencement of construction. Exh. SS-MOU-1 at Exhibit B.

145. Chelsea proposes to establish the fund in the amount of \$151,500 based on a cost estimate that it prepared. The amount represents the full estimated cost of decommissioning in 2014 dollars and does not net out salvage value. The estimated cost of decommissioning would be adjusted annually to account for inflation, based upon the current Consumer Price Index

("CPI") as maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Chelsea would file an annual report with the Board and the Department on the status of the decommissioning fund after each annual adjustment. The report would include the annual inflation adjustment to determine a revised estimated cost of decommissioning. In the event the CPI has a negative value at the time the annual adjustment is calculated, the value of the decommissioning fund would not be reduced. Exh. CS-ECOS-6.

146. Upon completion of decommissioning, Chelsea would seek a certification of completion from the Board. The certification would be provided to the entity issuing the LC or holding the security deposit with instructions to release and terminate the LC or security deposit account. Thereafter, Chelsea or its successor or assignee would be entitled to the remainder of the decommissioning fund. Exh. CS-ECOS-6.

147. The Board would have the right to draw on the LC or the security deposit to pay the costs of decommissioning in the event that Chelsea is unable or unwilling to commence decommissioning within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed ninety days, following issuance of a final Board order requiring decommissioning of the Project. Exh. CS-ECOS-6.

Discussion

Board Rule 5.402(C)(2) requires non-utility petitioners proposing to construct generation facilities greater than 1 MW in capacity to include with their petition a plan for decommissioning the project at the end of its useful life.

Chelsea agrees to decommission the Project at the end of its useful life, and has submitted a detailed plan for decommissioning that estimates it would cost \$151,500 to decommission the Project.

Previously, the Board has approved plans for decommissioning that include: (1) a detailed plan for decommissioning the proposed project and an estimate of the decommissioning costs; and (2) a plan for the creation of a decommissioning fund. Chelsea has provided a detailed plan for decommissioning the Project and an estimate of the decommissioning costs. Chelsea proposes that the decommissioning fund would be funded with an irrevocable, standby LC from an A-rated financial institution or other institution approved by the Board, that includes an

auto-extension provision (i.e., "evergreen clause"), and names the Board as the sole beneficiary, or in the alternative, a security deposit to be held in a federally insured bank in the United States.

Chelsea's plan for decommissioning and the proposed funding amount are consistent with the requirements the Board has imposed on decommissioning plans in the past, provided Chelsea increases the amount of the fund as necessary on an annual basis in response to any adjustments for inflation. I recommend the Board adopt, as a condition of approval, the following:

Prior to the commencement of site preparation or construction, Chelsea shall file with the Board and obtain Board approval of a final executed letter of credit ("LC") from an A-rated financial institution or other financial institution approved by the Board, or shall file documentation demonstrating that a security deposit account has been established at a federally insured bank located in the United States. If Chelsea elects to establish the fund using an LC, the LC shall be an irrevocable standby LC that: (i) is bankruptcy remote; (ii) includes an auto-extension provision (i.e., "evergreen clause"); and (iii) is issued solely for the benefit of the Board. If Chelsea elects to establish the fund using a security deposit account, that account shall be established solely for the benefit of the Board. No other entity, including Chelsea, shall have the ability to demand payment under the LC or withdraw from the security deposit without the consent of the Board. The amount of the LC shall represent the full estimated costs of decommissioning without netting out any estimated salvage value for Project infrastructure.

V. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

Findings

148. The Department and Chelsea, and ANR and Chelsea, respectively, have executed and filed First and Second Partial MOUs with the Board in which they agree on matters related to the Project. *See generally* exhs. CS-MOU-1, CS-MOU-2, CS-MOU-3, and CS-MOU-4.

149.

150. The MOUs provide that if the Board does not approve the MOUs in their entirety, then the agreements contained in the MOUs may terminate. Exh. CS-MOU-3 at 4; exh. CS-MOU-4 at 4.

Discussion

I recommend that the Board accept the MOUs with all of their provisions and conditions without material change or condition and require Chelsea to comply with the terms and conditions of the MOUs as a condition of any Board approval of the Project.

VI. CONCLUSION

Chelsea has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Project, subject to the conditions discussed above, complies with all applicable Section 248 criteria. Based upon the evidence in the record, I conclude that the Project, subject to the conditions set forth in the Proposed Order and CPG below:

- (a) would not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration having been given to the recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions, and the recommendations of the municipal legislative bodies;
- (b) is a renewable energy project with a plant capacity greater than 150 kW and no more than 2.2 MW and thus is not required to comply with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(2);
- (c) would not adversely affect system stability and reliability;
- (d) is a renewable energy project with a plant capacity greater than 150 kW and no more than 2.2 MW and is participating in the standard offer program and thus is not required to comply with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(4);
- (e) would not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics, historic sites, air and water purity, the natural environment, the use of natural resources, and public health and safety, with due consideration having been given to the criteria specified in 10 V.S.A. §§ 1424a(d) and 6086(a)(1) through (8) and (9)(K), and greenhouse gas impacts;
- (f) is a non-utility renewable energy project with a plant capacity greater than 150 kW and no more than 2.2 MW and thus is not required to comply with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(6);
- (g) is a non-utility renewable energy project with a plant capacity greater than 150 kW and no more than 2.2 MW and thus is not required to comply with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(7);
- (h) does not involve a facility affecting or located on any segment of the waters of the state that has been designated as outstanding resource waters by the Water Resources Board;

- (i) does not involve a waste-to-energy facility; and
- (j) can be served economically by existing or planned transmission facilities without undue adverse effect on Vermont utilities or customers.

I recommend that the Board approve the proposed Project and issue a CPG for construction of the proposed Project with the conditions set forth in the proposed Order and CPG, below.

According to Chelsea, the Department and ANR have waived their right to file comments on this Proposal for Decision provided that it is consistent with the draft order submitted by Chelsea. I am circulating this Proposal for Decision for comment by the parties because I have made changes and added recommended conditions beyond those contained in the proposed order submitted by Chelsea and because 3 V.S.A. § 811 requires the parties to waive their comments in writing. Additionally, Ms. Harris was also a party to this proceeding and there is no indication that Ms. Harris has waived her right to comment.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 2nd day of October, 2015.

s/Michael E. Tousley
Michael E. Tousley, Esq.
Hearing Officer

VII. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED by the State of Vermont Public Service Board ("Board") that:

1. Ms. Harris's request that the Board defer issuing a decision in this case is denied.
2. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Hearing Officer are adopted.
3. The construction and operation of a 2.0 MW solar electric generation facility located in Bennington, Vermont (the "Project"), by Chelsea Solar LLC ("Chelsea") would promote the general good of the State of Vermont in accordance with 30 V.S.A. § 248 and a certificate of public good ("CPG") to that effect shall be issued.
4. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project shall be in accordance with the plans and evidence as submitted in this proceeding. Any material deviation from these plans or a substantial change to the Project must be approved by the Board. Failure to obtain advance approval from the Board for a material deviation from the approved plans or a substantial change to the Project may result in the assessment of a penalty pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 30 and 247.
5. Chelsea shall obtain any state and federal permits required for the Project and shall comply with all conditions set forth in any required permits.
6. Chelsea shall comply with the terms and conditions of the two partial Memoranda of Understanding ("MOU") entered into with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources ("ANR"), and the two partial MOUs entered into with the Vermont Department of Public Service ("Department"), identified in the evidentiary record as exhibits CS-MOU-1, CS-MOU-2, CS-MOU-3, and CS-MOU-4, and herein incorporated by reference.
7. Prior to commencing construction, Chelsea shall file with the Board, the parties, and the Town of Bennington a letter stating that it has fulfilled all requisite CPG conditions and that it intends to commence construction of the Project.
8. Chelsea shall restrict construction activities and related deliveries to the hours between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday with no construction taking place during evenings, nighttime, weekends, or on state or federal holidays.
9. Chelsea shall enter into an Interconnection Agreement with Green Mountain Power Corporation ("GMP") that conforms to the requirements of Public Service Board Rule 5.500 and

shall be responsible for the cost of GMP's electric system upgrades reasonably necessary to implement interconnection of the Project, including those identified in exhibit CS-ECOS-5, and such other costs appropriately submitted to Chelsea.

10. Chelsea shall provide ANR with the following Project "as-built" information within 60 days of the commissioning date of the Project to assist ANR with compiling and analyzing greenhouse gas impacts:

- a. Solar panel manufacturer and model;
- b. Solar panel cell technology (e.g., mono-Si, multi-Si, CdTe, etc.);
- c. Rated solar panel output (in watts);
- d. Number of solar panels installed;
- e. Array mounting type (fixed, 1-axis tracking, 2-axis tracking, ground, roof, other);
- f. For fixed or 1-axis tracking, panel orientation and mounting angle;
- g. Rack system manufacturer and model;
- h. Rack system components, including the number of aluminum rails, steel mounting posts, etc.;
- i. Number and type of any other mounting components (e.g., concrete ballasts and foundation blocks);
- j. Manufacturer, model, and number of inverters;
- k. Manufacturer, model, and number of transformers;
- l. Mass of concrete used (for ballasts, foundations, mounting pads, etc.);
- m. Percent of Portland cement composition of concrete;
- n. Description, quantity, and source of any recycled materials used (e.g., recycled content concrete, recycled aluminum racking, etc.);
- o. Amount (length) and gauge of wiring used for project;
- p. Components for connection to grid (circuit boxes, circuit breaker panels, metering equipment, etc.); and
- q. Distance to grid connection.

11. By January 30 of each year, ANR may request that Chelsea provide an annual report for the previous calendar year of operations to ANR that would contain the information set out below which would be used to assist ANR with compiling and analyzing greenhouse gas impacts. Chelsea shall have 60 days from the date of ANR's request to supply the information. Should ANR not request the information set out below by January 30, Chelsea would not have any obligation to provide an annual report from the previous year of operations. The information to be provided includes the following:

- a. Electric generation in kWh for the prior year, broken down by month; and
- b. Any information about the replacement of PV panels, inverters, transformers, or a complete racking system. In instances of failure and replacement of equipment (e.g., PV panels, inverters, etc.), Chelsea shall provide descriptions of both the failed and replacement components at the same level of detail as required by the "as-built" reporting requirements of condition 10, above. This provision does not require Chelsea to provide information about *de minimis* replacement of system components (e.g., replacement of racking system hardware), or information regarding regular maintenance activities.

12. Should ANR not request the information in condition 11, above, in any two consecutive years after Project commissioning, Chelsea's reporting obligations will automatically cease. ANR and Chelsea, by mutual agreement, may cancel Chelsea's reporting obligations at any time.

13. Chelsea shall perform post-construction, as-built, field verification of all impervious surfaces associated with both the solar array and GMP line extension portions of the Project ("GMP Line Extension") and report the total impervious surface area to the Department of Environmental Conservation's ("DEC") Stormwater Management Program (the "Stormwater Program"). If the Stormwater Program determines that the total impervious surface area associated with the Project, in combination with the total impervious surface area of any other project deemed by the Stormwater Program to be part of a common plan of development as defined in DEC's stormwater rules, results in a total amount of impervious surfaces greater than 1 acre, Chelsea shall obtain an operational stormwater discharge permit and the Project shall be

retrofitted with required stormwater treatment practices pursuant to the Vermont Stormwater Management Manual, Volume I.

14. Chelsea shall obtain and comply with the terms of the DEC Construction General Permit 3-9020.

15. Chelsea shall ensure that the central equipment skid is of a dark grey color.

16. Chelsea shall ensure that the vegetation planted pursuant to the supplemental mitigation plan described at Figure 2 of exhibit CS-MK-7 shall be maintained for the life of the Project.

17. A post-construction aesthetics review shall be conducted by Chelsea's aesthetics expert and the Department's aesthetics expert to determine what areas along the Project's northern and eastern boundaries, if any, require additional vegetative screening. Chelsea shall consult with the property owners along the northern edge of the Project and the Town of Bennington for the purpose of obtaining their input on the final landscaping design.

18. In response to the presence at the Project site of Arrow-Leaved American Aster (*Symphotrichum Urophyllum*), an S1-ranked very rare species, and Nimblewill Muhly (*Muhlenbergia Schreberi*), an S2-ranked rare species, Chelsea shall comply with the protocol in ¶ 3 of the First ANR MOU to mitigate impacts to those plants.

19. Chelsea shall complete the Rare, Threatened, or Endangered ("RTE") survey for the GMP Line Extension and implement appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, if warranted, prior to any work commencing on the GMP Line Extension.

20. No later than six months in advance of the Project's decommissioning, Chelsea shall contact ANR to determine whether any permits are needed for decommissioning activities.

21. Chelsea shall use a non-toxic, bio-based coolant – FR3 or equivalent – for the Project transformer. A secondary containment system shall be built directly into the prefabricated equipment skid. The specifications for the secondary containment system are attached as Exhibit C to exhibit CS-MOU-1. Chelsea's operations and maintenance contractor shall perform periodic inspections of the secondary oil containment system and maintain the system in good working order for the life of the Project.

22. Chelsea shall comply with the terms and conditions of its proposed decommissioning plan, identified in the evidentiary record as exhibit CS-ECOS-6.

23. Prior to the commencement of site preparation or construction, Chelsea shall file with the Board and obtain Board approval of a final executed letter of credit ("LC") from an A-rated financial institution or other financial institution approved by the Board, or shall file documentation demonstrating that a security deposit account has been established at a federally insured bank located in the United States. If Chelsea elects to establish the fund using an LC, the LC shall be an irrevocable standby LC that: (i) is bankruptcy-remote; (ii) includes an auto-extension provision (i.e., "evergreen clause"); and (iii) is issued solely for the benefit of the Board. If Chelsea elects to establish the fund using a security deposit account, that account shall be established solely for the benefit of the Board. No other entity, including Chelsea, shall have the ability to demand payment under the LC or withdraw from the security deposit without the consent of the Board. The amount of the LC shall represent the full estimated costs of decommissioning without netting out any estimated salvage value for Project infrastructure.

24. Chelsea shall file an annual decommissioning fund status report with the revised estimated cost of decommissioning and any newly issued or amended LC or documentation of deposit into the security deposit account as required by the decommissioning plan by January 31 of each year.

25. Chelsea shall perform all work on the Project in accordance with the applicable provisions of the National Electrical Safety Code.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this _____ day of _____, 2015.

_____)	
_____)	PUBLIC SERVICE
_____)	
_____)	BOARD
_____)	
_____)	OF VERMONT
_____)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

FILED:

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of the Board

NOTICE TO READERS: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Board (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: psb.clerk@vermont.gov)

Appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Vermont must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within thirty days. Appeal would not stay the effect of this Order, absent further order by this Board or appropriate action by the Supreme Court of Vermont. Motions for reconsideration or stay, if any, must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within ten days of the date of this decision and Order.

Chen, Zachary

From: *redacted*
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:16 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:27:55 -0500
From: *redacted*
To: *redacted*

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Mon, 12 Oct 2015 13:13:31 -0400
Subject: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
To: vce@vce.org

Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

Announcements

10/12/15: The third meeting of the Task Force will be held October 22, 2015 from 1-3 p.m. in Room 11 of the Vermont Statehouse, Montpelier (directions to the Statehouse can be found here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/hours-map-and-directions/>>),

and the location of Room 11 here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/state-house-floor-maps/>>)

Thereafter, the schedule for the meetings is as follows:

Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Friday, November 13, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

News Coverage of Renewable Energy Vermont conference with protesting WPTZ
<http://www.wptz.com/news/renewable-energy-showcase-targeted-by-wind-turbine-protesters/35733366>

Burlington Free Press (contains a video) <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/10/08/wind-powers-future-vt-lauded-critiqued/73585158/>

VTdigger (contains audio)

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development>

Video of people protesting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU8Ggp2bris>

Not about solar but related to renewable energy and the public interest:

Video made by some of the people who were protesting — share this one far and wide, it is short and potent and needs to go viral.

<https://youtu.be/9XtCKtCrr9w>.

PSB approval of Bondville Solar — off Route 30, involves cutting 15 acres of forest

<http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/orders/2015/2015-10/8443%20Final%20Order.pdf>

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151011/OPINION06/151019896>

Opinion

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

|Perspective

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION06>>

Going solar

October 11, 2015

Solar development has been likened to a gold rush, and whether you like it or not probably depends on your attitude toward gold.

The gold in this case is the golden sunlight streaming down on the state that, with increasingly efficient solar technology, is transformed into electricity. That it does so without carbon emissions means it is a crucial weapon in the battle against climate change.

Solar proposals are coming fast and furious. Last week state officials described plans by one solar company for a 20-megawatt project somewhere in Brandon. Twenty megawatts is huge — 10 times larger than the largest now in the state. The project, in its early stages, would be one of six sites developed by a company called Ranger Solar. The company has already proposed a 125-acre project in Ludlow. An off-the-cuff estimate of the size of the Brandon project would put it well above 100 acres.

But that's not all. The Public Service Board has approved a 500-kilowatt project for a former farm field in Guilford. The project is in a remote area, and it met no opposition from local residents. It would occupy about 3.5 acres.

Additionally, school officials in Springfield are considering whether to join a consortium of schools to invest in solar projects. Springfield school officials estimate the solar project would save the school district \$86,000 a year on their electric bill. Other schools interested in the project are in Rutland, Bennington and Windham counties.

The school project would be similar to the many community solar projects that allow homeowners to sign up for electricity from a solar array, with no money upfront and their contribution to the project coming straight out of their electric bills. The array doesn't have to be nearby. It's like signing up for community-supported agriculture, with a delivery of vegetables coming from a farm in the next town. These community projects are widely available from a variety of solar companies for whoever wants to sign up.

The rush to solar is fueled in part by state and federal tax incentives, proving to solar critics that solar is untenable. But as Darren Springer told a renewable energy conference last week, the federal government will be providing nuclear and fossil fuel companies subsidies amounting to \$100 billion over the next 10 years, compared to subsidies of \$35 billion for solar. Springer is chief of staff for Gov. Peter Shumlin, who has been a champion for renewable energy development.

In the case of solar, those subsidies have done what they were supposed to do — help to effect a dramatic reduction in the cost of solar panels.

One result is that Vermont has 10 times more solar power than it had in 2009.

The development of renewable energy in Vermont has been the target of criticism by those who accuse utilities of double-counting energy credits. Utilities can sell energy credits to out-of-state utilities seeking to take credit for solar development. The inflow of money from the sale of solar credits is having the proper effect — fostering the development of solar power. But if Vermont utilities then count the solar power on their ledger of solar credits, they are guilty of double-counting, which is essentially a bookkeeping transgression.

In any event, the rapid development of solar power has been the occasion of criticism by those who believe solar arrays are a visual blight and who criticize developers for insensitivity to neighbors. The visual effect is something we are going to have to get used to; indeed, many people find the sight of a solar farm to be an arresting and welcome sign of progress.

Still, as reported on Vtdigger.com <<http://Vtdigger.com>>, backers of solar power are aware of the need to proceed carefully in order to prevent a backlash. Rep. Tony Klein, chairman of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee, said the Public Service Board has the authority to take into account local concerns when judging solar projects. In the past, the PSB has taken the odd view that neighbors' views must not be considered because neighbors are not objective. In fact, the siting of a solar array and its proximity to neighbors are relevant factors, and Klein hoped the PSB would not shirk its responsibility for considering local concerns.

At the same time, renewable energy development is crucial to the future of the state and the planet, and it must not be unduly hindered by NIMBYism. That's why energy projects are in the hands of the PSB rather than of local boards. The presumption must be that a solar project, well-conceived, is good for us, and the burden of proof for showing that it is not should be high.

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151011/OPINION06/151019900>

Opinion

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

|Perspective

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION06>>

Multi-purpose solar solutions

October 11,2015

The goal of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan is to meet 90 percent of our energy needs from efficiency gains and renewable sources by 2050.

But many stakeholders are polarizing around the challenges of building Vermont's renewable energy future. A solution that could help to unite stakeholders lies in developing what we might call multi-purposed projects.

A good example of a multi-purposed project is the Church Street Marketplace in Burlington. In the 1980s, the city wanted to boost its economic profile, so it decided to build a mall. This mall, unlike many other malls in Vermont and around the country, ended up not in a farm field outside the downtown, but rather right in the downtown. It landed there because Burlington stakeholders took seriously the importance of meeting a variety of the needs of its diverse constituents. The outcome was a multi-purposed economic development project that avoided direct impacts to natural resources while giving new life to its aging downtown infrastructure. It's been an environmental and cultural success and economic boon for Burlington ever since.

We can apply this multi-purposed approach to the siting of renewable energy projects in a similar way. In Brooklyn, N.Y., for example, a Whole Foods grocery store has built a multi-purpose 325-kilowatt solar canopy over its parking lot. The canopy not only produces enough power to run a quarter of the store, but it also shades the parked cars beneath it. Plus, the canopy contains an internal rainwater collection system that controls polluted runoff and provides grey water to the store's restrooms.

Why not explore the portion of our total solar demand that could potentially benefit from helping to resolve some of a community's other, perhaps unrelated issues — as Brooklyn and Burlington have done. These might include projects that could be slated for large flat roofs, barns, parking lots, brownfields, closed mines and landfills or industrial zones. Although Vermont has started to develop a few sites like these, we need to understand the available acreage, costs and challenges in order to consider the appropriate strategies and incentives to allow a project to move forward. They hold some promise to lead us to creative solutions.

And they reveal to us that other New England states are well on their way to finding solutions to multiple concerns. Here are just a couple of many ideas that could be explored.

— What if we could dual-purpose solar sites on agricultural lands by continuing to farm or graze them?

A key argument for not putting arrays on farmlands is that tractors could not drive through nor animals graze under a solar array, and it would therefore take these sites out of agricultural use. There are concrete examples in Massachusetts and Wisconsin of dual-use solar arrays that are high enough for cows to graze under and wide enough for tractors to pass through. They allow farmers to reduce electric costs and offset taxes while continuing their agricultural use. Why not have a couple of test cases to see how this would work in Vermont? The costs might be higher, but then we would know what level of incentives would be needed to help encourage this type of development.

— What if we could make it more economical to develop solar power on built surfaces, like in parking lots and rooftops? Many people say that most flat roofs were built to a standard that cannot support solar, or that the costs are simply too high to obtain the structural integrity necessary. Why not test this assumption by finding examples of where it has worked and what the additional costs might be?

Many say that parking lots won't be feasible because of snow removal requirements and additional costs. On the other hand, dozens of solar parking canopies (many with electric car chargers) are being built in climates similar to ours, like New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Why not pilot one in Vermont with private partners and test the feasibility, assess the additional costs per kwh produced and consider incentives? Wouldn't this be perfect for park-n-rides?

There are creative solutions just waiting to be implemented right now, many of which serve multiple purposes, making them more economical for developers and more desirable for neighbors, customers, communities, regulators and conservationists.

Let's help them along.

Elizabeth Courtney is the co-author of "Greening Vermont: The Search for a Sustainable State." She may be contacted at elizabethcourtneyvt@gmail.com <<mailto:elizabethcourtneyvt@gmail.com>>.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/kevin-jones-too-good-to-be-true/>

KEVIN JONES: TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

OCT. 7, 2015, 7:00 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 2 COMMENTS <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/kevin-jones-too-good-to-be-true/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Kevin B. Jones, PhD, who is a professor of energy technology and policy at Vermont Law School. He can be contacted at energyclinic@vermontlaw.edu

<mailto:atenergyclinic@vermontlaw.edu>./

The sharing economy and solar energy seem like such a natural combination, kind of like apple pie and vanilla ice cream. Green Mountain Power and Yeloha's recent press release announced that "Yeloha and GMP will make it possible for individuals who don't have a roof suited for solar to subscribe online to power produced by other homeowners and businesses, essentially going solar on someone else's roof."

It almost sounds too good to be true and perhaps it is, as demonstrated by the multiple communications I received, raising concerns about the potential deceptive nature of GMP and Yeloha's claims. In order for GMP and Yeloha's claims about "going solar on someone else's roof" to be accurate, these companies would have to provide the sharing partner with the renewable energy certificates (RECs) associated with these claims.

Contrary to the marketing claims, going to the frequently asked questions on Yeloha's website supports that Yeloha sells the renewable energy certificates to a third party, and the solar host and sharing partner do not receive the RECs or payment for them.

See <http://support.yeloha.com/knowledgebase/articles/603654-does-my-solar-energy-system-produce-solar-renewabl>

In the press release, GMP CEO Mary Powell states, "This is a unique opportunity to empower more people to be able to harness the power of the sun. ... We see a tremendous opportunity in leveraging more rooftops around Vermont for the benefit of all those who may currently be renters, or own homes that are not well suited for solar."

If the Yeloha website is accurate and the RECs are sold separately for profit, what GMP and Yeloha's version of the sharing economy will provide to these "renters" is electricity largely powered by fossil fuels and nuclear isotopes rather than local, low carbon, solar energy.

Making false green claims is not legal as the Federal Trade Commission pointed out to GMP in a letter earlier this year.

When electric customers believe they have purchased solar energy, but instead their solar energy is sold to a third party, less solar power is produced than consumers demand. Deceptive claims by a marketer harm the consumer, the solar industry and the environment.

Making false green claims is not legal as the Federal Trade Commission pointed out to GMP in a letter earlier this year, "By selling RECs, a company has transferred its right to characterize its electricity as renewable." Accordingly, the Code of Federal Regulations advise that, if "a marketer generates renewable electricity but sells renewable energy certificates for all of that electricity, it would be deceptive for the marketer to represent, directly or by implication, that it uses renewable energy." See 16 C.F.R. § 260.15(d) at <http://goo.gl/s8xzQ0>.

Unfortunately the concerns raised by this press release are not an isolated issue. In 2013, following a press release from GMP and the national energy firm NRG that marketed an NRG project in Rutland as community solar, Powell stated to the Vermont news media: "Through this partnership, customers who have no space for solar or can't afford to build it themselves will be able to rely on solar energy and support its construction through a low-cost lease program. ... Many participants are likely to pay less for solar energy than they are paying today on their electric bills." Contrary to these claims, the fine print on the NRG agreement notes that the RECs are retained and sold separately by NRG and the agreement informs the customer that "{Y}ou may not claim publicly that You are using renewable energy or solar energy."

If, as the Yeloha website states, Yeloha separately sells the RECs to a third party and not to the host or the sharing partner, then GMP and Yeloha have some explaining to do. What is this product that GMP is marketing to its customers if customers are not being sold solar energy?

What if any financial benefit does GMP receive from Yeloha in regards to marketing this product?

GMP has previously been warned by the FTC, which concluded in its 2015 letter to GMP that, "while Vermont consumers do not have a choice of electricity providers, they can choose to use less electricity, generate their own electricity at their homes, or switch fuel types. Accordingly, we urge that GMP carefully review its current and future communications to ensure that Vermont customers, and other market participants, clearly understand that GMP sells RECs for many of its renewable facilities and thus has forfeited its right to characterize the power delivered from those facilities as renewable, in any way. If we identify concerns in the future, we reserve the right to take further action."

When inaccurate green claims are made about solar energy, honest Vermont solar companies are harmed, the consumer is harmed, and the environment is harmed.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/steve-thurston-industrial-wind-and-solar-is-a-death-sentence-to-vermonts-landscape/>

STEVE THURSTON: INDUSTRIAL WIND AND SOLAR IS A DEATH SENTENCE TO VERMONT'S LANDSCAPE

OCT. 7, 2015, 7:05 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 25 COMMENTS <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/steve-thurston-industrial-wind-and-solar-is-a-death-sentence-to-vermonts-landscape/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Steve Thurston, of Ferrisburgh, who is a retired general contractor and home builder committed to energy efficiency and conservation as the critical path to reducing fossil fuel consumption. He was a founding member and co-chair of the Citizen's Task Force on Wind Power in Maine. In 2011 he helped initiate a successful citizens petition to create a special section in Maine's noise regulations to address wind turbine noise./

Due to federal and state subsidies for wind projects, which reimburse about two-thirds of the construction and operating costs of these projects, over 80 miles of New England's mountain ridges have been clear cut and blasted for the two lane highways that must be built to the top of the mountain and along the ridgeline to transport the enormous components of wind turbines to their destinations. Upon completion these machines rise hundreds of feet above the treetops with blade tips that move through the air at Class 5 hurricane force speeds – creating instant death to any bird, bat, or raptor that strays into its path. The roar created by the blades ripping through the air travels down the mountain to homes in the valleys below and at night, when all is quiet, many people who are sensitive to the pulsating low frequencies emitted by these enormous machines experience chronic, debilitating sleep disturbance.

Eighty miles of turbine-covered ridges amounts to 800 megawatts of installed generating capacity but during the summer months, when demand for electricity is highest, these machines operate at about 10 percent of their rated power, providing only about 1 percent of the 16,000 MW of electricity required by the New England electrical grid during an average day. This can easily be confirmed by visiting the ISO-NE website <<http://www.iso-ne.com/isoexpress/>> and viewing the real time charts showing how much electricity is being consumed and which generation types are providing it. For example, at the moment 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 25, 2015, grid demand is just over 15,000 MW and wind is supplying less than one tenth of 1 percent.

In Vermont the free money given to solar developers is rapidly transforming our scenic highways into solar panel corridors that would make any strip mall developer envious.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that to achieve the 20 percent wind goal that ISO-NE is planning for, our politicians, under the spell of well-funded special interests, will allow developers driven by the lure of free money, to continue raping the landscape until there are 1,000 miles or more of turbines strung out like enormous pinwheels on the iconic, high value landscape that New Englanders have heretofore protected with laudable environmental and conservation

policies. In Vermont the free money given to solar developers is rapidly transforming our scenic highways into solar panel corridors that would make any strip mall developer envious.

Vermont wind and solar developer David Blittersdorf unabashedly states that his own plan for Vermont includes more than 300 miles of turbine-covered ridges and 65,000 acres of solar arrays. Despite the disastrous effect he alone would have on Vermont's sense of place, the sporadic generation of his wind and solar installations would amount to no more than a symbolic gesture, with no real effect on the need for natural gas, nuclear and hydro generators to provide the low cost baseload power that the grid cannot operate without, and which must be ready on a moment's notice when the breeze slows, or the sun goes behind a cloud or over the horizon.

Many Vermonters, especially those directly impacted by the proliferation of turbines and solar panels have become rightly concerned about the direction we are heading in. Only the combined action of each of our legislators can stop this runaway train. By blindly embracing the 90 percent renewable by 2050 mantra they are giving a death sentence to Vermont's landscape, unnecessarily raising our electric rates, without a shred of evidence that such policies will benefit Vermonters in any way.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/2015/10/09/bed-expands-solar-footprint/73668334/>

BED expands solar footprint

Free Press Staff 4:10 p.m. EDT October 9, 2015

20151009 BUR BED solar array

(Photo: Courtesy Burlington Electric Department)

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The Burlington Electric Department says a new 124-kilowatt rooftop solar array at its Pine Street headquarters facility is now online.

The utility said the array is the latest project in the city's ongoing commitment to add more community solar to its portfolio and brings Burlington's total installed solar portfolio to 88 projects, which generate 1.93 megawatts of power. Burlington Electric expects to save up to \$900,000 in power and related costs during the 25-year life of the array.

"Burlington continues to be a national leader in energy innovation," Mayor Miro Weinberger said in a statement. "Prioritizing and building community-scale solar has been one of the City's key energy initiatives for more than three years, and we are honoring that commitment with announcements like the one today and this summer's unveiling of the Burlington International Airport solar array."

Weinberger said by installing solar arrays on city buildings, Burlington is encouraging private businesses and organizations to do so, too.

The arrays help ensure low-cost and locally generated power will be available during times of high use, such as hot summer days when demand for energy is greatest, BED said. Consequently, peak energy production and peak energy usage will coincide, offsetting costs and reducing reliance on more expensive energy sources.

"Adding locally sourced, renewable power in Burlington is an important component of our energy future," Burlington Electric General Manager Neale Lunderville said in a statement. "Local power is resilient power that we can count on when the New England grid is strained."

Lunderville said Burlington Electric is committed to building a sustainable energy future that benefits the city's growing economy.

As with the rooftop solar project at Burlington International Airport, which has produced more than 580,000 kilowatt hours of electricity since it came online, this new solar array will reduce the need to buy power from outside sources, BED said.

The solar array will be city-owned like the McNeil Generating Station and the Winooski One Hydro Plant. Solar power systems have the advantage of integrating low maintenance, non-moving mechanical parts, which provide quiet operation, the department said.

The municipal utility partnered with DC Energy Innovations, a Vermont company with offices in Burlington that has been increasing its renewable energy focus during the past decade.

"It was exciting to work with the team at BED to turn an underutilized city rooftop into a valuable, renewable energy site," said Ben Gordesky, Renewable Energy Manager at DC Energy. "As a Vermont company, we were grateful to partner with Mayor Weinberger and BED's team, who understand the importance of such a project. Burlington truly is leading the way for other cities around Vermont and our country."

Burlington Electric began work on the project in 2012 request for proposals to grow solar installations on city-owned properties. The utility and the University of Vermont recently announced a similar process for solar development on the UVM campus.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/09/state-oks-first-large-solar-array-in-guilford/>

STATE OK'S FIRST LARGE SOLAR ARRAY IN GUILFORD

OCT. 9, 2015, 8:17 AM BY MIKE FAHER

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/mike-faher/>> 1 COMMENT <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/09/state-oks-first-large-solar-array-in-guilford/#comments>>

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GUILFORD – The town’s first large-scale solar array has received state approval, but it might be hard to find even when construction is complete.

In granting a certificate of public good this week for a 500 kilowatt, group net-metered solar facility on former agricultural land, the state Public Service Board noted that the array “would have limited visibility from public viewpoints” and “would be substantially shielded by the existing vegetation and topography.”

That relative seclusion was a big reason that the site, at 1600 Guilford Center Road, was chosen, one of the project’s developers said.

*Read VTDigger’s two part series on the “Solar Gold Rush”

<<http://vtdigger.wpengine.com/fullimagestory/solar-is-everywhere/>>*

Data <<http://vtdigger.wpengine.com/fullimagestory/solar-is-everywhere/>>

“When you think about responsible and appropriate development practices and orderly development of the region, we think this project rates really high,” said Luke Shullenberger, managing partner of Waterbury--based Green Lantern Group. “It’s set back from public view and from neighbors.”

Fueled by financial incentives and Vermont’s net-metering law, the state’s solar industry has been booming. But it wasn’t until this past summer that several photovoltaic proposals began to surface in Guilford.

Guilford’s fire department already is drawing power from a small set of solar panels on the station’s roof. But the town does not yet have any arrays the size of Blanchard Hill Solar, which is the local business name for the project pursued by Shullenberger’s company and Guilford-based developer Dan Ingold.

Nevertheless, there was no opposition to the Blanchard Hill Solar proposal. Guilford Selectboard is just beginning to explore the complex regulations governing solar development, but Chairwoman Anne Rider said Ingold’s participation in the Blanchard Hill project made the process go smoothly.

Ingold has noted that the project’s access point – and even its initial name – was changed based on interaction with nearby residents. And he met several times with the Selectboard to discuss solar development.

“Dan gave a very thorough presentation .. he really addressed the concerns that we might have such as the aesthetic impacts and any other issues that might have come up,” Rider said. “He also helped us in trying to understand what questions Selectboards should be asking.”

In the end, “we felt comfortable with the specifications and thought they met the Public Service Board’s criteria pretty well,” Rider said.

The Public Service Board agreed, granting a certificate of public good for the project on Oct. 5.

State documents say the array will occupy about “3.5 acres of an approximately 5 acre, undeveloped, formerly agricultural parcel.”

Solar panels will be set back at least 250 feet from Guilford Center Road and at least 50 feet from other property lines, the board’s ruling says. After construction, the property will be reseeded, mowed as needed and “may be used as a seasonal pasture for sheep.”

“Potential visual impacts will be largely mitigated through the project’s design and siting on a 95-foot rise above the road. The project site is somewhat isolated, and potential visual impacts are minimal,” board members wrote. “From locations where the site would be visible, the project would be a minor element within the landscape because of the project’s high elevation and the low profile of the arrays.”

Under Vermont’s net-metering regulations, an electric customer – or a group of customers – can receive utility bill credits for generating power via small-scale renewable energy systems. And those “off-takers” don’t need to be anywhere near the actual array.

Net-metering credits associated with Blanchard Hill Solar will be transferred a few hours north to Warren-based Summit Ventures NE LLC, which runs Sugarbush Resort. State documents say the Guilford solar array “would be one of a group of net-metered systems that offset Sugarbush Resort’s electricity usage.”

Shullenberger said there’s no particular reason Sugarbush was linked to the Guilford project; the resort simply was selected as the next in line for net-metering services. “We have a whole long list of off-takers who have expressed interest in our projects,” he said.

Though state approval has been granted for Blanchard Hill Solar, Shullenberger said it will take several weeks to finish preparing the project for construction. Work ideally would start within the next 45 days and can continue even as cold weather approaches, he said.

“The biggest factor is really getting posts into the ground before the ground freezes,” he said.

There are several other solar projects in the works in Guilford, including a 150 kilowatt array on Guilford Center Road; a 500 kilowatt array on Kirchheimer Drive; and another 500 kilowatt proposal at the Exit 1 Industrial Park. The latter is on land owned by Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. and is situated partly in Guilford.

http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28940335/vermont-psb-approves-solar-projects-guilford-londonderry

Vermont PSB approves solar projects in Guilford, Londonderry

By Robert Audette

raudette@reformer.com <<mailto:raudette@reformer.com>> @audette.reformer on Twitter

POSTED: 10/08/2015 01:22:11 PM EDT 0 COMMENTS

<http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28940335/vermont-psb-approves-solar-projects-guilford-londonderry#disqus_thread>

GUILFORD >> The Vermont Public Service Board recently approved a pair of solar projects in Windham County.

In Londonderry, Integrated Solar received a certificate of public good for a 150 kilowatt interconnected group net-metered system on land owned by C&C Family Trust on Route 11. And in Guilford, the PSB approved a 500 kilowatt project that will be used to offset electricity usage at Sugarbush Resort in Warren.

The applicant for the Guilford project, GLC Powersmith Tinker Hill Solar LLC, submitted its request for a certificate on Aug. 13. Since the submission of the application, said Dan Ingold, technical director of the project, the name has been

changed to Blanchard Hill Solar, in recognition of the nearby Blanchard Hill Cemetery, following meetings with neighbors to the project. The developer for the project is listed as Waterbury-based Green Lantern Capital.

"The parcel is a former pasture that has been unused for more than 30 years and is currently covered with invasive brush," wrote Ingold in a letter to the town. "A buffer of mature vegetation along Guilford Center Road will mitigate views of the majority of the project from Guilford Center Road and residences."

Ingold told the Reformer that Sugarbush is the client for the project only because it was the next entity in the state queue for a solar agreement. The project "will employ local and regional Vermont companies during construction; will generate local and state tax revenue; will maximize the economic use of this parcel; and will further the state's renewable energy goals," Ingold's letter stated.

Ingold, who has lived in Guilford for 30 years, said all his interactions with residents, the Selectboard and the Planning Commission were cordial and mutually respectful.

There is no property tax benefit for the state, said Ingold, but Guilford and the state's education fund with split approximately \$4,000 in what is known as a capacity tax. "One of the great things about these projects is we don't require any town services but we are providing additional revenue."

Powersmith was the technical director for the 2 megawatt Winstanley Project at the end of Technology Drive in Brattleboro and is the technical director for a new net metered project just below that operating system, which was recently approved by the Public Service board. Powersmith is also working on a pair of projects in the North Springfield Industrial Park and a 500kw project at the Exit 1 Industrial Park operated by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. The application for that project, which is actually located in Guilford, was just submitted to the PSB, said Ingold.

The just-approved Guilford project will disturb 35,548 square feet of earth and create 10,248 square feet of impervious surfaces, which is below the jurisdictional limits of ANR's construction stormwater permit requirements. It will be sited on three-and-a-half acres of an approximately five-acre, undeveloped, formerly agricultural parcel located at 1600 Guilford Center Road and would be bound to the south by Guilford Center Road, and to the east, west, and north by agricultural lands and forest. The array would be set back at least 250 feet from Guilford Center Road, and at least 50 feet from all other property boundaries and the panels would be located on a rise of land approximately 95 feet above the road. The project will also require a new gravel road 775 feet long and 12 feet wide.

"The array would have limited visibility from public viewpoints. The Project site would be substantially shielded by the existing vegetation and topography (and) perimeter trees and vegetation shorter than 25 feet would be maintained to further mitigate any future off-site visibility. A small number of larger perimeter trees on the west and northwest perimeters would be removed to reduce shading and facilitate the functioning of the arrays."

In Londonderry, one requirement for the 150kw-Integrated Solar project is a "50-foot undisturbed vegetated buffer from the top of the stream bank within the Project area, except for the area where there is a crossing. The crossing and driveway within the 50-foot buffer shall be as narrow as possible to cause the least amount of disturbance and vegetation removal."

Integrated Solar applied for the certificate on July 28 and under Title 30, Section 248 of Vermont state statutes, received an expedited approval for the project. The facility will be interconnected with the Green Mountain Power Corporation electric distribution system and there will be multiple meters included in the group system. The goals of Vermont's net metering statute are to encourage private investment in renewable energy resources, stimulate the economic growth of the state, and enhance the continued diversification of energy sources used in the state.

The solar construction activity in Windham County is not unusual in Vermont, said Ingold. In fact, he said, the counties of Addison, Chittenden and Rutland are seeing even more activity because they have good transmission systems and lots of flat land.

Bob Audette can be contacted at 802-254-2311, ext. 160.

<http://www.newsandcitizen.com/news-and-citizen/lamoille-news/hydeparksolarheatingup>

Hyde Park Solar Heating Up

posted 2 hours ago by Staff News & Citizen

* by Kayla Friedrich*

Over the last 17 months, Hyde Park Electric Department (HPE) and Stowe Electric Department (SED) have been working simultaneously to develop solar projects that will help them meet some of the requirements under the new Vermont Renewable Portfolio Standard.

The Vermont Economic Development Authority recently reserved \$3.5 million in Clean Energy Renewable Bonds (CREBs) for the Hyde Park Solar Waterhouse Project, named after 35-year linesman Don Waterhouse. Voters approved the application for the zero-interest CREBs by a four to one margin earlier this spring, and municipal and town officials will now go about completing the process essential to securing the \$3.5 million in zero-interest bonds that have been set aside for the project.

On Monday, September 28, the Village of Hyde Park held an informational meeting to update the public on their progress with the project. Only two residents turned out for the meeting, but Hyde Park Village General Manager Carol Robertson said they had a good discussion without any contention.

"There were two ladies there," said Robertson. "One was Barb Potter who lives in the village, and the other one was Judy Womack whose home overlooks a part of this project. I had already met with [Judy] and her neighbors about the project, and she came with a lot of questions that she had after that. It was a great meeting."

Womack's main concern, according to Robertson, was that she would be able to see the solar field from her third story windows. Robertson says the village talked to a landscape architect, and they decided that to solve that issue by planting tall, fast-growing Junipers to block the view. From the lay of the land, there are very few people who can see it, but Womack can.

A 7-foot agricultural fence, not a chain-link fence, will surround the solar field and it will be very quiet, said Robertson. It will be a pad-mount transformer. The panels are fixed, do not move, and don't make any sound at all. Each one will have an underground connection that will feed back to the transformer.

So far, Encore Redevelopment, a Burlington company led by environmental engineer Chad Farrell, has done the preliminary designs and site selections for both Stowe and Hyde Park.

Continuation of the process will consist of obtaining permits, a certificate of public good and public service board (PSB) approval.

Following the PSB order, the village of Hyde Park will hold a required public meeting, around November or December. Then in December or January, they'll hold a special meeting and Australian ballot for the appropriate approvals. The hard deadline to secure the CREBs funding is February 2, and the village is hoping to begin work on the project in May 2016, providing they receive the funding. Their hope is to start producing power by that summer.

After the field begins producing power, the village can start selling renewable credits to other municipalities within the state.

"Our field is going to be cash positive from the day we turn the key," said Robertson. "We will own it with nice stable power."

The Waterhouse Project is tentatively going to be built at 1124 Silver Ridge Road in Hyde Park, a lot owned by Raymond and Carolyn Chauvin, located just behind the House of Troy. The Village of Hyde Park has a lease option on

that site on behalf of Hyde Park Electric. It will be a 25-year renewable lease that will go on for as long as both parties are willing.

"This is just the start," said Robertson. "As Barb Potter said in the meeting, she said 'Carol, this means that this is ours.' So, by building this, we are keeping all of our economics here. This landowner threw his land in the ring in the last month or so of the process. I think it's the right size, and the nice sweet spot for us."

Hyde Park is already working with Energy New England to get its name in the hat for people who would like to come in and pay to use this power once it's produced. Robertson believes Hyde Park can make everything local, and attract people in the future to invest some money and see how it's done.

By working with Stowe in each establishing a one-megawatt site, both towns can take advantage of discounts and save money.

We named this the Waterhouse project, because this is only the beginning," said Robertson. "Future projects may not be solar, it may just be energy storage from this. It could be anything, or it could be another solar project. We have looked at geothermal, and that's a possibility. There are things out there that haven't even been thought of that are possibilities, but the first rule is you have to generate cash from the first day."

St. Albans Messenger, Sept. 26, 2015

Solar array project topic for meeting

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By ELODIE REED Messenger Staff Write

ALBURGH — Time – and the ability to fall under the state's 15 percent net meter cap as well as receive a 30 percent federal tax credit ending Dec. 31, 2016 – is one reason for the Alburgh Selectboard to move fast on a municipal solar project.

In light of this, the selectboard will hold a special public meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m. to inform local residents about the project and answer any questions they may have.

The 500-kilowatt project, proposed at an Aug. 25 selectboard meeting by developers and brothers William and Victor Veve of Reservoir Road Holdings, is intended for the site of the former

U.S. Dept. of Defense Atlas Missile Base. The site was found to be riddled with health and safety hazards in Dec. 2010, when the Alburgh Town Garage was there.

The Veves, who specialize in developing brownfields and other contaminated land, asked the town to consider putting solar panels on three to five acres of the site that would power Alburgh's municipal buildings under Vermont Electric Cooperative's net metering program. The expected \$1 million in expenses associated with the project, including development, permitting, construction, maintenance, insurance and later decommissioning, would be paid by Reservoir Road Holdings.

This would be done with help from the developers' Greenwich, Conn. financing partner, Altus Power America.

As for the town, it would lease the land to the developers over a 20- to 30-year agreement, and it also would be receiving its power from a renewable, emissions-free source.

After receiving a preliminary motion from the Alburgh Selectboard to enter negotiations a month ago, the Veves have made efforts to look at the project's feasibility, cost and other details.

"We're making good progress with our diligence and engineering," said William Veve at the selectboard meeting on Tuesday. "We've been on the property and fully delineated wetlands."

He said that the Agency of Natural Resources planned to be on-site on Oct. 6, and shortly after, the Veves plan to file their application for a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Service Board.

Veve added that he had been in touch with adjoining landowners, and asked that the Town of Alburgh, since it has been involved in the project from the beginning, waive the 45-day notice period usually required by the PSB process.

This request, he said, was in the interest of time and making sure the project can happen. "We're in a tight race right now to meet the net meter cap," said Veve. The cap has been met for 2015, and 2016 is almost full already. "[There's] approximately 1.2 megawatts left for capacity, and we're asking for 500 of that," said Veve.

There's also a 30 percent federal tax credit for renewable energy projects completed before Dec. 31, 2016. After that date, the credit is reduced to 10 percent.

To move things along, Veves asked the selectboard to sign a letter of agreement that indicates the town and the developers would negotiate a lease. This piece is required for the PSB process, said William.

At this point, the selectboard showed some hesitation.

"I can understand your urgency," said selectman Alton Brusio. "But ordinarily, when these [things], we usually have the town attorney look at them."

Veve responded, "This is not the lease agreement – this is what is considered a letter of intent, which is binding."

Local resident, delinquent tax collector and fire warden Terry Tatro asked from the audience, "Don't you think there should be a little more public information and public input?"

The board agreed, and they decided 5-0 to have the town attorney look over the letter. Later in the meeting, they had a second, unanimous vote to hold a public informational meeting next week for residents.

The Veves said they would be there to answer questions.

William Veve said, "We're 10 real days from filing our CPG (certificate of public good) 45-day letter," which can't be done without the letter of agreement signed by the Alburgh selectboard. "At this point, we've spent \$11,000 of our money on professional fees."

His brother, Victor, added, "We're trying to work with the town and take a brownfield that's not being used and do something good with it."

Annette Smith
Executive Director
Vermonters for a Clean Environment
789 Baker Brook Road
Danby, VT 05739
(802)446-2094
www.vce.org

Chen, Zachary

From: *redacted*
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:17 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update - 10/19/15 - BENNINGTON CRAFTING RULES FOR SITING OF SOLAR ARRAYS

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update - 10/19/15 - BENNINGTON CRAFTING RULES FOR SITING OF SOLAR ARRAYS
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:28:33 -0500
From: *redacted*
To: *redacted*

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Mon, 19 Oct 2015 12:00:31 -0400
Subject: VCE Solar Update - 10/19/15 - BENNINGTON CRAFTING RULES FOR SITING OF SOLAR ARRAYS
To: vce@vce.org

Plenty to do this week and next:

NOW, VPR's Vermont Edition on the state energy plan
Tuesday Oct. 20 in Rutland, Comment on Vermont's Office of Public Advocacy
Wednesday Oct. 21 in Morrisville, Comment on Vermont's Office of Public Advocacy
Wednesday Oct. 21 in Montpelier, Comment on the Comprehensive Energy Plan Update
Thursday Oct. 22 in Montpelier attend the Solar Siting Task Force
Monday Oct. 26 in Bellows Falls Comment on the Comprehensive Energy Plan Update
Wednesday Oct. 28 in Montpelier attend VLCT's forum on land use and energy
Thursday Oct. 29 in Rutland Comment on the Comprehensive Energy Plan Update

VERMONT SUPREME COURT DECISION In re Application of Beach Properties, Inc. d/b/a Basin Harbor Club, for a Certificate of Public Good for an Interconnected Group Net-Metered Photovoltaic Electric Power System
<https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/LC/Supreme%20Court%20Published%20Decisions/op15-083.pdf>

VERMONT EDITION NOON TO ONE TODAY

<http://digital.vpr.net/post/assessing-plan-vermonts-energy-future#stream/0>

Assessing The Plan For Vermont's Energy Future

By JANE LINDHOLM & SAM GALE ROSEN

•
The state of Vermont is holding hearings on a draft of its updated Comprehensive Energy Plan.

WILSON RING AP

The state of Vermont is asking for public input on a draft of an updated Comprehensive Energy Plan for how to get to 90% renewable energy by 2050. It's a chance for Vermonters to weigh in on where the state is heading on energy, and how we can get there. What sources do we want in the mix, and what policy and infrastructure do we need?

To talk about the plan, we're joined by Dr. Asa Hopkins, state director of energy policy and planning. We're also talking to William Driscoll, Vice President of Associated industries of Vermont.

Post your questions and comments for the show here or email them to vermontedition@vpr.net <<mailto:vermontedition@vpr.net>>.

A schedule of hearings on the plan can be found here, and written comments on the plan can be left here.

Also on the program, it's not the first time that Vermont has faced an opiate-addiction crisis. In 1900, it was estimated that Vermonters consumed a staggering 3.3 million doses of opium every month. Historian Gary Shattuck joins us to discuss his research into the subject.

IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT ON HOW THE PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT'S

OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY OPERATES. This is a sleeper issue, folks, and one that would benefit from your input

Report to the Legislature – Public Comment Opportunity

<http://publicservice.vermont.gov/announcements/parpt_public_comment>

The Department of Public Service (DPS) was asked by the Legislature to provide a report by December 15, 2015, analyzing the structure of its Public Advocacy Division and whether alternate structures could result in improved benefits for utility ratepayers. The Department will be holding public hearings on this topic on the evenings of October 20 and October 21. DPS also welcomes comments from any Vermont residents who may provide them directly to the Department at the email or postal address below.

Hearings will be held from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm on Tuesday, October 20 at Rutland Regional Hospital, Community Health Education Center, 160 Allen Street and on Wednesday, October 21 at River Arts, 74 Pleasant Street, Morrisville.

Comments should be received by October 30, 2015. The purpose of the report is to examine the /structure/ of the public advocacy function of

the DPS, rather than any specific positions that the DPS has taken. Comments directly addressing the structure of the public advocate's office will be most relevant and helpful. Comments may be provided by mailing them by October 30, 2015 to the address below, or by email to Wayne.Jortner@vermont.gov <<mailto:Wayne.Jortner@vermont.gov>>. Vermont Department of Public Service

112 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05620

1. ATTEND ONE OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS NEXT WEEK:

*TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20th IN **RUTLAND**:* 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the Rutland Regional Hospital in the Community Health Education Center

*WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21st in **MORRISVILLE**:* 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at RIVER ARTS, 74 Pleasant Street, Morrisville

2. SEND COMMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE, THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES, AND THE GOVERNOR:

Here are a few ideas for things you might say:

- *The Public Advocate Office must be truly independent!***No matter where a Public Advocate Office is located (e.g. within DPS, at the Attorney General's Office, in a stand-alone agency or an independent nonprofit), the Office must be free from utility and political influence. The budget of the Office needs to be protected, and employees of the Office must be required to abide by a code of conduct and ethics that prohibits ties to utilities and has strict financial disclosure rules. They should also benefit from whistleblower protections so that they feel safe to voice concerns or report problems.

- *The Public Advocate Office should be responsible for helping the public understand and participate in utility cases.* Instead of acting as a gatekeeper that keeps the public out of the Section 248 process, the Public Advocate Office should be required to produce plain-language materials that explain not only the Section 248 process but also their rights as ratepayers, landowners, and the public AND the rate design and ratemaking process. Right now, it's nearly impossible for ratepayers to understand or participate in decisions that will affect their wallets, their health and safety, or the environment. Vermont needs a Public Advocate Office that respects our need for understandable and accessible information AND our right to participate in determining exactly what our interests are with respect to a given project or policy.

- *All Vermonters should have an equal right to assistance from a

Public Advocate Office. *Not all "public interests" are the same for all groups in any society. If different groups (e.g. ratepayers, property owners, small businesses) have differing interests, advocates should be assigned to represent the interests of each group, and/or funding should be provided to individuals and organizations, who want to intervene in the Section 248 process.

- *The Public Advocate Office should advocate for more than just lower rates!*It's a myth that ratepayers only care about the cost of energy.

- *The Public Advocate Office should be required to share complaints and communications received from ratepayers and members of the public with the Board and other parties during the course of Public Service Board proceedings. *

- *Improving the structure and effectiveness of the Public Advocate Office should start today - with a reasonable schedule for accessible public hearings and a comment process that makes sense!*

Until an effective and independent Public Advocate Office can be established, the Vermont public deserves to have Independent Counsel appointed for all large pending utility cases.

VERMONT SOLAR TASK FORCE MEETINGS

<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

Announcements

10/12/15: The third meeting of the Task Force will be held October 22, 2015 from 1-3 p.m. in Room 11 of the Vermont Statehouse, Montpelier (directions to the Statehouse can be found here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/hours-map-and-directions/>>),

and the location of Room 11 here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/state-house-floor-maps/>>)

Thereafter, the schedule for the meetings is as follows:
Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Friday, November 13, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

<http://www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/fall-planning-and-zoning-forum/view/2015-10-28>

Fall Planning & Zoning Forum

OCT. 28, 2015

<<http://www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/ics/1895/20151028T083000-20151028T153000>>

- * *Location:* Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
- * *Time:* 8:30am — 3:30pm
- * *Sponsored by:* VLCT Municipal Assistance Center, VLCT PACIF
- * *Contact:* Lisa Goodell
- * *Contact Email:* info@vlct.org <<mailto:info@vlct.org>>
- * *Contact Phone:* (802) 229-9111
- * *Contact Fax:* (802) 229-2211
- * *Cost:* Early Bird - \$60 VLCT PACIF Members; \$90 VLCT Member; \$160 All Other Attend
- * *Registration Deadline:* Wednesday, October 21, 2015.

Description:

From solar panels sited on open farmland to wind turbines on ridgelines to the Public Service Board process, energy issues are front and center in Vermont and municipalities are trying to deal with them. This workshop is geared towards zoning administrators, planning commissioners, selectboard members, town attorneys, town administrators and managers, municipal planners, town energy committee members, and regional planning commission staff as it will offer a mix of legal information, practical solutions, and policy discussions, as well as the opportunity to discuss pressing issues in municipal planning and zoning with knowledgeable officials from across the state. AICP Certification Maintenance and CLE credits are being sought.

*Click Here to Register

<<http://www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-registration/?eid=1895>>*

Agenda:

- *8:30 Registration *(coffee and light breakfast provided)
- *9:00 Welcome and Overview of the Day*, Abby Friedman, Director, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center
- *9:05 Getting from "NIMBY" to "Due Consideration" before the Public Service Board*

The Commissioner of the Public Service Department (PSD) and the attorney who recently represented the Town of Newark in a very important case before the Superior Court will discuss the recent litigation, with a broader discussion focusing on the Public Service Board (PSB) permit process. The speakers will discuss what the Newark case's outcome means to Vermont municipalities and how local officials can best communicate the town plan's "clear community standard."**/Speakers: Brooke

Dingledine Esq., Valsangiacomo, Detora & McQuesten, P.C.; Geoffrey Commons, Esq., Director of Public Advocacy of the Department of Public Service; Adam Lougee, Executive Director, Addison County Regional Planning Commission; Jeannie Oliver Esq., Special Counsel, Public Service Department/

10:35 Break

10:45 Roundtable Discussion on the Public Service Board Process

This session will give attendees an opportunity to engage in discussions with a variety of “players” who will provide insight and perspective about the PSB process, how to participate effectively, and more generally how the PSB Certificate of Public Good process works. As the session expands upon the previous discussion, participants will be encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and connect with other municipal officials who may be working through the PSB process, are updating local bylaws to better comply with state law, or are updating their town plans to communicate their town’s “clear community standard.”**/Speakers: Adam Lougee, Executive Director, Addison County Regional Planning Commission; Cindy Hill, Esq., Law Offices of Cindy Ellen Hill; Richard Saudek Esq., Diamond & Robinson, P.C.; Jeannie Oliver Esq., Special Counsel, Public Service Department; Geoffrey Commons, Esq., Director of Public Advocacy of the Department of Public Service/

*12:00 Lunch *(provided)

1:00 Legislative Update and the Outlook for 2016

In this session, we will review the 2015 legislative session, including how Act 56 pertains to solar siting. We will also update participants on the Solar Siting Taskforce, the Department of Housing and Community Development and PSD report on new screening requirements, the report from the agencies of Natural Resources and Agriculture, Food and Markets and Public Service Department on land use and environmental impacts of renewable energy generation siting, and the legislative Joint Energy Committee, which was scheduled to meet on September 30, 2015. Finally, we will look ahead to possible legislation in the 2016 session./ Speaker: Karen Horn, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy, VLCT/

*1:45 **Template for Group Net Metering Agreements*

The Municipal Assistance Center coordinated a collaborative effort to create a Template for Group Net Metering Agreements to help guide municipal and school district officials through the process of “going solar.” This session will review the process to develop the Template and how it is intended to be used./ Speaker: Abby Friedman, Director, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center/

2:00 Break

*2:15 **How to Write Effective, Shorter and Clearer Town Plans

*A whopping 92% of Vermont's 262 municipalities regularly prepare and adopt a municipal plan. How can we improve these plans to better serve as a practical guide for local decision making? Staff from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and its partners are working to address this question and invite you to preview the state's new Planning Manual. Learn how to develop more targeted town plans with measurable implementation objectives to achieve community goals. /Speaker: John Adams AICP, Planning Coordinator, Agency of Commerce and Community Development/

3:30 Complete evaluations

3:35 Conclusion

Three more Public Hearings on the draft Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan
Wednesday, October 21: Noble Hall at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier
Monday, October 26: Bellows Falls High School Auditorium, Bellows Falls
Thursday, October 29: CVPS/Leahy Community Health Education Center, Rutland

The Public Service Department has released the draft Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) and is holding five Public Hearings. All hearings are from 6 – 8 PM. Plan is available here:http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/psd/files/Pubs_Plans_Reports/State_Plans/Comp_Energy_Plan/2015/CEP_Public_Review_Draft_092215.pdf

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/13/bennington-crafting-rules-for-siting-of-solar-arrays/>

BENNINGTON CRAFTING RULES FOR SITING OF SOLAR ARRAYS

OCT. 13, 2015, 11:45 AM BY BENNINGTON BANNER

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/bennington-banner/>> LEAVE A COMMENT

<<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/13/bennington-crafting-rules-for-siting-of-solar-arrays/#respond>>

/Editor's note: This article is by Keith Whitcomb Jr., of the Bennington Banner <<http://www.benningtonbanner.com/>>, in which it was first published Oct. 13, 2015./

BENNINGTON — The Select Board will be reviewing an ordinance that gives it greater control over the siting of ground-mounted solar arrays.

Last week the Planning Commission met to discuss a draft of the ordinance before forwarding it to a board committee which will make its own recommendations before the full board, likely on Oct. 26.

In Vermont, Act 248 gives all permitting authority over power plants to the Public Service Board, a group appointed by the governor. The PSB's authority supersedes all local zoning laws. This has led to no small amount of controversy in communities across the state over the years regarding all manner of projects from biomass, to wind, to solar.

In Bennington, people are upset over what are legally two solar arrays set to be built next to one another on forested land east of Route 7 near the Apple Hill neighborhood.

Together they will be about 27 acres. Neighbors have been largely at odds with the developer over how the projects will be screened from view.

This past session, the Legislature passed a law giving towns the authority to create solar screening ordinances that would apply only to ground-mounted solar arrays like the ones planned for Bennington.

Bennington Planning Director Dan Monks said Monday that because the solar arrays' permits were filed for last year, it's not likely the new ordinance, if passed, will apply.

He said that while the ordinance would give the town some power regarding solar projects, there's a number of "catches."

For one, the ordinance can't effectively ban such projects. Monks said it's not clear if that means some projects can be allowed and not others, or if all projects must be allowed just with enough screening.

The ordinance also cannot place more restrictions on solar than it would other commercial properties, said Monks.

The Planning Commission has recommended that it be made to review each solar project as they are proposed, then make screening recommendations to the board.

The board will then make a decision on what it wants for screening and send that to the PSB.

Monks said the board has always been able to make such recommendations to the PSB, but with this new law the PSB will be bound to enforce them, provided they comply with the law.

If the board passes the ordinance, like any ordinance it will go into effect after 60 days.

St. Albans Messenger, Oct. 17, 2015

Developers explain Highgate solar plan

Developers explain Highgate solar plan

<mailto:?Subject=Read%20this%20interesting%20article%20from%20St%20Albans%20Messenger&body=Click%20on%20the%20link%20below%20to%20read%20the%20article%20sent%20to%20you%3A%0A%0A%20http%3A%2F%2Fdigital.edition.samesessenger.com%2F%3FIIID%3D130247%26startpage%3D1%26ArticleTitle%3D899183%0A%0A%20Sent%20from%20St%20Albans%20Messenger%20via%20Realview%20Digital.>

By MICHELLE MONROE Messenger Staff Writer

Aaron Svedlow of Ranger Solar explains the location of a portion of a proposed 99-acre solar project at Thursday night's Highgate selectboard meeting, held in the elementary school library.

MICHELLE MONROE, ST. Albans Messenger

HIGHGATE — If approved, a proposed 20-megawatt solar project in Highgate would be the largest in the state.

At Thursday night's selectboard meeting, a representative of the developer, Ranger Solar, addressed concerns about the project's impact on electric rates, property values and wildlife. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting, which was held at the Highgate Elementary School library to accommodate the crowd.

The project — not cost estimates have been released — is planned for 99 acres, 57 acres on the west side of St. Armand Road and 42 acres on the east side. It consists of approximately 95,000 panels. R.J. Fournier and Daniel Nadeau have each leased land to Ranger.

The company anticipates it will file a petition with the Public Service Board (PSB) requesting a certificate of public good in November. The certificate is the only permit required for an energy project in Vermont; no local permits are needed.

Aaron Svedlow, of Ranger Solar, said the company is seeking a long-term supply contract with Vermont utilities at the avoided cost rate. The avoided cost rate is defined as the costs the utilities would avoid paying to another generate of electricity, such as Hydro Quebec, by purchasing from the Highgate project.

Thus, utilities would pay the same for this power as they would for power purchased from other sources.

This is different from small-scale net meter solar projects, for which the producers are paid a rate above that paid to other electricity producers.

Svedlow also addressed the question of whether upgrades would be needed to the electric lines to enable them to handle power from the project. A previous story from VT Digger, published by the Messenger, stated the

cost of any needed upgrades would be split between Ranger Solar and ratepayers.

Svedlow said that is not accurate. "We're required to pay for any upgrades associated with our project," he reiterated several times.

An analysis is currently being done by a third party to determine what kinds of upgrades, if any, are needed, according to Svedlow.

"The reason why we chose Highgate is because of the electrical infrastructure here," he said. That infrastructure includes a sub-station and high-capacity kV power lines.

An additional step-up station will be installed, but its final location has not been selected. That location will be chosen based on which location will have the least impact, said Svedlow.

Minimizing impact

Svedlow also extended an offer to work with neighboring landowners to shield the project from view. "We'll plant trees on your property or whatever you'd like," he said.

There will be a 100-foot setback between the project and St. Armand Road. However, a sight line analysis by T.J. Boyle Associates found it will be visible from both the Highgate Elementary School and the Highgate Arena.

Ranger is willing to purchase land near the arena and donate it to the town for a future expansion of the arena or sports fields, said Svedlow. How much land is something Ranger would negotiate with the town.

Ranger has hired an historic architecture firm to document any potential impacts on historic structures.

Company representatives have met with the state architect and are currently doing preliminary surveys. The locations of panels and lines will be adjusted to avoid impacting any potential archeological sites identified in the surveys, explained Svedlow.

Arlene Gagne asked about possible impacts on her property values. "From my house, there's no way to hide it," she said, explaining a representative of Ranger Solar had already visited and agreed the project would be visible from her home.

She asked what the glare might do to her siding or roofing.

Svedlow answered that the glare from the panels is minimal, roughly equivalent to the reflection off of water on a hot day, and that any glare will be to the south, and not toward her property.

"I just want to make sure this isn't going to mess with my property

values," Gagne said.

Svedlow said he understood her concerns and the company would be in touch to discuss the plans for the field near her home.

There were also several questions about the impact of the project, which will be fenced, on wildlife.

The area is a turkey and deer habitat, said Highgate Selectboard member Chris Yates, who asked about the fence.

The project will use a wildlife fence, Svedlow replied, saying, "The intention is not to ensnare wildlife in it."

Svedlow said all wetlands will be protected by a 50-foot buffer and the buffers would be marked during construction to prevent any accidental encroachment on the buffers. In addition, there will be little clearing of trees, he said.

"How are wildlife going to the wetlands?" to get asked Dave Gagne, who said the area is a wildlife crossing.

Svedlow said connectivity between the wetlands would be maintained, although he never clarified to what extent wildlife would lose access to the wetlands.

Ranger Solar is developing the project, but once all the permits and necessary agreements are in place the company will sell it.

Svedlow said when asked that he could not specify whom the purchaser would be. "It could be to a variety of different companies," he said.

would be experienced with solar He added the purchaser energy and would have to abide by the terms of the leases signed by Ranger Solar with the sites owners, any agreements reached between Ranger and the town, and the certificate of public good.

Asked about what happens when the leases end or if the purchaser goes bankrupt, Svedlow said the terms of Ranger's lease with the landowner and Vermont regulations require the company to set aside the funds to remove the panels and restore the land to its previous condition.

In addition, the owner will have to have an escrow fund for maintenance.

Maintenance of the land, such as the cutting of the grass, will be done mechanically and not with chemical herbicides. "We will do all mechanical maintenance, no spray,"

said Svedlow. "It's not necessary, frankly, and it's damaging to the environment." The maintenance plan will be part of Ranger Solar's petition to the Public Service Board, he added.

Svedlow said the project will need three to five fulltime employees for maintenance. "We intend to hire those staff locally," he said.

In addition, if the project is approved, a job fair will be held in Vermont to hire subcontractors for the construction work and he expected about 60 percent of the construction work to be done by Vermonters, Svedlow said.

Ranger estimates the project will provide \$100,000 annually in property taxes to the town, although he did not say if that was all municipal taxes or included both municipal and education taxes.

The process

Although Highgate has no permitting authority over solar projects, the town is a party to the PSB proceedings and neighboring landowners may seek to become parties.

The town could support or oppose the project. "There's a hundred different ways you could go about doing that," said town attorney Ed Adrian. The town could also negotiate with Ranger, placing requirements on the company in exchange for the town's support.

The Vermont Public Service Dept. and the Agency of Natural Resources are also parties to the proceedings. "These two entities are supposed to act on behalf of the people of the state of Vermont," he said, noting that includes Highgate residents.

Town administrator Heidi Britch-Valenta said the Public Service Dept. is interested in hearing from people in the community about the project. She urged residents wishing to share their views on the project to contact the department.

In addition, adjoining landowners can petition to be made parties to the proceeding.

After Ranger files the petition next month, the PSB will hold a hearing and gather evidence about the project, said Adrian, who compared the process to a judge conducting a trial. Once they've gathered the evidence, the members of the PSB will apply Vermont law to that evidence in determining whether or not the project qualifies for a permit.

The selectboard has not yet formed an opinion on the project, indicated chair Jeff Towle.

-- -- -For those wanting more information about the process, the PSB publishes Citizens' Guide to the Vermont Public Service Board's Section 248 Process, which can be found at its Web site (<http://psb.vermont.gov>).

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510town-new-haven-gets-hearings-solar-projects>

Town of New Haven gets hearings on solar projects

Posted on October 15, 2015 |

* New Haven

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/section/new-haven>>

* Featured

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* Public Service Board

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* renewable energy

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* solar <<http://addisonindependent.com/category/tags/solar>>

By Gaen Murphree

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/reporter-author-name/gaen-murphree>>

NEW HAVEN — The state’s utility regulators will give the town of New Haven a voice in their consideration of three separate proposed solar power projects. The town, which boasts open fields and a proximity to a main power transmission line, has been the target for many solar array proposals.

Town officials are glad to get a chance to protect their interests.

“It’s relatively uncommon for the Public Service Board to grant hearings on these petitions,” said Geoff Commons, director of the Public Advocacy Division of the Vermont Public Service Department. “It does happen, but it’s relatively rare.”

The hearings are likely to take place in November, but are not yet on the Public Service Board’s publicly accessible schedule. These are usually posted about 12 days before a hearing date, according to PSB Deputy Clerk Judith Whitney.

These upcoming hearings on three proposed solar projects are not New Haven’s only filings currently before the Public Service Board — the town has submitted to the PSB concerns over at least eight applications currently or recently pending for a Certificate of Public Good to build new solar arrays in the town. But at present three of these are significant enough in the eyes of the PSB to have warranted a hearing.

At issue for New Haven, as for towns across Vermont who have similarly

felt unheard on PSB decisions about renewable energy projects — is the town's ability to regulate development within its borders. While Vermonters see and understand the importance of embracing solar and other renewable energy sources in the battle against climate change — and by law 55 percent of utility sales must be from renewable sources by 2017 — the Certificate of Public Good process has led many to feel that town plans have been trampled and that towns have been disempowered in their ability to make critical land use decisions.

In addition to this overarching concern, the town of New Haven has differing concerns about each of the three installations that range from best use of prime agricultural soils, to the effect on the historic and aesthetic aspects of a given location, to impacts of decommissioning. They also wonder if solar developers might be gaming the system by installing a series of smaller arrays that are subject to less stringent regulation and less scrutiny than a single, larger solar installation would be.

The PSB has scheduled a hearing for Nov. 23 on the proposed 2.2 megawatt (MW) Next Generation Solar project proposed by Waitsfield's Green Peak Solar to go in along Field Days Road. It has set a tentative date of the week of Nov. 1 for a hearing on the proposed addition of 350 kilowatts — issued as a new and separate Certificate of Public Good — to an existing 150 kW array on Route 7 behind the Vermont State Police barracks.

And the PSB has granted a hearing but set no date for a proposed 150 kW installation on South Street.

Act 56, the renewable energy legislation signed into law by Gov. Shumlin on June 11, includes some changes intended to address towns' concerns. The law gives all town selectboards and planning commissions "the right to appear as a party in any Section 248 proceedings." It also stipulates that solar installations must comply with municipal screening requirements and, if greater than 15 kW, be set back 50 feet from property boundaries and 100 feet from the edge of state or municipal highways.

But it's not yet clear to what extent Act 56 will be effective in addressing towns' concerns or are just window dressing by a Legislature wanting to appear to be responsive, according to experts interviewed for this article.

For New Haven town attorney Cindy Hill the PSB's new automatic recognition of towns as "parties" may bring subtle yet potentially powerful changes to the process. Previously, towns had to petition to be recognized as "interveners" in the Certificate of Public Good process and the Public Service Board could limit which of a town's issues as an intervener it would choose to address. Being automatically recognized as "parties" could help towns present the breadth of their concerns about a particular project.

"The difference may well be subtle in terms of what a nonlegal person

might perceive of it," said Hill. "A statutory party is by law they have a legal vested interest in participation in the process. An intervener is only by permission. So it's a difference of by right versus by permission. The granting of party status to all towns in these proceedings appears to not limit the issues that a town can raise in the course of that party status, whereas interveners can be limited by the Public Service Board in what they can attest to.

"Basically, an intevener is by the discretion of the Public Service Board and therefore more limited and only subject to their permission, whereas a party means that by law you have a seat at the table."

One thing Act 56 does not change is the language regarding how the PSB is to weigh a town plan when evaluating a solar generator's petition for a Certificate of Public Good. The current language of "due consideration" still stands. Section 248 instructs the Public Service Board to give "due consideration" to the "recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions, the recommendations of the municipal legislative bodies, and the land conservation measures contained in the plan of any affected municipality."

To what extent "due consideration" is a meaningful standard depends on which stakeholder you talk to.

In New Haven, the town plan, in effect since 2011, limits utility projects such as solar arrays to 300 kW. Yet the Public Service Board gave the green light to the 2.2 MW Cross Pollination project along Route 7 north New Haven junction, which was installed in 2013.

Of the eight proposed projects currently pending before the Public Service Board, four are larger than allowed by the town plan: the 350 kW SSE New Haven Solar II near the state police barracks, the 500 kW BDE Lazar Solar on Main Street, the 500 kW New Haven GLC Solar off Route 7, and the 2.2 MW Next Generation installation on Field Days Road.

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<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development/>

RENEWABLE ENERGY ADVOCATES ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLIC PUSHBACK ON WIND AND SOLAR DEVELOPMENT

OCT. 8, 2015, 9:15 PM BY MARK JOHNSON
<<http://vtdigger.org/author/markjohnson/>> 68 COMMENTS

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Darren Springer

Darren Springer, chief of staff for Gov. Peter Shumlin, gives a speech at the Renewable Energy Vermont conference. Photo by Mark Johnson/VTDigger

SOUTH BURLINGTON — Advocates for renewable energy in Vermont said Thursday they have much to celebrate, but that significant challenges lay ahead.

More than 350 people attended the Renewable Energy Vermont annual conference in South Burlington. Outside, approximately 25 protesters lined the sidewalk in front of the Sheraton Conference center to demonstrate against wind power projects either already built or planned for their communities.

Darren Springer, Gov. Shumlin's chief of staff and the former deputy commissioner of the Department of Public Service, told the audience inside that the amount of renewable energy in Vermont, through solar and wind projects, as well as through conservation efforts, has exceeded projections. (Springer filled in for Shumlin, who was slated to speak, but had to help the family of a friend who died yesterday.)

Despite successes, Springer said challenges remain to convince public policy leaders, particularly in Washington, to extend tax credits to boost the renewable energy sector, in the face of global warming, which he noted some politicians still doubt.

Springer touted the accomplishments of the industry during the Shumlin administration: 16,000 jobs currently in the clean energy sector and 100 megawatts of power from wind projects since 2009 and 10 times the solar capacity in Vermont since the governor was elected in 2010. Vermonters are using 13 percent less power than had been projected since 2000, thanks to efficiency programs, and electric rates in Vermont are the second lowest in New England, he said.

Listen to interviews with Mark Johnson and audio from the conference

Keith Ballek on wind development

Tony Klein on local siting

Darren Spring on the threats to renewables

"There's a lot to celebrate. There's also a moment of challenge," Springer said, noting he had attended the "compelling" presentation on global warming at UVM this week by former Vice President Al Gore.

Springer said the success behind the expansion of renewable energy in Vermont is in part attributable to state incentives for renewable projects, as well as net metering programs that allow residents and companies that create more power than they use to sell it back to utilities. He also applauded the work of the utilities with a variety of programs to help customers cut back on use.

However, Springer said federal tax incentives were critical and that their future was "constantly under threat." He said no energy source would be viable without subsidies. Springer said the federal government was on track to provide subsidies of \$100 billion in the next 10 years for nuclear, coal and other fossil fuels. If renewable programs were extended, the subsidies would amount to \$35 billion over the next 10 years, he said.

"We are on schedule to put \$100 billion into fossil fuels, yet we refuse as a country to extend the tax credits for renewables to help level the playing field," Springer said. He also noted renewable energy received a smaller share of federal research and development funds than nuclear power and fossil fuels.

He also acknowledged local opposition to renewable energy projects. He said legislation passed this year should make it easier for opponents to be heard, including a provision in the review process that gives towns an automatic right to be a part of the case. That legislation also changed how "renewable energy credits" are sold between utilities and states trying to reach renewable energy goals. Vermont, for example, is seeking to get 90 percent of its energy from renewables by 2050.

"We know there are some folks who are reacting to the idea we're going to see energy produced in our communities instead of being brought in

via powerlines from some large plant out there somewhere, whether it's coal or a nuclear plant or whatever it might be. And we have to be smart in responding to those concerns," he said.

Anti-wind Protestors

Anti-wind protestors demonstrate outside the Sheraton Hotel during the Renewable Energy Vermont conference. Photo by Mark Johnson/VTDigger

Sally Collopy and Penny Dubie, the wife of former Lt Gov Brian Dubie, were among the protestors in front of the conference center holding signs opposing wind turbine construction on ridgelines. In Swanton, there is a proposal for a project with seven 499-foot tall turbines.

"It just makes no sense at all," said Collopy, holding a sign that said "We are victims of industrial wind."

Opponents, including Keith Ballek of Sheffield, say the wind turbines cause health problems because of the noise vibrations they create, while other opponents were more focused on aesthetics and keeping Vermont ridgelines pristine. Several said they felt the regulatory process was slanted toward developers and that opponents didn't have enough say or sway.

"This is a statewide issue and I just feel people need to speak up now because what's right happening now is a runaway train the way this policy is set up right now," Ballek said. "It's a feeding frenzy and the word's out there's not much oversight here... it's like they're prospecting."

Springer said the Legislature this year called for more regulations for siting solar panel projects to "try to bridge the gap between those opposing projects and those trying to build them. I think we should give those things a chance to work," he said and that it was worth the "time and effort" to have communities and developers work together.

"This is not an industry that can fail," Springer said, "we have to get renewable energy right."

Rep Tony Klein, the chair of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee, said "the state's come a long way."

"Along with those successes are challenges and the challenges are sometimes unintended consequences that nobody has even thought about or at the speed that you're developing that you run into things that maybe shouldn't happen and you have to address that," he said. "Right, wrong, indifferent, there are people who are upset with some of the placements of some of the larger solar installations, and I think some of that is legitimate, and we have to find ways to address that and to find the real cause of the problem before you can address that."

He said wind projects went through a "full blown, not overnight" regulatory process with the Public Service Board.

In an interview, Klein said the Public Service Board had powers “to incorporate some of the problems and wishes in certain areas and towns who want to have their voices heard better” and that they were “not doing that” but instead claiming they were following the guidelines set down by the Legislature. For example, on solar projects, he said the PSB had the power to have a developer move, reduce the size or require screening.

“When I hear the chair of the Public Service Board make statements that they are only doing what the Legislature is telling them to do and if you don’t like what we’re doing go talk to the Legislature, I react negatively to that because that’s just not necessarily so,” Klein said. “And what I’m fearful of is that if people are going to really turn on the Public Service Board and me knowing they already have existing authority to be more nimble, to be more helpful and if they’re not going to to that, then eventually there is going to be a lot pressure put on the Legislature to tell them exactly what to do.”

He said the PSB will not like that and the Legislature may not be capable of setting those parameters. “I worry about that,” Klein said.

Klein, who expressed concerns about the anger of some renewable project opponents, said the PSB needs to use its existing powers to make people feel more included in the process or there could be a backlash that threatens to have “a positive regulatory process that we’ve seen for the past 40-plus years undone willy-nilly because of emotion.”

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/11/bray-housing-vermont-and-audet-honored-at-renewable-energy-vermont-conference/>

BRAY, HOUSING VERMONT AND AUDET HONORED AT RENEWABLE ENERGY VERMONT CONFERENCE

OCT. 11, 2015, 9:39 PM BY PRESS RELEASE

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News Release — Renewable Energy Vermont

Oct. 8, 2015

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Burlington, VT — Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) recognizes a Vermont

real estate development company and two Vermonters for their outstanding contributions to the progress of a sustainable energy future at Renewable Energy 2015: "Leading the Energy REVolution", an annual conference hosted by REV taking place on October 8-9 at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in Burlington. The 2015 Renewable Energy Awards are generously presented by VLITE as part of their continuing commitment to building an energy secure Vermont.

This year's awardees include:

The Renewable Energy Legislative Award, awarded to an elected official who worked to advance energy policy in the state in the prior year, is awarded to Senator Christopher Bray from Addison County. In his first year as Chair, Senator Bray passed a Climate Change Resolution, initiated a Water bill that did become law, and – critically – oversaw the passage of Vermont's Act 56, the Renewable Energy Standard. Act 56 focuses on the balance between rate impact, renewable goals, alignment with regional policy, helping Vermonters lower their total energy costs, economic development and greenhouse gas emission reductions. This Act brought Vermont into compliance with the regions' RPS policies thereby preventing a \$40 million rate increase, set forth renewable energy requirements through 2032, and also made significant changes in solar siting requirements while also establishing a Solar Siting Task Force. For those who experienced the last three weeks of the 2015 Legislative Session, Chair Bray provided a fair and balanced approach to governing and an example of true leadership. Not surprisingly, this will not be the first energy-related honor for Senator Bray, who was the recipient of the Vermont Natural Resources Council's Legislative Leadership Award in 2009.

The Renewable Energy Industry Award, celebrates a Vermont company who went above and beyond its core mission to increase the deployment of renewables. This year the recipient is Housing Vermont, a non-profit real estate development company that creates permanently affordable rental housing for Vermonters through public-private partnerships. Since its founding in 1988, Housing Vermont has produced almost 5,000 affordable apartments for Vermonters. For the past five years Housing Vermont has been involved in trailblazing work to integrate renewable energy in their buildings. Housing Vermont has installed solar hot water in 650 units, solar electric in over 120 units and modern wood central heating systems serving 342 affordable apartments throughout the state. By the end of 2016, Housing Vermont will have developed 650 kW (AC) of photovoltaic system that will be net metered to over 300 affordable housing units. As noted by Housing Vermont, "in order to be good at our core mission of providing affordable housing, we have to be great at this energy work."

The 2015 Jim Grundy Award, is named for Jim Grundy, one of the founders of REV, a renewable designer and businessman, and beloved husband, family and community member. Jim was known for his integrity of spirit, kindness of soul and ingenuity and craftsmanship in renewable energy technologies, as well as a willingness to personally invest in advancing

renewable energy in Vermont through his daily actions and throughout his community. This year's Jim Grundy award will be presented to Marie Audet and the Audet Family of Blue Spruce Farm and Audet's Cow Power in Bridport, Vermont. Marie Audet and the team at Blue Spruce farm are true pioneers in what they refer to as "Cow Power" on their third-generation farm that produces milk for Vermont's famous Cabot Cheeses. Producing almost 4,500,000 gallons of milk each year and with 3,000 acres of land to feed the cows, Blue Spruce Farm generates electricity by feeding cow manure into an anaerobic digester which produces a biogas which in turn spins an electric generator creating electricity. The farm also boasts a Northwind 100 Turbine and hosts a solar array. Marie and her family are truly a model for many, opening their farm to thousands of tourists annually to show visitors what a true working Vermont landscape looks like – from food to renewable energy to community.

"For REV members and the Board, it's a sincere pleasure to take a brief moment out of every year to thank a few of the Vermonters that quietly work towards making renewable energy and efficiency happen in their communities, homes and businesses. These awards show the breadth and scope of who makes energy work here in Vermont – from housing entities to farmers, to legislators and town energy committee members. Truly, this works takes all of us collaborating together", says Jeff Forward, Chair of the Renewable Energy Vermont board.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Awards, the recipients and RE2015: Leading the Energy REVolution visit, www.revconference.org/

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151019/NEWS01/151019375>

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Renewable energy forum planned for Tuesday

By Emily Cutts <<mailto:emily.cutts@rutlandherald.com>>

STAFF WRITER | October 19, 2015

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<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20151019/NEWS01/151019375?template=printart>>

FAIR HAVEN — The Fair Haven Select Board is holding a public forum on renewable energy Tuesday.

The forum is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the Fair Haven Grade School gymnasium on North Main Street. The board will use the meeting as a chance to discuss with residents possible renewable energy projects related to solar and hydro, according to a news release.

"We hope to see a lot of people there. We want to hear a lot of different opinions," Chairman Robert Richards said. "We'd love to hear

and see several hundred people there that we could get a consensus from and give us direction.”

Richards said the meeting will be run as a special Select Board meeting and the he expects it to last for about an hour and a half.

Several solar companies have given presentations to the board in the past few months looking to install solar panels in town. Most recently, Fred Bova, president of Stella Power, made a presentation to the board with a proposal of a 3.4 acre solar array at the south end of the Air Park, according to Sept. 15 meeting minutes.

According to the minutes, Bova told the board the project would potentially generate enough power for the town and \$170,000 in revenue in the first year.

The board is also considering the construction of a small-scale hydroelectric generating plant on the Castleton River. The dam would be constructed most likely at the site of the former Depot or Water Street dam, as it was deemed most suitable, according to the Fair Haven Low Impact Hydro Feasibility Study.

Last month, the board voted to offer to pay \$2,500 to Vermont Structural Slate to relinquish all their rights to the Water Street dam, the Slate Factory dam and the Shirt Factory dam, according to Sept. 15 meeting minutes.

Following the presentation from Stella Power and the agreement reached with Vermont Structural Slate, the board instructed the town’s Energy Committee to make a recommendation.

Mike Stannard, chairman of the Energy Committee, read the committee’s recommendations from a letter to the Select Board at their Sept. 29 meeting.

In the letter Stannard wrote on behalf of the committee, the committee wrote a favorable opinion of both a potential solar project and a hydro project, but raised questions and concerns about both.

The letter states “We believe that the overall long-term benefits of profit and ownership of capital from the proposed hydro project trumps the approximately \$30,000/year (\$900,000 over 30 years) of savings to the town from said solar development.”

The committee unanimously recommended that the town should take advantage of the “unique type of opportunity” in respect to a solar net metering project. The committee also raised concerns about the proposal given by Stella Power, especially in regards to the location of a project at the Air Park.

“This committee agrees that Fair Haven needs to stop losing opportunities from inaction and that there is a place for a solar project in our town,” Stannard wrote in the letter to the board.

Members of the Town Energy Committee are expected to attend the meeting to help with the discussion.

<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/>

Solar looks bright in Charlotte

While some residents of New Haven are resisting more solar-power projects in their community, Charlotte town officials—and many residents—are eager to utilize solar power, plugging in new state standards and revamping existing regulations. Pictured: Solar-power project in Ferrisburgh, Vt.

[<http://www.gmoutlook.com/photos/2015/oct/16/53174/>](http://www.gmoutlook.com/photos/2015/oct/16/53174/)

While some residents of New Haven are resisting more solar-power projects in their community, Charlotte town officials—and many

residents—are eager to utilize solar power, plugging in new state standards and revamping existing regulations. Pictured: Solar-power project in Ferrisburgh, Vt. Photo by Louis Varricchio
<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/staff/louis-varricchio/>>.

By Gail Callahan

First Posted: Friday, October 16, 2015 -8:45 a.m.

<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/>>

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p1>>Charlotte

—
While some residents of New Haven and Hubbardton are resisting more solar-power projects in their communities—complaining of permanent changes to their town's rural appeal, akin to adding arrays of billboards to the landscape—Charlotte town officials are eager to utilize solar power, plugging in new state standards and revamping existing regulations.

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p2>>While

the state is seeking to use 90 percent renewable energy by 2050, Vermont is experiencing a solar boom with the help of taxpayer-funded incentives which are set to expire in 2016. The Vermont State Legislature has crafted and passed new energy regulations, but with that comes a new layer to take closer looks at projects.

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p3>>Locally,

the Charlotte Planning Commission is discussing how the Town Plan can include regulations, enabling the town to have more say in the location of solar projects. The current document contains no such language. That goes hand-in-hand with a state-created committee, kicking off in three months, is tasked with studying how project locations are determined.

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p4>>Charlotte

officials are considering a list of goals as a starting point for

writing documents on how to look at proposed solar projects. At the same time, areas that are off limits to development, such as wildlife habitat, will also be included in the work.

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p5>>Updating

town plans and zoning regulations must pass through public hearings and a voting. Any such action could be coupled with a possible vote on the town charter.

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<<http://www.gmoutlook.com/news/2015/oct/16/solar-looks-bright-charlotte/#h240976-p6>>

Retooling the 2008 Town Plan, renewed by local voters, two years ago, is still ongoing.

<<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2015/10/gmp-solar-to-play-lead-role-in-vermont-re-standard-compliance.html?cmpid=renewablesolar10172015&eid=318385716&bid=1206130>>

Solar to Play 'Lead Role' in Vermont RE Standard Compliance

October 13, 2015

By Jennifer Delony

<<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/content/rew/en/authors/a-f/jenniferdelony.html>>

Associate Editor

New distributed generation solar power

<<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/content/rew/en/solar-energy.html>>

facilities

of 5 MW or less likely will play a "lead role" in Green Mountain Power's

<<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2015/09/green-mountain-power-to-install-2-tesla-powerwall-energy-storage-systems-at-state-park.html>>

(GMP)

compliance with Vermont's new renewable energy standard (RES), according to Doug Smith, director of power planning for the utility.

"Solar right now, with the cost and performance improvements

<<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2015/09/berkeley-lab-utility-scale-solar-project-costs-down-50-since-2009.html>>

that

we've seen, is a relatively low net cost, new renewable resource, and with some exceptions, it can be sited a lot more easily" than other renewables, Smith said during the RE2015 Conference & Expo in Burlington, Vt., on Oct. 8.

During the conference, which was hosted by Renewable Energy Vermont, Smith participated in a panel discussion on Vermont's Act 56 – an act relating to establishing an RES.

Passed on June 11, Act 56 requires the state's utilities to meet a 75

percent by 2032 total renewable energy requirement, with an interim goal of 55 percent by 2017. Before passing the RES, Vermont ran a renewable goal program called Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development (SPEED). The SPEED goal, enacted in 2005, set a target of 20 percent renewables by 2017.

Under the new RES, utilities also must meet 10 percent of sales with distributed generation in 2032 and 12 percent of sales with “energy transformation projects” in 2032. Interim goals include meeting 1 percent of sales with distributed generation in 2017 and 2 percent of sales with energy transformation projects in 2017.

Smith said that while GMP sees a significant role for solar under the distributed generation requirement, the company does not “envision all solar” for that segment. In order to meet the distributed generation goal, the company would need 30 MW of new generation in 2017, and an additional 20 MW yearly through 2032, he said. GMP serves about three quarters – or 4.5 million MWh – of Vermont’s electric load.

According to Smith, GMP’s compliance with the energy transformation projects requirement will come from collaborative projects that can include space and water heating-focused pumps, weatherization, electric vehicles and biomass heating. Biomass projects that produce electricity can count toward a utility’s energy transformation requirement only if the plant produces both electricity and thermal energy from the same biomass fuel, and the majority of the energy recovered from the plant is thermal energy.

In order to determine eligibility and the application of an energy transformation project to a utility’s annual requirement, the utility must convert the net reduction in fossil fuel consumption resulting from the energy transformation project to a MWh equivalent of electric energy.

Smith said that fulfilling the energy transformation project requirement will require GMP to work with third parties to create product offerings.

“This is not a situation where GMP will take over that sector,” he said.

“We don’t have all the details, but collaboration is the primary theme.”

Speaking during the Act 56 panel session, Vermont Rep. Tony Klein, sponsor of the original RES bill and chair of the Vermont House Natural Resources Committee, said that the energy transformation project requirement was the most “exciting” and “innovative” part of the RES.

“I hope it will be the key to kicking down the barriers that have existed in this state that keep more Vermonters from weatherizing their homes, weatherizing businesses, partaking in self generation, and partaking in more efficient products that heat and cool their homes and businesses,” he said.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2015/10/14/vt-lands-15-million-usda-energy-grants/73925938/>

VT lands \$1.5 million in USDA energy grants

Free Press Staff 2:59 p.m. EDT October 14, 2015

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COMMENTEMAILMORE

Twenty-two small rural businesses and farms in Vermont have received a total of \$1,555,448 for energy and efficiency upgrades, according to a new release Wednesday from Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Projects receiving the grants include photoelectric arrays, energy-efficient reverse-osmosis maple sap pumps and milk chillers; and a wood-fired furnace, the release states.

Eight of the 10 largest grant recipients are developing grid-tied solar power arrays.

The largest of the projects, Barton Solar LLC in Barton, proposes a 1.89 MW solar system, for which it received \$500,000.

In the most modest of the grants to Vermont, Michael D. Quinn received \$5,231 to install a high efficiency evaporator and flue pan at his maple syrup operation in Middlebury.

Also noteworthy: A grant of \$300,000 to Applegate Housing Limited Partnership to help fund the replacement of an oil boiler at a multi-family housing project in Bennington with a wood-chip device.

The total energy contribution in generating and efficiency will equal the approximate electricity needed to annually power 676 homes, according to the USDA release.

Grants from the department's Rural Energy for America Program fund 25 percent of the total cost of energy upgrades, up to a maximum grant of \$500,000 — with a \$250,000 cap for energy efficiency projects, according to department guidelines.

Application for the next round of the REAP grants are due Nov. 2, the news release added, with funding of up to \$20,000 available per project.

For more information about the upcoming grants, visit www.rd.usda.gov/vt <<http://www.rd.usda.gov/vt>> or call (802) 828-6000.

<http://timesargus.com/article/20151019/OPINION02/151019481>

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Pollica: A tough sell
October 19, 2015

A recent commentary about electric energy by David Blittersdorf should

boggle the mind of average ratepayers.

This ideologue is quick to assault Joe Benning, who exposed Blittersdorf's radical speech to the Addison County Democrats, where he envisions a future of mass construction of solar and wind sites, destructive of our physical surroundings and, even worse, advocates that the 10-acre home site in the country is all but eliminated, because to meet Act 56 goals we will all be forced to move into dense city living and thus must eliminate automobiles.

Blittersdorf wants to mandate all Vermont-produced wind and solar output be forced purchased by Vermont retailers. After all, he says, this will keep dollars in Vermont. Not so, since about 80 percent of kilowatt cost is the cost of the retail utility, and it is already foreign owned. Not only that, out-of-state millionaires own the current wind sites.

For someone trying to change the entire culture of the state against common sense, his reasoning is tragically weak and superficial. He fails to mention our potential use of cheap Hydro-Quebec power, or other sources of clean energy that are in abundance. He says we are spewing carbon. This is nuts since we are one of the cleanest states in the nation. According to him, destroying our ridgelines and overlaying prime agricultural land for solar is the only alternative to energy. As a native Vermonter, I have had to accept Act 250 and its useful protection of the land, no billboards, and no houses built over a certain elevation, reasoned growth and so forth. Blittersdorf is arrogant enough to want to cast out this decades-old land stewardship for his own benefit — for a fad.

It's for his benefit and the benefit of Vermont legislators under his spell, and for no other, since we don't need even one excessively costly wind or solar site. Act 56 needs revision, and our Legislature needs to come to its senses and re-evaluate what its bad energy laws are doing to us. None of the so-called clean wind and solar sites are clean, since renewal energy credits are sold to polluters for cash and thus there is no improvement on carbon dioxide pollution.

Blittersdorf's plan majors in hypocrisy.

Mike Pollica

Plainfield

http://w

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Solar placement is the problem

The Manchester Journal

POSTED: 10/13/2015 04:55:43 PM EDT0 COMMENTS

<http://www.manchesterjournal.com/letters/ci_28963574/solar-placement-is-problem#disqus_thread>

To the Editor:

I generally agree with Andrew McKeever, but I do take exception with his reasoning in his editorial titled "Solar Nymbyism" whereby he makes reference to those opposed to solar farms popping up in Vermont by stating, "It would have seemed difficult to have found these benign objects "objectionable," but apparently a lot of folks do." The opposition is not to the function of solar panels and the benefit they provide, but to their ill-considered placement along our scenic byways and in residential neighborhoods.

Every community in our state has sites that would be well suited for placement of solar farms with minimal aesthetic impact. In Manchester there are several that might hold promise: the Dana L. Thompson Memorial Park, the Municipal Complex, Hunter Park and others.

This would be a non-issue had the Public Service Board reached out to every community to identify those sites and the respective size of each. When a solar farm developer conveyed an interest in locating a facility in Vermont the Public Service Board could direct them to every available predesignated parcel within the state.

Jim Kardas

Manchester

<http://timesargus.com/article/20151013/OPINION02/151019853>

Opinion <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
| Letters <<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION02>>

Person: Goals of illusion

October 13, 2015

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* Email Article

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* Print Article

<<http://timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20151013/OPINION02/151019853?template=printart>>

The green movement in Vermont is guided by fear and greed. To keep this movement money is used to soften and control people with and around the rural communities which renewables focus upon. Rural communities are the easiest to disharmonize, small in numbers, little money and not well

organized, sleeping communities.

The big flash in the pan is our state's goal of 90 percent or 100 percent renewable producing electric by 2050.

This make no sense. Where are we at in honest figures in both goals set and what the state uses? The other part is the goal or gold rush of the solar projects along Route 7. Greed to push these projects into communities that have little say, and only able to make comments.

Out-of-country owners of Green Mountain Power have control over our state's Legislature, in-state electrical company, and take no real responsibilities for damage to our environmental, social and economic systems, which is very unjust. Environmental groups and citizen legislators have been bought with free federal and state money — money we pay for by taxes. The laws are written and overseen to only benefit the few elite who run this from afar.

Fred Person
Starksboro

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151015/OPINION04/151019667>

Opinion

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>
| Commentary

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION04>>

Solar fakery is not so green

By Roland Marx

Commentary | October 15, 2015

* Email Article

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* Print Article

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20151015/OPINION04/151019667?template=printart>>

The lead editorial in the Sunday, Oct. 4, Rutland Herald questioned whether incentives for solar energy are encouraging the behavior and actions that Vermont really needs. When it comes to the selling of renewable energy credits, we agree that is not what Vermont needs. Here's why: Can you believe that only some Vermont solar is truly green? How's that? All solar is green — that's obvious isn't it? Well, is a solar project that sells RECs green?

RECs are renewable energy credits. They represent the environmental attributes of the net-metered electricity produced by a solar facility. Solar is renewable as the power of the sun doesn't diminish; coal, oil and gas are not renewable since once used, they're gone. RECs can be sold separately from the electricity output and for a ton of money. The catch is when you sell RECs, you can no longer claim to be green or renewable. You've sold that right. Now, only the buyer can use those rights, and they do to support or offset their pollution. So selling RECs supports pollution.

Almost all large-scale solar projects in Vermont (and the proposed new giant solar developments) sell RECs to out-of-state buyers. These commercial projects, which are gold mines for their developers, still make green energy claims, and their output is still counted toward Vermont's renewable energy goals.

That shouldn't be. That's double counting and unethical if not fraudulent. That is not in the best interests of the state. That is not the behavior and action Vermont needs.

Solar energy can be produced at low cost and at great benefit to the local community — and without selling RECs. There is such a solar farm in West Rutland that has been recognized by Vermont Natural Resources Council and Vermont Law School and is currently being replicated in other communities in Vermont.

This farm pioneered a distinctive concept that's VGVG — Vermont Grown

and Vermont Green — a designation that's truly green, as RECs are held, not sold. So its energy output credibly and legitimately counts toward Vermont's renewable energy goals. And this model still has low, low costs for big energy savings.

So let's do solar energy in Vermont, but let's not accept solar that sells RECs. Let's insist on VGVG — Vermont Grown and Vermont Green. Let's insist on solar being truly green. That's the behavior and action Vermont needs.

Roland Marx is a resident of Mount Holly.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/18/peter-shumlin-beyond-panels-and-turbines>

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2015/10/15/opinion-beyond-panels-turbines/74003406/>

Opinion: Beyond panels and turbines

Gov. Peter Shumlin 3:21 p.m. EDT October 15, 2015

BUR20150914ENERGY4

(Photo: GLENN RUSSELL/FREE PRESS)

1COMMENTEMAILMORE

When we talk about renewable energy, the focus is often on the project – the solar panel or the wind turbine that allow us to harness local, Vermont-grown energy to power homes and business around the state. But if we dig deeper we find that renewable energy projects are about more than the panel or the turbine. Below the surface there is much more – an entire supply chain that supports 16,000 Vermont jobs, efforts to preserve Vermont's heritage and culture, and hundreds of thousands of Vermonters who are saving money on their energy bills.

Take for example the solar tracker made by AllEarth Renewables in Williston, which is a component affixed to the base of a solar panel that allows it to change positions throughout the day, following the sun's movement to capture maximum solar energy. Follow the sourcing of materials and installation process in Vermont for this product and you get a good sense of how the local renewable energy industry is truly a statewide engine of job growth and economic opportunity.

Here's how it works: Components for the tracker are sourced from companies like Grennon Solderworks in Bristol, PCM Precision

Manufacturing in Springfield, and NSA Industries in St. Johnsbury. Those components all get put together in Williston by a team composed mostly of graduates from Randolph-based Vermont Technical College. Those trackers are then sold and installed by companies like Nuñez Electric in Franklin County and Solar Pro in the Northeast Kingdom. Once sold, the trackers are installed by companies like Smith and McClain in Bristol and ECI Inc. and Timberline Electric in Williston.

That type of economic activity is replicated at Vermont companies statewide and is why over 16,200 Vermonters – or one in every 20 working Vermonters – are employed by the clean energy economy.

Renewable energy is also helping to preserve what makes Vermont what it is, giving landowners and farmers the ability to bring in some additional income from their land without having to subdivide it and sell it off for commercial development. The Whitcomb Farm in Essex is a good example. I was proud to join the Whitcomb family at a grand opening for the solar project they are hosting at their farm, which has been in continuous operation since 1867. They have leased 15 acres of their 400 acres to host one of the largest solar farms in Vermont, with 12,000 panels. The benefit for the Whitcombs, a seventh-generation dairy farming family, is to diversify their income and help keep their land productive for future generations.

Or look at the Audet's Blue Spruce Farm. Their third-generation dairy farm in Bridport was purchased by the Audet family in 1958 and has well over 1,000 cows. The Audet family has pioneered the use of renewable energy on their farm, being the first farm in Vermont to host a cow power biodigester that puts renewable electricity on to the grid. Their digester also provides heat for farm operations.

The Whitcombs and the Audets are two of the many families in Vermont who are proving that renewable energy and working lands go hand-in-hand, and offer a vision for a more sustainable economic and environmental future.

Then there are the literally thousands of Vermonters who are collecting another source of income through Vermont's net metering program, which allows Vermonters to set up small scale renewable energy projects at their homes or businesses and get paid for the power they produce. As one example of the over 5,000 net-metering projects generating electricity in Vermont, Crossett Brook Middle School in Waterbury partnered with Suncommon and Green Lantern Capital, both based in Waterbury, on a solar project through which they are meeting nearly half the school's energy needs and saving an estimated \$12,000 annually. At a time when upward cost pressures have made the job of putting together sustainable school budgets a growing challenge for Vermont's school boards, net metering has provided a great opportunity for schools to reap financial savings, often while providing a great educational opportunity for students.

Every Vermonter, whether they participate in net metering or not, is benefitting from renewable energy. By locking in long-term, stably

priced contracts for energy including from hydro, biomass, wind, and solar projects, our utilities have helped Vermont be the only state in New England whose electric rates for residential, commercial, and industrial customers have all decreased in the last few years. Just this year, Vermont's electric rates fell from 14.79 to 14.34 cents per kilowatt hour. In Connecticut they rose from 16.73 to 16.99 cents per kilowatt hour.

All that is to say that renewable energy is much more than what you see when you see a solar installation or a wind turbine. So as we have the important discussions about how to move forward with renewable energy in Vermont, we need to remember that renewable energy is about much more - it's about jobs, about economic opportunity, about preserving what makes Vermont special, about saving Vermonters money, and about doing what is right to ensure a livable planet for future generations.

/Peter Shumlin, of East Montpelier, is the governor of Vermont./

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2015/10/13/opinion-involve-community-energy-plan/73880200/>

Opinion: Involve community in energy plan

Sara Jane Luneau-Swan 3:18 p.m. EDT October 13, 2015

windfarm-25-c7

(Photo: AP File)

COMMENTEMAILMORE

What would happen if our Legislatures examined our "renewable energy" goals and strategically created a plan that encouraged local control? I believe that local planning boards as well as regionally planning boards could collaboratively work with the community, Agency of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife as well as the Public Service Board at achieving our Vermont state "energy" goals and our national goals.

This local collaborative approach would allow towns to research the most efficient "green" energy with the least amount of environmental impact while maintain the quality of life for our community including the animals, birds and our water quality. The economic benefits as well as renewable energy credits would be kept locally within our community and state. We have been stewards of Vermont's environment and this would allow us to continue in an ethical manner.

Alternative energy needs to be a collaborative effort and it needs to look at all facets such as reducing the emissions of fossil fuel and gas. Conservation needs to become common practice as well as continuing research on the viability of alternative energy while protecting the

health of our citizens.

Research and time is needed to create a systematic plan that unites community members and works to keep Vermont green on all fronts. This needs to be the priority. The priority does not need to be quickly erecting projects to meet a future goal without careful deliberation of how it will impact our state. It is time that we realize how special Vermont is and work together to keep it that way for future generations.

Large out-of-state corporations should not dictate what land is desecrated. Preserving our community, environment and our Green Mountain state can be achieved with careful planning in regards to "energy" projects. We should not sacrifice our Vermont environment for big corporation profits or out-of-state Reusable Energy Credits. I believe RECs should be locally controlled with state oversight and expertise recommendations, upholding standards that puts our green environment number one.

Careful planning by the community will achieve responsible energy projects as the local supply dictates, and with the least impact on our community members. We can sustain our environment and utilize sustainable energy in a responsible manner with research, future innovations, and careful planning. Our legislators need to take a leap of faith and trust that the communities can work together to achieve our state renewable energy goals. Our community Energy Planning Boards would work with our agency standards for appropriate land use, protecting our health and the wealth of our environment.

I encourage (Swanton wind project developer) Mr. Travis Belisle to become a part of our community in the systematic planning of renewable energy projects by becoming a part of this plan. I urge him to think about creating the Travis Belisle Woodlands area at the current Rocky Ridge sight. While he may not reap the same profits as his current project, his return would be leaving a responsible legacy not cement pads and decommissioned wind-turbines in a pristine wetland area. I believe he could find other spaces to have his energy projects when the time comes. Once a clear plan is created with "standards" that don't infringe on the quality of life for our community members.

Projects involving community involvement and transparency from inception would be a component of future energy plans. Our community can be strong and we can work together to maintain our green mountain state.

/Sara Jane Luneau-Swan lives in Swanton/
/-----/

Dear Annette,

Save the Date!!

2.22.2016

Vermont Climate Economy Summit: IDEAS TO ACTION

Vermont Technical College, Randolph VT

Save the date for VCRD's "Vermont Climate Economy Summit: IDEAS TO ACTION" on February 22, 2016. Join us to review a platform of action developed by the Vermont Climate Change Economy Council

<http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001eM2qa2Y0r2oHV_zJAKivjbdUnMqGX3ISr7yCoBtIHUbeE3wwQsG0keHVHzcUz7cbAhUJRQIFWQQz9RFw9L1MpNjGfxWaSGiloVRWEaDMDUjvDrj4JutH8stFiOqXN9V5Y9yw7-FdMCFLOnQBc9aI5zQp0N0BYtiTgwL5QosHPdTXAQ_4C0K9BP0mDh8Cqf9rIAhiEg_RH28vd42Zi6E60nA===&c=aorqLCxoDqQ3YI9kCCge9s0jAwWfZZ-rLPfV1zTskXVgkXnFhIJ59g==&ch=5o85xTUCRTMIJUUsluMdTu2WhZZpO4FbiRfZSuF7n0BnT31FJZZGQ==>>
and

consider action to create jobs, build national reputation, and attract young people to our rural communities.

To find out more about the VT Climate Change Economy Initiative, visit <http://vtrural.org/programs/climate-economy>

<http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001eM2qa2Y0r2oHV_zJAKivjbdUnMqGX3ISr7yCoBtIHUbeE3wwQsG0keLe4dmIPYsFtH_W8EI3iLQzhPAWePT_P-rEGqVSoiY8riy1iCcTppXCnxUvYRj49ivwH49yU0qrmxhEMMRtQpLHrg0E8uO_DTzENexHtzUN4nz89NvfFgNGIbWEORL_qU-ZUAKvt-wWRj8oAURFel=&c=aorqLCxoDqQ3YI9kCCge9s0jAwWfZZ-rLPfV1zTskXVgkXnFhIJ59g==&ch=5o85xTUCRTMIJUUsluMdTu2WhZZpO4FbiRfZSuF7n0BnT31FJZZGQ==>>.

We look forward to seeing you on February 22nd!

Sincerely,

Paul Costello, /Executive Director/
Vermont Council on Rural Development
PO Box 1384, Montpelier VT 05601-1304
802-223-6091

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is a non-profit organization charged by the federal farm bill to act as a neutral convener at both the local and policy level supporting the progress of Vermont communities.

Chen, Zachary

redacted
From: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:18 PM
Sent: Chen, Zachary
To: Fwd: FW: VCE's Wind Update Oct. 21, 2015 -- Wind turbines proven to be threat to people's health
Subject:

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE's Wind Update Oct. 21, 2015 -- Wind turbines proven to be threat to people's health
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:29:21 -0500
From: *redacted*
To: *redacted*

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Wed, 21 Oct 2015 21:21:19 -0400
Subject: VCE's Wind Update Oct. 21, 2015 -- Wind turbines proven to be threat to people's health
To: vce@vce.org

News and Information about Wind Power in Vermont

View this email in your browser
<<http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=62a0f44940&e=ac1b48e383>>

VERMONTERS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

WIND UPDATE - October 21, 2015

/Protests, Programs and Public Meetings/

The Autumn winds are picking up, and with them the people of Vermont are increasing efforts to shift the power to our communities. Vermonters for a Clean Environment is working for you. Please support our work.

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=7b21852813&e=ac1b48e383>>

/Educational Events are being held in Swanton, Fairfield and St. Albans/

/Grafton is the place to watch this beautifully crafted movie/

<http://www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/fall-planning-and-zoning-forum/view/2015-10-28>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=480a213668&e=ac1b48e383>>

Fall Planning & Zoning Forum

OCT. 28, 2015

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=b3c40d569f&e=ac1b48e383>>

Location: Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

Time: 8:30am — 3:30pm

Sponsored by: VLCT Municipal Assistance Center, VLCT PACIF

From solar panels sited on open farmland to wind turbines on ridgelines to the Public Service Board process, energy issues are front and center in Vermont and municipalities are trying to deal with them. This workshop is geared towards zoning administrators, planning commissioners, selectboard members, town attorneys, town administrators and managers, municipal planners, town energy committee members, and regional planning commission staff as it will offer a mix of legal information, practical solutions, and policy discussions, as well as the opportunity to discuss pressing issues in municipal planning and zoning with knowledgeable officials from across the state. AICP Certification Maintenance and CLE credits are being sought.

<http://www.commonnews.org/site/site05/story.php?articleno=13130&page=1#.Vh5oK2TUCfw>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=bfe37e2ec1&e=ac1b48e383>>

Wind meetings planned in Windham County

/A developer and landowner plan to propose turbine locations at Stiles Brook, the site for a proposed wind facility in Grafton and Windham/

By Mike Faher/The Commons/

WINDHAM—For years, opponents of a wind-turbine development proposed in Windham and Grafton have complained that they've not gotten much solid information about the project.

That might change later this month, as a developer and landowner involved in the Stiles Brook proposal have teamed up to schedule public meetings in both towns.

The sessions are to include discussion of a "preliminary draft study

layout," meaning that, for the first time, developer Iberdrola Renewables will show where windmills might be sited.

The meetings are scheduled for Oct. 26, at 6 p.m., at Grafton Elementary School and Oct. 27, 6 p.m., at Windham Meeting House. / click on link above to read the rest of the story/

We Are Victims of Industrial Wind
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=2e9675a9cc&e=ac1b48e383>>
We are Victims of Industrial Wind

Vermont Solar Siting Task Force -- next meeting Oct. 22, Room 11, Statehouse 1 - 3 pm
<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=84448bd484&e=ac1b48e383>>
The third meeting of the Task Force will be held October 22, 2015 from 1-3 p.m. in Room 11 of the Vermont Statehouse, Montpelier (directions to the Statehouse can be found here
Thereafter, the schedule for the meetings is as follows:
Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Friday, November 13, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

STATE ENERGY PLAN UPDATE MEETINGS

Monday Oct. 26 in Bellows Falls Comment on the Comprehensive Energy Plan Update

Thursday Oct. 29 in Rutland Comment on the Comprehensive Energy Plan Update

*IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT ON HOW THE PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT'S **OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY OPERATES.
This is a sleeper issue, folks, and one that would benefit from your input*

Report to the Legislature – Public Comment Opportunity
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=bb19ea23eb&e=ac1b48e383>>

The Department of Public Service (DPS) was asked by the Legislature to provide a report by December 15, 2015, analyzing the structure of its Public Advocacy Division and whether alternate structures could result in improved benefits for utility ratepayers. The Department will be holding public hearings on this topic on the evenings of October 20 and October 21. DPS also welcomes comments from any Vermont residents who may provide them directly to the Department at the email or postal address below.

AUDIO OF October 20 at Rutland
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=ca3f4c64a8&e=ac1b48e383>>
HEARING.

Comments may be provided by mailing them by October 30, 2015 to the address below, or by email to Wayne.Jortner@vermont.gov <mailto:Wayne.Jortner@vermont.gov>.

N*ews Coverage of Renewable Energy Vermont conference with protesting*

Photos of people protesting outside:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/112246232055800335101/>

RenewableEnergyVermontProtestOct82015?authkey=Gv1sRgCPDf27CjuJKiwQE

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=e33d0fc579&e=ac1b48e383>>

WPTZ (contains video)

<http://www.wptz.com/news/renewable-energy-showcase-targeted-by-wind-turbine-protesters/35733366>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=4f9a5020fd&e=ac1b48e383>>

Burlington Free Press (contains a video)

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/10/08/wind-powers-future-vt-lauded-critiqued/73585158/>

<[http://vce.us2.list-](http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=28f03903cf&e=ac1b48e383)

[manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=28f03903cf&e=ac1b48e383](http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=28f03903cf&e=ac1b48e383)><<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/10/08/wind-powers-future-vt-lauded-critiqued/73585158/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=2533d5cf85&e=ac1b48e383>>>

VTdigger (contains audio)

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development>

<[http://vce.us2.list-](http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=967a335351&e=ac1b48e383)

[manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=967a335351&e=ac1b48e383](http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=967a335351&e=ac1b48e383)><<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=f9f1eaaf18&e=ac1b48e383>>>

Video of *people protesting*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU8Ggp2bris>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=9b890b14ae&e=ac1b48e383>>

Video made by some of the people who were protesting — share this one far and wide, it is short and potent and needs to go viral.

<https://youtu.be/9XtCKtCrr9w>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=4a6cfe761f&e=ac1b48e383>>

Photos of people Protesting outside CEP Update public meeting in Essex, Oct. 13, 2015

<https://picasaweb.google.com/112246232055800335101/EssexCEPUupdateOct132015?authkey=Gv1sRgCO3nysPQzLv8cA>
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=c58ef9a020&e=ac1b48e383>>

*Audio: *

--*Fairfield Select Board* wind meeting with Swanton Wind
http://vce.org/FairfieldSelectBoard_101215.mp3
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=a6e2f4541c&e=ac1b48e383>>
--DPS Commissioner Chris Recchia at *Swanton Select Board* 10/20/15
http://vce.org/SwantonSB_DPSRecchia_102015.mp3
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=474a704516&e=ac1b48e383>>
where Commissioner Recchia said "there is no public health issue associated with wind turbines."
http://vce.org/VT_Recchia_NoHealthIssueWindTurbines_102015.mp3
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=47815bad25&e=ac1b48e383>>

DON'T MISS THIS ONE, IT IS WORTH LISTENING TO -- Comment by Oct. 30
--DPS public hearing in Rutland on role of Office of Public Advocacy in Department of Public Service, Oct. 20, 2015
http://www.vtcp.org/dropbox/DPS_Rutland_hearing_on_Public_Advocate_policy_2015_1020.mp3
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=2880df1a87&e=ac1b48e383>>
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=1b7f05ef93&e=ac1b48e383>>

UPCOMING PROTESTING OPPORTUNITIES: OCT. 30 AND NOV. 3.
CONTACT: SALLY COLLOPY
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=3fbca5eb96&e=ac1b48e383>>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=ce8658114f&e=ac1b48e383>>
/Wind Power Comes to Burlington as Vermonters' Voices are Heard
Click on image above to watch video /

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/10/08/wind-powers-future-vt-lauded-critiqued/73585158/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=f3763cfed3&e=ac1b48e383>>

Wind power's future in VT lauded, critiqued

* Joel Banner Baird*
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Free Press Staff Writer*/6:23 p.m. EDT October 8, 2015/

/As industry experts outlined renewable energy strategies at a conference, skeptics protest outside/

*SOUTH BURLINGTON - *Inside the Emerald Ballroom, advocates of Vermont's quickening embrace of renewable energy delivered round after round of applause.

Outside the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in South Burlington, a couple dozen protesters sounded a more cautionary note: Large-scale wind is a poor match for Vermont, they said.

Is the Green Mountain State's environmental community so deeply polarized?

"This is not an easy transition," acknowledged Gabrielle Stebbins, executive director of Renewable Energy Vermont, the trade group that hosted the two-day conference.

But, Stebbins added in her opening remarks to hundreds of attendees, the state's "energy revolution" is picking up speed, investment and credibility.

That momentum will very likely include the ridge-top development of more large-scale wind projects, she said.

Jeff Forward, REV's board chairman, agreed.

Big wind farms, Forward said, play a critical role in a society that is working overtime to keep fossil fuels unburned, in the ground. /click on link above to read the rest of the story/

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=bdd7869c1c&e=ac1b48e383>>

RENEWABLE ENERGY ADVOCATES ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLIC PUSHBACK ON WIND AND SOLAR DEVELOPMENT

OCT. 8, 2015, 9:15 PM BY MARK JOHNSON

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68 COMMENTS

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Darren Springer, chief of staff for Gov. Peter Shumlin, gives a speech at the Renewable Energy Vermont conference. Photo by Mark Johnson/VTDigger

SOUTH BURLINGTON — Advocates for renewable energy in Vermont said Thursday they have much to celebrate, but that significant challenges lay ahead.

More than 350 people attended the Renewable Energy Vermont annual conference in South Burlington. Outside, approximately 25 protesters lined the sidewalk in front of the Sheraton Conference center to demonstrate against wind power projects either already built or planned for their communities.

Darren Springer, Gov. Shumlin's chief of staff and the former deputy

commissioner of the Department of Public Service, told the audience inside that the amount of renewable energy in Vermont, through solar and wind projects, as well as through conservation efforts, has exceeded projections. (Springer filled in for Shumlin, who was slated to speak, but had to help the family of a friend who died yesterday.)

Despite successes, Springer said challenges remain to convince public policy leaders, particularly in Washington, to extend tax credits to boost the renewable energy sector, in the face of global warming, which he noted some politicians still doubt.

Springer touted the accomplishments of the industry during the Shumlin administration: 16,000 jobs currently in the clean energy sector and 100 megawatts of power from wind projects since 2009 and 10 times the solar capacity in Vermont since the governor was elected in 2010. Vermonters are using 13 percent less power than had been projected since 2000, thanks to efficiency programs, and electric rates in Vermont are the second lowest in New England, he said.

Listen to interviews with Mark Johnson and audio from the conference

Keith Ballek on wind development

The Mark Johnson Show

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*10/8/15 Keith Ballek, wind development

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Tony Klein on local siting

The Mark Johnson Show

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*10/8/15 Rep Tony Klein, renewable energy

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Link: <http://markjohnsonshow.podbean.com>

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Darren Spring on the threats to renewables

The Mark Johnson Show

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10/8/15 Darren Springer, renewable energy

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Link: <http://markjohnsonshow.podbean.com>

<<http://markjohnsonshow.podbean.com/>>

“There’s a lot to celebrate. There’s also a moment of challenge,”

Springer said, noting he had attended the "compelling" presentation on global warming at UVM this week by former Vice President Al Gore. /click on the link above to read the rest of the story/

Blittersdorf/Irasburg PSB Met Tower Investigation Pre-Hearing
Conference, Oct. 7, 2015

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David Blittersdorf/Irasburg PSB Met Tower Investigation Pre-Hearing
Conference, Oct. 7, 2015

10/21/2015

Irasburg Asks Towns To Join In Challenge To PSB Process

Collective Voice Of NEK Will Be Harder For Montpelier To Ignore,
Selectman Says

By Jennifer Hersey Cleveland Staff Writer

IRASBURG -- The select board here will ask other towns to join them in challenging the process by which the Public Service Board (PSB) approves renewable energy projects as well as any Montpelier agency acting in a manner which overlooks the concerns of Northeast Kingdom residents.

"The towns in the Northeast Kingdom are getting tired about being rode roughshod," said Selectman Brian Fecher.

The concept of a region-wide challenge arose after the Westmore selectmen sent a letter to the Irasburg select board supporting the town in its concerns over projects that impact the whole community, presumably referring to a two turbine industrial wind development proposed by David Blittersdorf.

"We are of the opinion that a town's vote should not be ignored by the State or State Boards who seem to disregard a Town's wishes," wrote Westmore selectmen Bill Perkins, David Stevens and Burton Hinton.

During Monday's select board meeting in Irasburg, Fecher said he wants to thank Westmore for supporting them in their fight against the "avalanche that comes down from Montpelier."

Fecher sought and gained approval from the board to reach out to towns with an offer of advice in the face of such a bureaucratic battle and as a simple gesture of goodwill.

Selectman Brian Sanville said the letter should address any unwelcome intrusion, not just pertaining to wind towers.

Michael Sanville, a strong opponent and one of the founders of the Irasburg Ridgeline Alliance (IRA), said the collective voices of many towns - possibly the entire NEK - will be far louder than just one

town's voice.

He said the siting of energy projects is carried out with nary a nod toward local concerns, in contravention of the democratic process.

"The towns in the county have little or no power," Fecher said, which became obvious when the Department of Public Safety ignored concerns about moving dispatching services from Derby to Williston.

A message needs to be sent to Montpelier, Fecher said. "Their actions are starting to fuel something here in the Northeast Kingdom that they might not want to fight."

Cindy Sanville said from what she's heard, power companies are not buying wind power anyway.

"That's power that they do not want or need," Michael Sanville said.

Companies like Green Mountain Power have publicized that they respect the opinions of a town, but "renegade" developers place a shield between towns and power companies so that companies like Green Mountain Power may not even be aware they are supporting unwanted energy projects, Michael Sanville said.

Blittersdorf's Unpermitted Test Tower

The board appointed Dr. Ron Holland to act as its pro se representative to the PSB, following an executive session for legal matters.

Blittersdorf has not yet filed an application to the PSB for his proposed towers, nor given the town the required 45-day notice. But the CEO of AllEarth Renewables is a litigant in a PSB investigation regarding his apparent lack of a certificate of public good for a test tower on his Kidder Hill property.

Holland will represent the town in that matter before the PSB.

The town will be permitted to intervene, based on a letter to the clerk of the PSB from Leslie Cadwell, Blittersdorf's attorney, who wrote that Blittersdorf has no objection to the town nor the Agency of Natural Resources intervening.

The deadline for motions to intervene was Tuesday. As of closing time at the PSB, according to Clerk Susan Hudson, only the Agency of Natural Resources had moved to intervene.

"The Agency seeks to intervene with respect to the potential impact the siting, construction, and removal of Mr. Blittersdorf's meteorological tower may have had on natural resources," the agency's motion states.

10/21/2015

Newport City - Council Balks At Straw Vote Opposing Turbines In Irasburg

By Robin Smith Staff Writer

NEWPORT CITY -- Calling 500-foot wind turbines "atrocious," Alderman Jacques Roberge asked the Newport City Council Monday evening to support Irasburg's opposition to turbines on Kidder Hill.

Roberge said that the city does not want big turbines in city limits.

But the rest of the council balked at taking a non-binding stance without further discussion. The topic came up under other business, catching the council by surprise.

Roberge noted that Westmore selectmen voted to show solidarity with Irasburg in opposition to industrial-sized wind turbines in Irasburg. Irasburg is asking for support from towns in the region.

Alderman Neil Morrisette said he wasn't sure if he would support this or not. He wants to see what community members think.

That prompted discussion of having a non-binding referendum question on the town meeting ballot. But that raised more concerns.

Former Alderman Denis Chenette pointed out that the council refused to allow a non-binding political question on last year's town meeting ballot about whether Newport residents opposed using the Portland Pipeline that goes through the Northeast Kingdom to transport tar sands crude oil from western Canada.

The council has a policy of not allowing non-binding questions on issues that are not directly related to the city.

Mayor Paul Monette noted that the regional plan would ban industrial-sized turbines.

Unfortunately, he said, the Vermont Public Service Board is not required to take the regional plan or local bans into account when permitting wind projects.

On Tuesday, Monette said that a non-binding referendum question could be put on town meeting ballot if it relates directly to whether the city would support industrial wind turbines within the city limits or in the city's viewshed.

The council is expected to discuss this issue again.

10/19/2015

Newark Town Plan Report Hearing Oct. 21

Legal Challenge Led To Updated Report

The Newark Town Plan was amended in mid-September 2012 at this public hearing, the largest turnout in the town's history, where a wide majority passed changes that ban industrial wind. A legal challenge led to the plan being invalidated, and the planning commission has issued an updated report on the plan to address deficiencies the judge said existed when the plan was first passed. A hearing is set on that updated report on the 2012 town plan for Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Newark Town Clerk's office.

By Amy Ash Nixon Staff Writer NEWARK -- The Newark Planning Commission released a report on the town plan in response to a Caledonia Superior Court judge who invalidated the plan in August for deficiencies.

A public hearing on that updated town plan report is set for Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Newark Town Clerk's office, said Kim Fried, chairman of Newark's Planning Commission.

Fried said Judge Robert Bent's August ruling "basically said that the report (for the 2012 town plan), based on his interpretation of the statute, was not sufficient. End of story."

The town plan became part of a court action when an effort to restrict the height of industrial structures was challenged by Hawk Rock Holdings, a large landowner.

Hawk Rock leased land rights to Seneca Mountain Wind, a firm interested in developing industrial wind sites on local properties in Newark, Brighton and Ferdinand. The projects have since been abandoned.

Following a contentious fight over a proposed wind project, a record number of voters supported the addition of anti-wind amendments to the town plan in a 169-59 vote.

The report produced by the Newark Planning Commission dated Sept. 16 is required to go to the chair of planning commissions in adjoining towns and to the executive director of the regional planning commission.

The main point that Judge Bent focused on in his ruling was a change in the designation of land, to restrict development on the ridgeline.

"In his Caledonia Supreme Court ruling, Judge Bent concluded that this amendment represents a change in the designation of land," the Newark Planning Commission's recent report states. "When a town plan includes a change in the designation of land, statute requires the town plan report to address a number of issues."

Those issues included impact on the surrounding area, cost or benefit to the community, details on the land which the change would affect, and more.

In the new report, planners responded to the issues, stating in part: "This designation will prevent negative impacts on surrounding areas,"

and "will benefit Newark by helping to preserve the town's natural and cultural heritage."

About 10,000 acres of land in Newark are subject to the restriction introduced in the 2012 amendment, the updated report further states.

"The designated lands are well-suited for this designation because they are ecologically important, environmentally sensitive, and visually prominent," the report goes on.

The town had a Natural Resources Inventory completed last year using grant dollars, Fried said Friday.

The inventory takes stock of the most significant natural resources in town and makes recommendations "for protecting and stewarding the most significant natural resources in the Town of Newark." The planning commission hopes to secure another grant and take that work further, said Fried Friday.

"We had a 2012 amended town plan, we went through the whole legal process and we made extensive presentations to the town, we had separate documents that dealt with every change that we had made," said Fried. "It doesn't matter whether we agree with the judge's ruling or not, but based on the judge's ruling, we went back and studied the statute more closely and we put together exactly what he felt was lacking, and now we are putting the 2012 plan through the process again."

He said, "There's no precedence for any of this stuff, and there's nobody we can go to for help," of the unusual place Newark finds itself in with having a public hearing on an updated report on the 2012 town plan.

The select board will need to vote on the report after the planning commission.

"People have to recognize we didn't change anything in the town plan, it's exactly the one voted 169 to 59 in a special town meeting by paper ballot," Fried said. "It came down to a technicality; I don't expect much controversy."

The planning commission is at work on the next town plan, which will likely go to the public in 2016 for action, said Fried, and will include the new natural resources inventory and other updates.

Mark Whitworth, also a member of Newark's planning commission, said, "Judge Bent found that the Newark Town Plan was sound. He found fault only with our town plan report."

"We have updated the report in order to correct the deficiencies that he noted," said Whitworth. "We will re-adopt the plan which has already been approved overwhelmingly by the voters of Newark. The NVDA, which has already approved the plan, has determined that they need not review the plan again."

10/16/2015

Westmore Backs Irasburg In Wind Opposition

By Jennifer Hersey Cleveland Staff Writer

The Westmore Selectmen have decided to stand in solidarity with the town of Irasburg in its fight to prevent the construction of industrial wind towers on its ridgelines.

"The Selectboard of the Town of Westmore is in support of the Town of Irasburg's efforts to voice its concern regarding projects that impact its community as a whole," states a letter signed by Selectmen Bill Perkins, David Stevens and Burton Hinton.

"Furthermore, we are of the opinion that a town's vote should not be ignored by the State or State Boards who seem to disregard a Town's wishes," the letter continued.

The letter refers to the town's efforts to block landowner and developer David Blittersdorf's proposed wind project on Kidder Hill. Blittersdorf wants to build two nearly 500-foot-tall turbines on the hill, in close proximity to several houses.

Blittersdorf has not yet filed the required 45-day notice with the town before filing his application for a certificate of public good with the Public Service Board (PSB).

But the town has already had a non-binding vote on the issue, with 274 opposing the project and only 9 voting in favor.

The Irasburg select board is also seeking party status to intervene in a PSB investigation into a meteorological test tower on Blittersdorf's property, which he allegedly placed there without first obtaining a certificate of public good.

Blittersdorf does not believe he needed such a permit to have a tower to test wind speeds for the two small towers he built for residential use, but Irasburg residents believe that he used the tower to obtain data in preparation for the two larger proposed towers, which he denies.

According to the minutes of the October 5 Westmore select board meeting, Chair Bill Perkins raised the issue of supporting Irasburg.

"Bill said he feels that the Town should support Irasburg on their fight not to have wind towers," the minutes state. "He did not think it was fair for each little town to go against big business and have three people at the state level decide if the proposals are good for the public."

Perkins was referring to the three members of the PSB, who are appointed by the governor.

The Westmore selectmen know a thing or two about the will of the people being ignored by the three members of the PSB.

In Nov. 2014, the select board, planning commission and zoning board all vehemently opposed a telecommunications tower proposed by VTel Wireless.

Despite that strong opposition, the PSB granted the project a certificate of public good in March.

St. Albans Messenger

Oct. 16, 2015

Local aviation another turbine plan obstacle?

VTrans seeks adequate time to study issues

Opponents of Swanton Wind gather outside a public forum held by Ashley and Travis Belisle Sept. 14 to engage the community and give them access to Swanton Wind's consultants.

MATT FREEDOM, Messenger file photo

SWANTON — A wind energy project here has come under scrutiny for its proximity to the state airport in Highgate.

An official of the Vermont Agency of Transportation has asked the Public Service Board for sufficient time to explore safety issues with the Federal Aviation Administration.

The PSB will decide whether to permit the proposed seven-turbine Swanton Wind project on Rocky Ridge, which is located off of Route 105 near the St. Albans Town and Swanton border.

In a letter to the PSB on Oct. 1, James Thompson, Aviations Operations manager said it must be determined whether the 500-foot turbines would make flying into and out of the Franklin County State Airport hazardous or have any impact on its "functionality."

The proposed Swanton Wind location is miles from the Highgate airport, however, Thompson said that in some cases the towers would offer less than 1,000 feet of vertical separation from aircraft operations.

His letter further states:

- during inclement weather, pilots operating solely by reference to instruments would not see the turbines, "a very real cause for concern;"
- the proposed tower installations will disrupt aircraft traffic patterns;

- not all of the aircraft leaving the airport to the south will be able to climb above the towers, “creating an unsafe situation for the flying public;”

- and, the regional flight schools operating out of Burlington International and Franklin County airports utilize the region of the proposed tower for training and “will be forced to fly closer to terrain to the east or over water to the west.”

The Swanton Wind project, being developed by the Belisle family, has come under increasing criticism from its immediate neighbors and others in surrounding towns that have cited potential health and environmental hazards. The Public Service Board has sole power to approve or deny the project.

St. Albans Messenger, Commentary
Oct. 17, 2015

Emotional? You would be, too

On October 12, 2015 the Fairfield Selectboard held an informational meeting with the residents of Fairfield. About 50 people attended. A good turnout for a small community, on a Monday night and a holiday weekend.

Participants at the meeting discussed the proposed Swanton Wind Industrial Turbines to be placed on Rocky Ridge in Swanton, VT. This location is also on Fairfield Pond, the beautiful natural resource so many people enjoy. Travis and Ashley Belisle, the developers were there, along with representatives of Vermont Environmental Research Associates, (VERA), Martha Staskus, John Zimmerman, and attorney Anthony Iarrapino. Noticeably absent in this proposed greed project was Alan and Kim Bourbeau. According to the proposed project area turbines 6 & 7 would be on the Bourbeaus land. They’ve yet to make an appearance - why is that? And where do they stand in signing a contract with the Belisles? If you’re proud of a project wouldn’t you be shouting it from the rooftops?

VERA made a brief presentation with glossy photos touting the glories of industrial wind. To the uninformed citizen, it actually could have sounded good. But not a single person in the room supported the Belisles and Bourbeaus, or this project. Why is that? Because we know the truth!

We know the truth about industrial wind and the “VICTIMS” who suffer because of it!

We know that it is an inefficient source of energy that our electric companies don’t want and don’t need. We strongly urge our Government and the Public Service Board to respect and value their motion to dismiss the project!

We know that noise standards for these turbines are too high at 45dBA averaged over an hour. The World Health Organization says 30dBA is the

recommended rating for a good night's sleep. We know that people can't sleep, call their "noise hotlines"

leaving a message that is rarely responded to. Their complaints go unanswered for long periods of time by the Public Service Board and the Department of Health. Isn't our Government supposed to care about its citizens? People's homes are bought out or abandoned, others still live with the torment. All because our Governor, the Public Service Board, the Department of Health, and other State agencies DO NOT CARE about us!

What does it say when Travis Belisle, the developer who built the residential area in a beautiful spot on the backside of Fairfield Pond says, SURPRISE, did I mention I'm now going to ruin your lives by placing 7 - 500' tall industrial wind turbines as close as 2,000 feet from your home? What does it say when the Belisles propose to place the largest turbines yet in Vermont closest to homes compared to any other project to date? It says I DO NOT CARE ABOUT YOU! Does it matter that their neighbors don't want it, the Selectboard doesn't want it, Green Mountain Power and other electric companies don't want it? Is it okay to destroy what's considered a high value habitat block in the region, and threaten the amazing habitat on Fairfield Pond?

What does it say if this project goes in despite all these oppositions? It confirms that our Governor DOES NOT CARE about the people. It confirms that the Department of Health, The Public Service Board, the Public Service Department, and many legislators DO NOT CARE about Vermont citizens health and safety. It confirms that the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Agency of Natural Resources DO NOT CARE about following the guidelines and goals of their 2015 State of the Lake and the recently passed Shoreland Protection Act. They strictly regulate what trees you can cut on your camp lot. Yet when they clear-cut, blow up ridges, build roads, destroy wetlands and high value habitat blocks, encroach on neighboring properties, and use tons of cement putting monster turbines on a hill over Fairfield Pond, they say, it'll be okay, no worries!

What does it say when Rep. Tony Klein, chair of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee said at the recent REV Conference regarding renewable project opponents that, "a positive regulatory process that we've seen for the past 40-plus years undone willy-nilly because of emotion."? Really?

It says, I DO NOT CARE ABOUT YOU and your willy-nilly emotion! Rep. Klein, watch and "listen" to every PSB testimony in relation to wind. You'll see how "positive" the regulatory process is. It's insulting to accuse "VICTIMS" of industrial wind as being willy-nilly because of emotion! Yes, they're emotional, and have every right to be. They have been ignored by our Government for years! Not being emotional would be very sad. It means they're so beaten down and broken by the system that they've given up - given up their rights as Vermonters! Very sad indeed!

Right now it's Swanton, Irasburg and Grafton. Shame on our government

for treating their citizens this way! Shame on our Department of Health for doing the governor's bidding and not respecting its oath to protect the people! If these 7 - 500' industrial wind turbines go up in this residential neighborhood, destroying people's lives - Vermonters will have their answer about our Government - they DO NOT CARE ABOUT US! Remember, you're the next "VICTIM"! VERMONT LIVES MATTER!

Sally Collopy, a resident of Fairfield

St. Albans Messenger, October 16, 2015
Letter to the Editor

CLF's letter was a joke; factually incorrect, misleading

The recent article in the Messenger by Sandra Levin, an associate with Conservation Law Foundation, is a joke and bordering on delusional.

Ms. Levin states: "Key benefit to more renewable energy, like wind and solar, is their low or zero fuel cost." The true costs come in the price tag of the wind project itself, which isn't even touched upon in the article.

Let's just take an average monthly bill of say \$100, adjust up or down to meet your particular situation. Then we'll look at Swanton Wind project of roughly \$35,000,000 to set up, with decreasing efficiency every year until approximately 20 years at which time replacement is necessary. This amounts to \$1,745,000 per year just in initial costs. We know most lending institutions charge interest and lots of it, so let's double that \$1,750,000 to make it \$3,500,000 with the interest and other miscellaneous expenses. This would be a break-even point, but wait, they have to make a profit on their investment, so let's add more, a lot more. Isn't your monthly power bill looking good? If this project ever gets through I believe we'll all regret what we've allowed to happen.

It is reported that consumption of electricity accounts for only five percent of Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore focusing on the generation of electricity is not an effective method for reducing. Let's look at the 95 percent areas where it's really going to make a difference. This will not.

We, the people will pay for these wind projects, one way or another. Wind is the most expensive electricity known to mankind, creates eye pollution that can be seen forever, health hazards for some, noise [lots of it], extremely unhealthy for our waters and for our wildlife.

Can we stand together and "just say no?" You bet we can and hope all will join in with us by insisting/demanding local control, as we are more than capable, by contacting the governor's office 828-3333. A real live person will answer the phone and give information to contact the Public Service Board as well as everyone else who needs to hear from us.

Pat Messier, Swanton

St. Albans Messenger, October 16, 2015

Letter to the Editor

Wind turbines proven to be threat to people's health

This review is intended to educate the public on the concerns and eventualities of the implementation of Wind Turbine energy on the health and welfare of those who will live close by and within the radius of that construction and the susceptibility to the impact of the noise and light levels that will have an impact Vermonters. There is clinical evidence that substantiates that there is a clear correlation between the dba levels and the distance of the effect of the noise and specifically the infrasound that will adversely affect residencies and the respective residents. This particular stance is not contrived or based on conjecture, the facts stand on the complaints of individuals who have suffered greatly to include lost sleep, severe headaches, increases in blood pressure and increased levels of stress and eventually, having had to abandon homes and properties as a result of their continued deteriorating health and welfare. Here are some responses that offer some insight and come from the study: Wind Turbines and Proximity to Homes:

The Impact of Wind Turbines Noise on Health a review of the literature | discussion of the issues by Barbara J Frey, MA (University of Minnesota) & Pater J. Hadden (Est Man), FRICS January 2012:

"Whereas, assessing the potential health impact of wind turbines has been difficult to measure but if present would be of significant concern. This is especially apparent regarding the noise level and other noise characteristics specific to industrial wind turbines.

"Therefore be it resolved that the Maine Medical Association work with health organizations and regulatory agencies to bring to the public's attention the scientific information of known medical consequences of wind development.

"Further Resolved that the Maine Medical Association (1) encourage performance of studies on health effects of wind turbine generation by independent qualified researchers at qualified research institutions, (2) ensure that physicians and patients alike are informed of evidence-based research results." [Maine Medical Association. Resolution Re: Wind Energy and Public Health.

MMA (USA), 2009] Here is one individual's status: "Her symptoms came on quickly. She experienced bad headaches, dizziness, queasiness, a heart rhythm sensation and a vibration inside her body..."

[Woman Tells a Tale of Turbine Torment: Retired Pharmacist Speaks to Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards about the Effects Industrial Wind Turbines had on her. Health. Barry's Bay This Week, 11 February 2009]

"It was just like the whole room was spinning says Lisa Michaud of Thamesville, Ontario, as she recalled the weeks after the Kent Breeze wind farm began operating in May. The noise at night keeps you awake. But it's not just the noise that you hear.

It's something else that's coming at you constantly that you don't hear, but you feel. It's just not right."

[Seglins D and Nicol J. Wind Farm Health Risks Claimed in \$1.5M Suit: Ontario Family Sues Suncor, Alleging Health Problems. CBC News, 21 September 2011 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=935c46e4a2&e=ac1b48e383>><<http://vce.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=05d1b3f8b3&e=ac1b48e383>>toronto/story/2011/09/21/seglins-

windfarms.html; see also Seglins D and Nicol J. Ontario Wind Farm Health Risks Downplayed: Documents. CBC News, 22 September 2011 This particular study offers many more responses from individuals adversely affected by the construction of the Wind Turbines. In addition, there is a multitude of articles that one can access and review that substantiate health risks and adverse affects from the construction of the Wind Turbines especially as that relates to a safe radius from residencies and respective residents.

Our group who opposes the construction of the Wind Turbines on Rocky Ridge by Mr. Travis Belisle's company is not in opposition to embracing alternative energy sources and embracing renewable energy as a means of self-sustaining our economies and advancing our independence from fossil fuels. Our stance and position is that Vermont lives matter and the health and welfare of our residents in the towns of Fairfield, Swanton and St. Albans.

This is especially true for those who have young children who will be affected and the elderly.

As legislators, you need to be concerned as well and should be thinking of the health issues and not just focusing on the return on investment for grants. When the realities of the noise and dba levels come to fruition and the respective health degradations, you cannot stand on the sidelines and state you were not aware of the consequences; this letter and many more of us who have factored this critical point in our essays have gone on the record and advised you of the facts. The call to question is this; do Vermont lives matter? Your actions will obviously answer that question.

What is the solution? First recognize there is an impact on health and welfare for those who live close to the construction sites. Second, there needs to be disciplined reviews and measurements by third party resources that trend the noise levels and if those levels exceed the recommended levels for safe operations then the turbines will be shut down until they can be successfully run or are run when the noise levels will not adversely affect those residents.

If these points are ignored, many Vermont residents will be adversely affected and we can then argue that Vermont lives do not matter. We need to learn from previous construction sites of Lowell and Georgia, Vermont and the lessons that those resident's health and welfare and economic security to include homes and property value were adversely impacted.

Robert Perkins PhD, Fairfield

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/15/penny-dubie-strengthen-support-for-renewable-energy-projects-with-local-control/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=6ae108dcd6&e=ac1b48e383>>

PENNY DUBIE: STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS WITH LOCAL CONTROL

OCT. 15, 2015

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Penny Dubie, a former educator who lives on Fairfield Pond in Fairfield./

Like most Vermonters, I support goals that would decrease our carbon footprint. Of all the energy we use in Vermont, only 5 percent is electricity and 95 percent is fueling our cars and heating our homes. If we truly want to decrease our carbon footprint, wouldn't it be better to focus our resources on making our homes and cars more energy efficient? /click on the link above to read the rest of the article/

http://www.reformer.com/localeditorials/ci_28965534/wind-power-what-you-cant-hear-can-harm

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=cae8e155cd&e=ac1b48e383>>

Brian Dubie | Wind Power: What you can't hear can harm you

/By Brian Dubie/

10/13/2015

What do you think of when you think of an industrial wind project? Wind developers want you to think of free, green electricity. People who live near industrial wind turbines think of noise. Let's see why. /click on the link above to read more/

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2015/10/15/opinion-beyond-panels-turbines/74003406/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=e090ac8cf4&e=ac1b48e383>>

Opinion: Beyond panels and turbines

Gov. Peter Shumlin
/October 15, 2015/

When we talk about renewable energy, the focus is often on the project – the solar panel or the wind turbine that allow us to harness local, Vermont-grown energy to power homes and business around the state. But if we dig deeper we find that renewable energy projects are about more than the panel or the turbine. Below the surface there is much more – an entire supply chain that supports 16,000 Vermont jobs, efforts to preserve Vermont's heritage and culture, and hundreds of thousands of Vermonters who are saving money on their energy bills. /click on the link above to read more/

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2015/10/13/opinion-involve-community-energy-plan/73880200/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=ed0d8578de&e=ac1b48e383>>

Opinion: Involve community in energy plan

Sara Jane Luneau-Swan
/October 13, 2015/

What would happen if our Legislatures examined our “renewable energy” goals and strategically created a plan that encouraged local control? I believe that local planning boards as well as regionally planning boards could collaboratively work with the community, Agency of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife as well as the Public Service Board at achieving our Vermont state “energy” goals and our national goals.
/click on the link above to read more/

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/my-turn/2015/10/13/opinion-wind-turbines-fairfield-pond/73880212/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=84b11eac67&e=ac1b48e383>>

Opinion: Wind turbines over Fairfield Pond

Bruce Collopy/3:19 p.m. EDT October 13, 2015/

I love Fairfield Pond, also known as Dream Lake. It’s been our home for 16 years.

My wife Sally and I have lovingly cared for the pond, protecting its health and water quality since the beginning. I also love to fish. And I love fall. But most of all I love fall fishing. I love seeing the sky fill with geese and ducks during the fall migration. /click on the link above to read more/

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20151021/NEWS01/151029860>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=20cf5d21af&e=ac1b48e383>>

DPS comes under fire at its own hearing

By Gordon Dritschilo <<mailto:gordon.dritschilo@rutlandherald.com>>

STAFF WRITER | October 21, 2015

AUDIO

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=47daf99f95&e=ac1b48e383>>

A former longtime official with the Department of Public Service said the department has lost its way.

“The DPS is now more an advocate of the utilities than consumers,” said Charles Larkin, whose roles with the DPS included serving as its first chief of consumer affairs. “The department is defined as the public’s advocate. ... They should not be testifying on behalf of a utility.”

It was a sentiment shared by the handful of other Vermonters who joined

Larkin on Tuesday night at Rutland Regional Medical Center to speak at a public input hearing called by the department.

The meeting is one of two — the other is at 6:30 p.m. tonight at River Arts in Morrisville — held as part of a process that will end in a report to the Legislature focused on improving the department's Division for Public Advocacy.

"The problem is not the structure," Larkin said. "The problem is how it's been perverted into 'We have to help the utilities as well as the public.'"

A concrete example came from Rick Hackett, who pointed to comments from Public Service Commissioner Chris Recchia on the Vermont Natural Gas pipeline proposal.

"Whose side is he on?" Hackett asked. "If Vermont Gas needs a fast track, let them get their facts together from day one."

He said the way the department does business has shifted in 20 years, going from openly litigating proposals before the Public Service Board to relying on settlements and memoranda of understanding reached behind closed doors.

Hackett said this keeps embarrassing information out of the public eye and prevents the PSB from judging whether a proposal is truly in the public interest.

"Their hands are tied when they don't have all the facts," he said. "Hiding the facts is not good public policy."

Hackett said Rutland was ill-served by that process in the merger of Green Mountain Power and Central Vermont Public Service.

"The city of Rutland gave it away," he said. "They didn't see the whole picture. They were in a vacuum."

Hackett was dismissive of GMP's efforts in the community.

"They took away a lot of foot traffic downtown," he said. "They took away a lot of property tax."

Political influence on the department was a recurring theme. George Gross, one of the property owners fighting the pipeline, suggested a structure to prevent it.

Gross said Vermont lawyers could be drafted in a system similar to choosing citizens for jury duty. Lawyers would serve one term as advocates and then a second term mentoring their replacements.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/11/bray-housing-vermont-and-audet-honored-at-renewable-energy-vermont-conference/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=4d4f9c2136&e=ac1b48e383>>

BRAY, HOUSING VERMONT AND AUDET HONORED AT RENEWABLE ENERGY VERMONT CONFERENCE

OCT. 11, 2015, 9:39 PM BY PRESS RELEASE

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LEAVE A COMMENT

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Burlington, VT — Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) recognizes a Vermont real estate development company and two Vermonters for their outstanding contributions to the progress of a sustainable energy future at Renewable Energy 2015: “Leading the Energy REVolution”, an annual conference hosted by REV taking place on October 8-9 at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in Burlington. The 2015 Renewable Energy Awards are generously presented by VLITE as part of their continuing commitment to building an energy secure Vermont.

This year’s awardees include:

The Renewable Energy Legislative Award, awarded to an elected official who worked to advance energy policy in the state in the prior year, is awarded to Senator Christopher Bray from Addison County. In his first year as Chair, Senator Bray passed a Climate Change Resolution, initiated a Water bill that did become law, and – critically – oversaw the passage of Vermont’s Act 56, the Renewable Energy Standard. Act 56 focuses on the balance between rate impact, renewable goals, alignment with regional policy, helping Vermonters lower their total energy costs, economic development and greenhouse gas emission reductions. This Act brought Vermont into compliance with the regions’ RPS policies thereby preventing a \$40 million rate increase, set forth renewable energy requirements through 2032, and also made significant changes in solar siting requirements while also establishing a Solar Siting Task Force. For those who experienced the last three weeks of the 2015 Legislative Session, Chair Bray provided a fair and balanced approach to governing and an example of true leadership. Not surprisingly, this will not be the first energy-related honor for Senator Bray, who was the recipient of the Vermont Natural Resources Council’s Legislative Leadership Award in 2009. /click on the link above to read more/

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510opinion-corporations-ruining-vermont-environment-profit>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=5fd8176120&e=ac1b48e383>>

Opinion: Corporations ruining Vermont environment for profit

* Posted on October 19, 2015 | Opinion

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=425630fc1e&e=ac1b48e383>>

By Fred Person

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=7dc6c83d3b&e=ac1b48e383>>

Out of country energy corporations are using our tax dollars to push their version of energy solutions into the small communities of Vermont for profit. The communities that are besieged by these threads of economic profiting which blind those who are participating with great ideals.

The flow moves through our federal and state legislative community, through lobbying with our tax dollars. Advertising and education in the schools, universities, business and environmental sections all give way to this illusion, which brings into the Vermont rural communities a surprise and shocking reality, they have little say.

The only reason Green Mountain Power was bought was to master this New England market for profits in other New England states. Let's destroy the environment to say we are saving the Earth for profits.

The on rush of possible profits brings a lot of business but at what cost to wildlife and human habitat and environments? Blinding views are costing a lot people in Vermont rural communities suffering in health, natural environment of life, and economic strife.

Controlled central powers of our of country corporations influencing every sector of life to say, "We know what is best for you, trust us, we know ... you do not and will not get in our way."

*Fred Person
Starksboro*

<http://timesargus.com/article/20151019/OPINION02/151019481>

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Opinion

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Pollica: A tough sell

October 19, 2015

A recent commentary about electric energy by David Blittersdorf should boggle the mind of average ratepayers.

This ideologue is quick to assault Joe Benning, who exposed Blittersdorf's radical speech to the Addison County Democrats, where he envisions a future of mass construction of solar and wind sites,

destructive of our physical surroundings and, even worse, advocates that the 10-acre home site in the country is all but eliminated, because to meet Act 56 goals we will all be forced to move into dense city living and thus must eliminate automobiles.

Blittersdorf wants to mandate all Vermont-produced wind and solar output be forced purchased by Vermont retailers. After all, he says, this will keep dollars in Vermont. Not so, since about 80 percent of kilowatt cost is the cost of the retail utility, and it is already foreign owned. Not only that, out-of-state millionaires own the current wind sites.

For someone trying to change the entire culture of the state against common sense, his reasoning is tragically weak and superficial. He fails to mention our potential use of cheap Hydro-Quebec power, or other sources of clean energy that are in abundance. He says we are spewing carbon. This is nuts since we are one of the cleanest states in the nation.

According to him, destroying our ridgelines and overlaying prime agricultural land for solar is the only alternative to energy. As a native Vermonter, I have had to accept Act 250 and its useful protection of the land, no billboards, and no houses built over a certain elevation, reasoned growth and so forth. Blittersdorf is arrogant enough to want to cast out this decades-old land stewardship for his own benefit — for a fad.

It's for his benefit and the benefit of Vermont legislators under his spell, and for no other, since we don't need even one excessively costly wind or solar site. Act 56 needs revision, and our Legislature needs to come to its senses and re-evaluate what its bad energy laws are doing to us. None of the so-called clean wind and solar sites are clean, since renewal energy credits are sold to polluters for cash and thus there is no improvement on carbon dioxide pollution.

Blittersdorf's plan majors in hypocrisy.

Mike Pollica

Plainfield

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/readers/letters/2015/10/12/opinion-greed-driving-green-movement/73678034/>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=0488604c19&e=ac1b48e383>>

Opinion: Greed driving green movement

Letter to the editor/
October 12, 2015/

The green movement in Vermont is guided by fear and greed. To keep this movement, money is used to soften and control people with and around the rural communities which renewables focus upon. The rural communities are

the easiest to deharmonize — small in numbers, little money and not well organized — sleeping communities.

The big flash in the pan is our states goal of 90 percent renewable producing electric by 2050. This make no sense. Where are we at in honest figures in both goals set and what the state uses?

The other part is the goal or gold rush of the solar projects along U.S. 7 — greed to push these projects into communities who have little say and only able to make comments. What is this all about, controlled power with no input from those who live next to or nearby renewable projects?

Out-of-country owners of Green Mountain Power have control over our state's Legislature, in-state electrical company and take no real responsibilities for damages to our environmental, social and economic systems which are very unjust.

Environmental groups and citizen legislators have been bought with free federal and state money — money we pay for by taxes. The laws are written and overseen to only benefit the few elite who run this from a far.

*FRED PERSON
Starksboro*

<http://watchdog.org/241767/vermont-global-warming/>
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=54656c7034&e=ac1b48e383>>

Vermont's green energy plan to have no impact on global warming

By Bruce Parker
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=7a25b03e2b&e=ac1b48e383>>

/ October 9, 2015 /

GREEN?: Vermont's updated energy plan offers a pathway for the Green Mountain State to become the nation's first renewable energy economy. While the plan could turn Vermont into the Solar Panel State, the plan's policy director says a green makeover won't have any impact on global warming.

LYNDONVILLE, Vt. — At the first public hearing for Vermont's updated energy plan, audience members criticized the siting of wind and solar projects, and the plan's policy expert told Vermont Watchdog going completely green will have no impact on global warming.

The Vermont Public Service Department on Wednesday held the first of five public hearings on the state's 2015 Comprehensive Energy Plan
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=22b181eec3&e=ac1b48e383>>.

The 380-page draft
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=947b577746&e=ac1b48e383>>
lays

out a path to reaching Vermont's goal of operating on 90 percent renewable energy by 2050.

The plan's targets include reaching 25 percent renewable power by 2025, up from 16 percent in 2015. Targets also include a 15 percent reduction in Vermonters' energy use by 2025, and a one-third reduction by mid-century.

Also by 2025, planners expect to attain 10 percent renewable transportation and 30 percent renewable buildings. A full 67 percent of electric power will be generated by renewable sources.

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"We're after energy security and after bringing energy sources local and under our own control. We want to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals," Asa Hopkins, the department's energy policy director, told the audience at Lyndon State College.

NO IMPACT: Asa Hopkins, the director of energy policy and planning at the Public Service Department, says global climate change is so large an issue that no single state or nation can do anything about it.

"We want to keep more of our energy dollars local and be buying energy from each other rather than sending billions of dollars out of state every year to buy energy that's imported."

While the objectives look good on paper, prominent environmentalists around the state say the goals could require siting wind turbines on one-third of Vermont's mountain ridgelines, or solar panels across 90,000 acres

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One

well-known developer, David Blittersdorf, predicts Vermonters may have to abandon cars

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in

favor of electric mass transit.

Noticeably absent from the plan are state targets for alleviating global warming.

Hopkins told Vermont Watchdog global warming targets aren't in the plan because Vermont's efforts won't affect climate change.

"Climate change is a classic tragedy-of-the-commons problem where no one person's actions, no one state, or even one country's actions is attributable to even more than maybe a few percent of the global challenge. So, I haven't calculated out what Vermont's impacts would be," Hopkins said.

Some environmentalists argue Vermont's role is not to affect climate

change, but to offer green-energy leadership that other states will follow. Asked if the draft had targets for states or nations following Vermont's lead, Hopkins replied, "No."

"We are focused on trying to take a path forward that works for Vermont. We're not taking action ... in hopes of inspiring action elsewhere."

Hopkins said the goals are consistent with 2030 goals set forth by the regional New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers
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and
also Under 2 MOU
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which Vermont and other sub-national jurisdictions have signed on to. Those agreements call for an 80 percent reduction of CO2 by 2050.

AN EMBARRASSMENT: Kim Fried of East Burke said his two-year struggle with the Vermont Public Service Board was 'an embarrassment' and insulting.

The hearing's public comment period drew stern warnings about coercive siting of solar and wind projects, which has caused a backlash in towns across the state.

"Anybody who has ever been involved in an energy proceeding before the Vermont Public Service Board knows that communities have no authority to influence the siting of electrical power plants. The Public Service Department has opposed every attempt to grant a more meaningful role to our cities and towns in electricity siting," Mark Whitworth, a resident of Newark, said.

He added the Board's rubber-stamping of renewable projects has produced a sort of Wild West in which developers are set loose to cut down Vermont's forests, compromise wetlands, ignore zoning regulations, encroach on neighboring properties and "bully neighbors."

Along with his comments, Whitworth submitted an "energy rebellion" map
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in
which 67 Vermont towns are shown mounting resistance to coercive siting, whether by resolutions or town votes against projects. Last week in Irasburg, voters delivered a stunning 274-9 rejection
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=e7f49f87af&e=ac1b48e383>>
of
developer David Blittersdorf's 500-foot wind turbines on Kidder Hill.

Other commenters also expressed frustration.

"I have found my experience, which was nearly two years with the Public Service Board, to be an embarrassment. I felt insulted, and I felt the Public Service Board is incompetent in this modern age of renewable energy siting," Kim Fried, of East Burke, said.

Fried counted up recent votes on industrial ridgeline wind projects in Irasburg, Brighton, Newark, and Unified Towns and Gores. The tally was 1,219 against and 396 in favor, he said.

RECs CONTROVERSY: Noreen Hession, a resident of Newark, urged full transparency in the sale of renewable energy credits, a practice that lets fossil fuel states buy Vermont's credits and claim to be green.

Noreen Hession, a resident of Newark, blasted Vermont's sale of renewable energy credits
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=1d31b19b5f&e=ac1b48e383>>

a controversial practice in which utilities and developers sell renewable power certificates to non-green states to help offset the higher cost of wind and solar. Neighboring CO2-generating states buy Vermont's RECs as a way to meet their renewable energy mandates.

"By selling RECs, Vermont allows other states to meet their requirements while still burning fossil fuels. Vermont wind projects are not creating renewable energy for Vermont." Hession said. "Claiming that the industrial wind turbines on top of Lowell Mountain are generating renewable energy for Vermont while simultaneously selling those RECs out of state, that's double counting."

Closing out the evening was state Sen. Joseph Benning, R-Caledonia, who offered his comments for the plan.

"Whether we get to these goals or not, nobody knows. We want to reach for them — that is important. But we shouldn't become so blind to what is happening at the industrial level, with profiteers who are coming here to take advantage for their own purposes at the expense of what we have worked so hard to protect," he said.

Additional hearings are scheduled for Oct. 13 in Essex; Oct. 21 in Montpelier; Oct. 26 in Bellows Falls; and Oct. 29 in Rutland. The plan must be completed and adopted by Jan. 1.

<http://www.courant.com/business/dan-haar/hc-colebrook-wind-farm-bne-opens-20151015-story.html>

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=6a03403184&e=ac1b48e383>>

Colebrook Wind Farm Ready To Go, Bringing State Into An Industry That Remains Controversial

Connecticut now has its first commercial wind farm in Colebrook. (Lauren Schneiderman / Hartford Courant)

Dan Haar

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=9960dcb3fc&e=ac1b48e383>>*Contact

Reporter*

<<mailto:haar@courant.com?subject=Regarding:%20%22Colebrook%20Wind%20Farm%20Ready%20To%20Go,%20Bringing%20State%20Into%20An%20Industry%20That%20Remains%20Controversial%22>>

The controversial Colebrook wind farm is ready to switch on, generating 5 megawatts of juice.

If it takes two turbines to have a farm, Connecticut has finally joined the rest of the northeast and most of the country — barely — with its first commercial wind farm, capping a long controversy in Colebrook.

The twin General Electric turbines just off Route 44 in this bucolic northwest Connecticut town will be switched on any day now for regular generation onto the grid, developer Gregory Zupkus said. Each tower, 492 feet tall at the highest swipe of its three thin blades, will generate just under 2.5 megawatts at peak output.

Zupkus' company, BNE Energy, has a contract for Eversource to buy the 5 megawatts. The BNE partners also hope to win a purchase deal that would enable a third turbine at the same site, which was approved by the state.

Zupkus, his business partner, their lenders from the Connecticut Green Bank, Webster Bank and others gathered at the site Thursday to celebrate the moment, as engineers continued to test and fine-tune the turbines.

For Zupkus, 52, it was the culmination of more than 15 years of dreaming and planning, stretching back to the time he saw a row of wind turbines on a hillside in Donegal, Ireland, just beyond his grandfather's birthplace.

"We're very excited, we were optimistic for years. This is it," Zupkus said. "I personally think they're beautiful and a lot of people have been coming up to see them."

The beauty of the white turbines is not a view shared by everyone. Opponents, including neighbors who formed the group FairWindCT, took their fight all the way to the state Supreme Court, which decided in BNE's favor last year.

Joyce Hemingson, a Colebrook resident and head of FairWindCT, was not aware of Thursday's event when I spoke with her Wednesday night, but said she was quite aware of the turbines, which BNE finished erecting on Aug. 6.

"They're quite visible," Hemingson said. "It's what we expected it to be based on wind farms elsewhere and it really is a matter of time before people understand the effects of having homes so close to them."

We can call this a split decision, overall. The Connecticut Siting Council, which has purview over energy projects, sided with opponents in rejecting BNE's bid for a wind farm in Prospect, where Zupkus lives. FairWindCT also had a role in state regulations that require specific distances from each turbine to the owners' property lines — rules that didn't apply to the Colebrook site.

There was no sign of opponents Thursday on a clearing in the shadow of one of the turbines, off a road under construction, beneath a deep blue sky. A steady wind, fittingly, tousled the hair of speakers, including state Rep. Themis Klarides, the Republican House leader, who applauded BNE's years of work.

"This is a perfect example of people who had a vision," Klarides said, "and kept at that vision until it came to fruition."

The two turbines are down from an original plan for three, generating roughly the same power. In the years it took to duke this issue out, GE came up with turbines the same size that are more powerful and very slightly quieter.

A second set of three turbines farther north in Colebrook was also approved by the state but Zupkus said the firm has no immediate plans to build it.

"We have the capability to make wind power a leading source of energy in our state and this project will demonstrate wind power's compatibility with Connecticut's renewable energy," said Paul Corey, Zupkus' partner, and chairman of BNE Energy.

Wind power will remain only a small part of efforts to generate cleaner electricity, as the state consumes something in the range of 6,000 megawatts on a hot summer day. But small pieces matter, as we saw in Bloomfield on Thursday, where the Pepperidge Farm commercial bakery marked what it called "the largest solar installation at a manufacturing site in Connecticut and the second largest in New England."

BNE won't say how much it spent on Colebrook South, but the financing includes a \$14.9 million construction loan from Webster, a \$2 million loan from the Connecticut Green Bank and \$5.6 million from a California bank tied to federal tax credits.

Wind power doesn't pay for itself yet on the open market, in most places. Rather, taxpayers or ratepayers pay the difference between the cost of renewable power and what traditionally generated power would cost. But BNE was the low bidder for the renewable power contract that it won.

Hemingson and others say that for all the cost, most wind farms in New England generate less than a third of their rated power overall, because the wind doesn't blow all the time. Even allowing for that, the Colebrook turbines are expected to power 1,500 to 2,000 homes.

Fights can and should continue over noise, subsidies, bird kills and proximity to houses, and that latter concern alone will keep the number of turbines down in densely populated Connecticut. But as for the argument about scenic vistas from a distance, that should, by now, be settled. As a drive through Pennsylvania's eastern ridges shows, wind turbines are here to stay.

They do seem to have a sort of Teletubbies look about them and could almost fit into a 19th century folk art painting. As BNE cranked up one of the turbines during testing Thursday, the gathering of reporters and officials could hear a soft crackling sound, like a rain stick — the instrument made from a tube of hollowed cactus — followed by a low hum similar to the wind itself.

The percussive sounds of firearms at a nearby gun club punctuated the scene.

This is the first project for Zupkus and Corey, who attended St. Margaret's grammar school and Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, a couple of years apart.

They're politically connected. Zupkus, a former aeronautical engineer and telephone company executive, is married to state Rep. Lezlye Zupkus, R-Prospect. Corey, a lawyer, former executive director of the state Department of Public Utility Control and former chairman of the Connecticut Lottery Corp., along with his wife, Christine, an assistant for former Gov. John G. Rowland, gave Rowland a hot tub that made headlines.

The partners say they're looking at other sites in Connecticut and an option to buy land in Vermont, where they have studied the wind for two years. For now, the new site in Colebrook is a curiosity in a state that's late to the game.

"We basically caused a tourism problem," Zupkus said, with people coming to the windy hill to see the turbines over the past several weeks.

"People want to see it. We'll have a phone number for arranging tours."

/Courant Staff Writer //Mara Lee/

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=9b0eb6ca24&e=ac1b48e383>>/

contributed

reporting from Colebrook for this column./

Save the Date!!

2.22.2016

Vermont Climate Economy Summit: IDEAS TO ACTION

Vermont Technical College, Randolph VT

Save the date for VCRD's "Vermont Climate Economy Summit: IDEAS TO ACTION" on February 22, 2016. Join us to review a platform of action

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consider action to create jobs, build national reputation, and attract
young people to our rural communities.

To find out more about the VT Climate Change Economy Initiative, visit
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We look forward to seeing you on February 22nd!

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Chen, Zachary

From: *redacted*
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:19 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update Oct. 23, 2015 -- video of Solar Siting Task Force #3

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update Oct. 23, 2015 -- video of Solar Siting Task Force #3
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:29:56 -0500
From: *redacted*
To: *redacted*

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Fri, 23 Oct 2015 13:18:39 -0400
Subject: VCE Solar Update Oct. 23, 2015 -- video of Solar Siting Task Force #3
To: vce@vce.org

Video of yesterday's solar siting task force meeting. The presentations were very good.
<https://youtu.be/K9RcYzVUxRg>
Supporting materials, some not posted yet.
<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs>

When homeowners push back | From the Editor

The Eagle
As of Monday, October 19, 2015 -4:54 p.m.
<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/>>

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<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p1>>Commercial

“solar farms” have been popping up everywhere in Vermont, being most visible, locally, along the U.S. Route 7 corridor.

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p2>>While

developers may add a few grazing sheep or faux sugar shacks among the arrays to dress up a solar site, they’re hardly “farms” in any traditional sense.

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p3>>While

more than a few homeowners—and concerned members of various town select boards without a P.C. energy agenda to push—have protested the fact that many of these operations are being erected on residential and agricultural, not commercial, zoned land; their concerns seem to have fallen on deaf ears in Montpelier. When it comes to “green” energy, state law is running roughshod over our local zoning laws.

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p4>>With

a package of federal subsidies for solar projects about to sunset next year, there’s been a rush to push through “solar farms” with a public-be-damned attitude from the power-plant developers as well as many town officials.

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p5>>Regardless

of the sunny spin developers may put on this issue, you can’t deny facts: solar energy is a costly enterprise without government subsidies (ironically, it’s exactly what solar folks used to use to accuse the commercial nuclear power industry about).

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p6>>“Solar

energy remains prohibitively expensive, often three times more than electricity produced from natural gas and other sources,” according to a report by the Taxpayers Protection Alliance.

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p7>>“We’re

shining a bright spotlight on the darker side of solar power,” said TPA president David Williams in a CNS interview. “Taxpayer-backed loans to the solar industry, bailouts, and publicly funded grants cost Americans more than \$39 billion annually. Despite these massive costs, taxpayers aren’t even benefitting with lower electricity prices.”

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p8>>In

the case of one local “solar farm” eruption, fighting back gets results.

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?blogs#h241183-p9>>

A recent homeowner protest against “solar farming” in Rutland County seems to have delayed development of a “solar farm” near the historic Hubbardton Battlefield.

Waterbury-based SunCommon announced plans in June to build a solar array, on a cow pasture on the Galvin property—on Saint John Road—and sited it along Howland Road, a stone’s throw from the Vermont’s only Revolutionary War battlefield.

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?page=2&blogs=#h241183-p2>>Neighbors

were clearly not happy after receiving printed letters from the company announcing its plans during the early summer. In fact, SunCommon surveyors were already flagging the site before the letter ink was dry.

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?page=2&blogs=#h241183-p3>>At

a public hearing following the letter, town officials—and a SunCommon P.R. specialist—got an earful. After the meeting, Hubbardton residents signed a petition, sent it to the PSB and SunCommon, stating that they do not want commercial solar arrays in their neighborhoods.

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?page=2&blogs=#h241183-p4>>Hubbardton

officials also weighed in: “Most towns in Vermont are not up to date with regulations regarding energy producing facilities..,” according to a letter written by Hubbardton Select Board Chairman Robert Gibbs and Planning Commission head Shawn DuBois to the Public Service Board.

“Development of renewable energy sources should be developed to avoid negative impact on the rural character of our community and complement our plan for land use. We, as a town, prefer in all cases that big and non-single use homeowner solar projects be located in designated commercially zoned areas and are opposed to this(Sun Common) proposed solar array (on the Galvin property).”

#

<<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2015/oct/20/when-homeowners-push-back-editor/?page=2&blogs=#h241183-p5>>

In the case of Hubbardton’s push back, while one victory in a cow pasture does not win a war, it’s a start in the uphill battle against returning sanity to Vermont’s residential and agricultural zoning laws.

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510supreme-court-sends-basin-harbor-array-back-psb>

Supreme Court sends Basin Harbor array back to PSB

Posted on October 22, 2015 |

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* solar <<http://addisonindependent.com/category/tags/solar>>

* Vermont Supreme Court

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/tags/vermont-supreme-court>>

By Andy Kirkaldy

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/reporter-author-name/andy-kirkaldy>>

FERRISBURGH — An opponent of Basin Harbor Club’s 150-kilowatt solar array last week won a Vermont Supreme Court decision against the Public Service Board.

However, the decision addressed procedure, not the issues at the heart of the case, such as the array’s impact on the lakefront neighborhood.

On Friday, Oct. 16, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that the PSB erred in not honoring neighbor Mary McGuire’s motion that the board reconsider its Nov. 14, 2014, award of the Certificate of Public Good (CPG) that allowed Basin Harbor Club to build the array on 1.5 acres at 4800 Basin Harbor Road.

The project is sited about 100 feet from Mile Point Road, which provides the only access to dozens of year-round and seasonal homes on Mile Point, just north of the Basin Harbor Club resort.

On Jan. 14, the PSB denied McGuire’s motion to reconsider its CPG, ruling that McGuire lacked party status because she had not filed as an “intervener” in the case.

But last week the court, in a decision written by retired Justice James Morse, disagreed.

“Although McGuire disputes BHC’s (Basin Harbor Club’s) claim that party status was required to appeal or move for reconsideration, she also asserts that she became a party /in effect /in the course of the proceeding and therefore properly appealed and moved for reconsideration,” Morse wrote. “We agree with the latter assertion.”

Although the court decision did not touch on the issues McGuire raised in her motion to reconsider, her family members said they are happy with the ruling and confident moving forward.

“We are very satisfied,” said Elizabeth McGuire, McGuire’s daughter. “In order for the PSB to consider our Motion for Reconsideration they needed to acknowledge us as a ‘party.’”

LOOKING AHEAD

McGuire said as of Tuesday she had yet to hear from the PSB as to what the next step would be.

“It is not clear whether we will be required to re-submit it or whether they will review the motion we filed earlier this year,” she said.

PSB clerk Susan Hudson said on Tuesday she could not describe how the PSB would go about responding to the decision or how long a response might take.

“It’s been remanded back to the board for consideration, so we will act accordingly. I’m sorry I can’t give you any more information than that, because this is something pending before the board,” Hudson said. “If there was a set time on it, that would be one thing, but there isn’t, and the board will move as expeditiously as it can.”

If the PSB denies a motion of reconsideration — one that raises a number of issues, including impact on the neighborhood and alleged misrepresentation on Basin Harbor Club’s application — McGuire said the family would appeal that denial to the Vermont Supreme Court, which already has heard some of the arguments.

“This time our appeal would only be on the merits of the case. We would no longer have to address the questions regarding party status,” she said, adding, “based on our oral arguments we are very confident regarding a ruling on the merits of the case.”

McGuire said she hopes last week’s ruling on the PSB’s procedures will help change what she calls a “confusing and convoluted” PSB solar siting process.

“This decision draws attention to the confusion and challenges inherent in the PSB process. Property owners find themselves fighting to protect their homes and the aesthetics of their communities against solar developers who are unfortunately incentivized by tax credits and motivated by their own financial gain, with little concern about the immediate and long-term impacts on Vermont,” she said.

“We hope that this ruling encourages the Legislature and the PSB to create a clear and reasonable process for solar permitting and siting that is fair to all parties involved.”

RULING DETAILS

The Supreme Court decision noted that generally “non-parties to a suit do not have standing to appeal,” but, “There are, however, a number of generally recognized exceptions to this rule.”

The decision stated that McGuire “maintains with some validity” that “she was not notified of the need to apply for party status, reasonably believed she was a party, and was effectively treated as such.”

The decision pointed out a PSB mailing to McGuire included a list of all "Notified Parties," on which her name was stated; said "nothing about the need to intervene"; and "appeared to imply she already was (a party) by stating that comments were due within 10 days of the notice to 'all required parties.'" In a footnote, the decision pointed out the PSB has changed that language to "all required recipients."

The Oct. 16 decision specifically leaves untouched the grounds upon which neighbors opposed the project. "Our disposition renders it unnecessary to address McGuire's claims that the Board erred in issuing the CPG," Morse concluded.

ARRAY OF ISSUES

Issues raised by McGuire and other opponents include:

- The impact of the array on the view and property values of the neighborhood.
- The refusal of the PSB to consider the opinion of the array's immediate neighbors under the "Quechee test," which is often used in zoning and Act 250 applications. Boards use the Quechee test as a yardstick to determine whether a proposed development would offend an "average person."

The PSB has maintained in many cases that immediate neighbors cannot be considered "average persons" simply because of their proximity to projects, and McGuire's motion challenges that interpretation.

- Basin Harbor Club's alleged failures to consider the array's impact on the historic nature of the area, to disclose in its application that historic structures were in the area, and to conduct a full archaeological survey of the site.
- Claims that the Ferrisburgh Town Plan encourages "small-scale" solar and other renewable energy projects, not larger solar arrays and that the PSB "overlooked evidence presented by neighbors," including a 2004 case involving a quarry and an access road that the motion argues should have been used as a precedent.
- A claim that proposed landscape buffering is inadequate between Mary McGuire's home, 200 feet from the solar array site, and from Mile Point Road traffic.
- A statement that glare from the panels will affect pilots of planes landing at the Basin Harbor Club's private airport at certain times of day at certain times of year.

Basin Harbor Club owners have maintained that the area is not a historic district, even if some seasonal homes are individually considered historic; that the project meets all town zoning criteria and renewable energy is supported in the town plan; and that the site was chosen because of proximity to three-phase power and other environmental initiatives, both existing and planned.

<http://www.wcax.com/story/30290676/vt-supreme-court-orders-psb-to-reconsider-solar-appeal>

Vt. Supreme Court orders PSB to reconsider solar appeal

/Posted: Oct 18, 2015 9:01 PM EDT//Updated: Oct 18, 2015 9:27 PM EDT/ By WCAX News CONNECT
<<http://www.wcax.com/story/30290676/vt-supreme-court-orders-psb-to-reconsider-solar-appeal#>>
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MONTPELIER, Vt. -

A Vergennes woman has one a small victory before Vermont's high court in opposing a local solar farm. The Basin Harbor Club last year allowed more than two dozen solar trackers to be built on its property. A number of neighbors opposed the project before the Public Service Board, but ultimately lost. The PSB also rejected an appeal by one neighbor, Mary McGuire, saying she didn't have "party status" in the case. But in a ruling Friday <<https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/LC/Supreme%20Court%20Published%20Decisions/op15-083.pdf>>,

the Vermont Supreme Court said the PSB failed to tell McGuire of the need to apply for party status, and that her active participation in the Certificate of Public Good hearing process should allow her the ability to appeal. Despite the fact that the solar farm is already operating, the PSB has been ordered to reconsider her appeal.

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510gmp-plans-one-its-biggest-projects-northern-panton>

GMP plans one of its biggest projects for northern Panton

Posted on October 22, 2015 |

- * Panton <<http://addisonindependent.com/category/section/panton>>
- * 5 MW <<http://addisonindependent.com/category/tags/5-mw>>
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- * Green Mountain Power

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* solar <<http://addisonindependent.com/category/tags/solar>>

By Andy Kirkaldy

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/reporter-author-name/andy-kirkaldy>>

PANTON — Green Mountain Power is proposing to install and operate an \$11 million, 4.99-megawatt solar farm in Panton. The project would be more than twice the size of the largest existing Addison County arrays and is also as large as any such venture GMP is proposing in Vermont.

The site proposed is 40 acres of a 327-acre parcel that is part of Panton's largest dairy operation, the Vorsteveld Farm. The site lies in the town's north end, between Panton Road and the Ferrisburgh town line, east of Jersey Street and west of Slang Creek.

The county's current largest solar projects are a 2.2-megawatt (MW) array off Route 7 north of New Haven Junction and a 2.2MW solar farm in Middlebury off Route 7 behind the Blue Spruce Motel.

According to a Sept. 18 letter GMP sent to Panton officials, the Vermont Public Service Board and project neighbors, the proposed array would generate about 9.2 million kilowatts per year, enough to provide power for more than 1,200 homes.

The power generated would be sent directly into the power grid, while GMP officials said the project would also include a "micro grid" with battery storage that would provide emergency electricity to Panton town buildings during a wider power outage.

According to GMP spokesperson Kristin Carlson, the Panton Solar Project is one of several solar ventures that GMP is looking at statewide. Another 4.99MW project in Hartford would match its output, while another proposal in Williston (4.7MW) would approach it in scope. One GMP solar project with micro-grid battery storage, the 2.2MW Stafford Solar Farm in Rutland, is complete.

Carlson said GMP would like to add to its inventory of solar projects with micro grids, especially given that the company expects more damaging storms and resulting power outages due to climate change.

"We're always looking for solar projects that make sense for the customers and make sense for the communities," Carlson said, adding, "We really see this as part of Vermont's energy future."

Carlson said if all goes well — including GMP earning a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Service Board for the project — a four-month construction process could begin next summer and wrap up at about this time next year.

GMP's September letter states the array will produce power at a cost that "is projected to be among the lowest-priced solar options presently available to GMP, and lower than most or all solar sources that have been developed to date."

Carlson said the nature of the land, brought to GMP's attention by a developer, is a main reason for the cost savings.

"It is ideally sited," she said. "The land is flat. It is close to transmission."

GMP's letter, written by GMP Director of Development Kirk Shields, adds that installation will not require tree removal, and only minimal grading will be needed. The site, the letter also states, has "no residences in the vicinity to the south or east."

Shields' letter portrays the Panton project as "in the planning stages." It describes an array with more than 21,000, nine-foot-high, solar trackers arranged in 280 rows that would cover most of the 40 acres.

Shields also met with the Panton selectboard on Oct. 13. Selectboard Chairman John Viskup said GMP represented that the project will generate, to start with, \$45,000 in new annual property tax revenue.

Viskup said the selectboard looked favorably on the proposal due to the tax boost even before considering the micro grid.

"It's a source of income. We're going to take it. It's just that simple," Viskup said.

He added that he could not speak for the town's planning commission, but does not believe they would object to the site or the concept. Viskup said that farm co-owner Hans Vorsteveld told the selectboard the acreage in question is not prime agricultural land.

"It isn't wetlands, but it is sort of a wet area, according to Hans," Viskup said.

According to Shields' letter, "The project will adhere to all wetlands regulations," and although there are wetlands in the area, "all of them are located well away from the proposed locations of the panel racks."

Shields also estimated the project's productive life will range from 25 to 35 years, and the company will remove the panels and restore the site when the array is no longer useful.

In the meantime, Shields wrote, the project will help GMP "meet its long-term needs for energy and capacity" and "meet its obligations under Vermont's new Renewable Energy Standard framework."

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission, which is helping towns deal with the spread of sometimes unpopular solar arrays, also received Shields' letter. The commission has not yet had a chance to sit down with GMP officials and learn more, according to executive director Adam Lougee.

"We just recently received their 45-day notice and an offer to meet, which we will take them up on shortly," Lougee said.

<http://addisonindependent.com/201510planners-weigh-solar-guidelines>

Planners weigh in on solar guidelines

Posted on October 19, 2015 |

* Addison County

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By Gaen Murphree

<<http://addisonindependent.com/category/reporter-author-name/gaen-murphree>>

MIDDLEBURY — As the pace and scale of solar development has accelerated in Addison County, communities have become increasingly concerned about how to regulate development so as to balance the need for renewable energy with the desire to preserve Vermont's rural, historic and natural landscapes. And the pressure is intensifying as the industry accelerates movement toward Vermont's goal of getting 90 percent of its energy from renewables by 2050.

"The number of solar installations has just kept growing in the region, and the concern that people have had about their aesthetic impact has been heightened with that growing number," said Adam Lougee, executive director of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

In response, the ACRPC is giving towns new tools to address solar development sensibly and be able to weigh in more effectively before the Public Service Board.

The commission last Wednesday approved two short documents that it believes can have a big impact.

The first is a letter the ACRPC will send to any developer who proposes a solar project in Addison County and to the Public Service Board in reference to that developer's application for a Certificate of Public Good. The letter outlines the county's goals for balancing the development of renewable energy with the historic character and aesthetic qualities of the region.

The second is a memorandum to all Addison County selectboards and planning commissions that provides language that can go into a town plan, crafted so as to give the community's vision of its own development greater weight and more efficacy in PSB decisions.

"Renewable energy and our regional aesthetic are both important to us," said Lougee. "And this is trying to help us hit the renewable goals but do it in a way that's sensitive to neighbors and citizens and the rural landscape."

Solar projects 150 kW and larger have proliferated at such a pace that even the regional planning commission doesn't have a complete list of all solar projects currently installed in Addison County and all currently pending before the PSB.

The largest facilities in operation are the 2.2 megawatt (MW) Cross Pollination solar array off Route 7 north of New Haven Junction, the 2.2 MW Champlain Valley Solar Farm in Middlebury off Route 7 behind the Blue Spruce Motel, and the 2 MW Bridport Solar Holdings off Route 22A in Bridport. Green Mountain Power is now proposing a 5 MW installation in Panton, more than double the size of any current installation.

Beyond these, the county has an abundance of 150 to 500 kW installations. New Haven alone has six solar installations ranging in size from 150 kW to 2.2 MW currently in operation, and eight proposals within that same range currently before the Public Service Board.

The two ACRPC documents were jointly drafted by the commission's Act 250 and Energy committees, the two committees most concerned with preserving the region's rural and historic landscape and with furthering Vermont's ambitious energy goals.

"Both the Energy Committee and the Act 250 Committee felt that it was important for them to weigh in and do it uniformly and get a message out to our towns," said Lougee.

The letter that will be sent to the Public Service Board and to solar developers with each new proposal clearly states the ACRPC's criteria for sensible solar development in the region. The letter prioritizes "the aesthetic qualities of both the natural and humanly built landscape," encourages energy conservation and calls for the development of renewables in ways that preserve that landscape, with its historic mix of villages and rural countryside.

It clarifies that any solar array greater than 125 kW would constitute "significant regional impact" and as such be subject to close review by the ACRPC with regard to aesthetics, viable farmland and wildlife resources. To accomplish these goals, the letter lays out siting criteria and makes clear that "commercial/industrial development such as solar generation is most appropriate within previously identified commercial and industrial zones." It provides a detailed list of steps that need to be taken for adequate screening and setback, more specific and more stringent than those put into Act 56 (the most recent solar regulation). It emphasizes that all proposals must include a decommissioning plan.

Finally, it stresses the ACRPC's goal of "preserving critical agricultural soils" and prohibits construction in mapped floodplains, ANR-defined river corridors and class I and II wetlands, and stipulates that impacts on existing wildlife corridors be addressed.

The ACRPC's letter to area selectboards and planning commissions provides language that the regional planning commission believes will give town plans greater efficacy in PSB deliberations.

“When properly included in a municipal plan and filed as testimony before the PSB,” the letter states, “a well-crafted solar policy supported by specific siting criteria should significantly influence the PSB’s judgment with their obligation to give ‘due consideration’” to municipal and regional plans.

But as the letter makes abundantly clear, specificity is important because the town plan provides the basis for a given municipality’s argument before the PSB. A town plan, for example, that “suggests” a 300 kW limit on solar projects could be construed by the PSB as permissive, with more weight given to “suggests” than to the proposed limit itself as a hard and fast cutoff.

The ACRPC envisions the document as able to provide cut-and-paste language that could be put right into a town plan or could be used as a useful starting point for municipal deliberation. The document focuses on providing language about aesthetic criteria, as natural resources criteria has already been more fully developed. The document lays out community standards for siting and details what makes a poor site or a good one. It helps close the “average person” loophole in Section 248 by defining an “average person” as “either the municipal legislative body or the planning commission.” It carefully lists necessary steps in screening, setback and other aspects of mitigation and calls for a detailed plan for decommissioning and restoration.

A theme repeated among energy experts, planning experts and even state-level officials interviewed for this article is that the Section 248 process — the process by which the Public Service Board awards a renewable energy developer a Certificate of Public Good — was originally developed for a very different model of power generation and distribution than the state sees today with the distributed generation of renewables.

“Section 248 was written when the utility model was big central power plants. It has a statewide focus, a focus on statewide need,” said Geoff Commons, director of Public Advocacy for the Vermont Department of Public Service. “Now we are in a different world. There are power generators in everybody’s neighborhood. So we are experiencing, I think, some growing pains, we the state as a whole, some growing pains around this. And there is some friction that needs to get worked through.”

One planner contrasted the time-tested orderliness of the Act 250 process against the more baffling quasi-judicial nature of the PSB regulatory process.

Whiting ACRPC delegate Ellen Kurrelmeyer, who chairs the Act 250 Committee that cooperatively drafted the two documents and who is also chair of the Whiting selectboard, says the regional planning commission hopes the documents will help towns and will help potential solar developers make proposals that better balance the important drive toward renewables with preserving the landscape.

“We’re hoping that they look at the suggestions we’ve made about how a project should be sited and screening and the way we pay attention to things like wildlife movement and wildlife habitat, that they would use all that information and do the best siting and arrangement so that everyone is happier because the state has said 90 percent, and it’s coming up quick,” said Kurrelmeyer. “We want to meet the state’s renewable energy requirements and feel like we’re not looking at a sea of solar panels.

“We want to be the leaders in renewable energy, but we also want to be known for doing it in a way that keeps the character and the nature of the state the way that everybody who lives here wants it to be.”

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Guarding the guardian

October 22, 2015

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Criticism of the Public Service Department at a forum Tuesday grew out of brewing discontent with how the department has handled controversial energy projects such as the natural gas pipeline in western Vermont and wind turbines in northern Vermont.

One of the department's important roles is to serve as advocate for the public in proceedings before the Public Service Board. The board is the quasi-judicial body that rules on whether proposed projects are in the public good. It is the job of the department to study projects thoroughly and to represent the interests of the public during the PSB's hearings. The interests of the utilities may or may not coincide with the public's interests. If it appears a project will have a damaging effect on the environment or will cost ratepayers too much, the public depends on the Public Service Department to make that case before the PSB.

It wasn't always that way. As the PSB was originally conceived, it had the responsibility of judging projects and representing the public's interest. The Legislature split those duties by creating the Public Service Department, which sometimes must take an adversarial role in fighting to block or modify utility projects.

In recent years, the department has made a practice of negotiating with utilities, persuading them to modify their plans before they get to the PSB. Thus, if a wind project looks as if it would damage wildlife habitat, the department and the utility may create a memorandum of understanding requiring specific actions by the utility to protect wildlife. The department may then recommend that the board approve the project on the condition that the utility follows the terms of the memorandum.

These dealings take place behind closed doors, and it often appears to the public that the department is greasing the skids for the utilities rather than advocating for the public. Public confidence may suffer as a result, in the same way that public confidence may suffer when a prosecutor reaches a plea deal with a defendant rather than taking the case to trial.

Outspoken opposition to wind projects and the pipeline has heightened concern in some quarters that the department and the PSB are in the pocket of the utilities. At the same time, public support for these energy projects, if not as vocal as the opposition, is widespread, and the potential public benefits are not inconsiderable.

In fact, regulators are often subject to what is called regulatory capture, meaning that they become too cozy with those they are regulating, so that they are representing the companies' interests rather than the interests of the public. The public must always be on guard against regulatory capture.

Yet there are reasons for prosecutors to agree to plea deals. Going to trial with every case would be impossible. The Public Service Department could stick to a strictly adversarial role, choosing to take its concerns about wildlife habitat or cost overruns to the PSB and letting the PSB bring down the hammer on the utilities. But negotiating agreements on how to proceed may yield a better result and smooth the process.

Ultimately, determining department policy is a political question. The commissioner of the Public Service Department is a member of the governor's administration and adheres to the governor's policy.

It so happens that Gov. Peter Shumlin has been a supporter of renewable energy and natural gas and so has not felt compelled to push a policy on those projects as tough as his policy regarding, for example, Vermont Yankee.

Because the public has little say on utility projects, the Public Service Department has a responsibility to listen. (That is what the hearing on Tuesday was for.) What it hears will be a many-voiced chorus.

The department is the public guardian on utility matters, and the question will always be: Who is guarding the guardian?

Ultimately, it is always the public. It is not possible to establish an infinite regression of overseers to oversee the overseers. In the end, it is the department's job to balance its concept of the public interest against the ideas voiced by the public. And in the end, the buck stops with the governor.

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DPS comes under fire at its own hearing

By Gordon Dritschilo <<mailto:gordon.dritschilo@rutlandherald.com>>

STAFF WRITER | October 21, 2015

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A former longtime official with the Department of Public Service said the department has lost its way.

"The DPS is now more an advocate of the utilities than consumers," said Charles Larkin, whose roles with the DPS included serving as its first chief of consumer affairs. "The department is defined as the public's advocate. ... They should not be testifying on behalf of a utility."

It was a sentiment shared by the handful of other Vermonters who joined Larkin on Tuesday night at Rutland Regional Medical Center to speak at a public input hearing called by the department.

The meeting is one of two — the other is at 6:30 p.m. tonight at River Arts in Morrisville — held as part of a process that will end in a report to the Legislature focused on improving the department's Division for Public Advocacy.

"The problem is not the structure," Larkin said. "The problem is how it's been perverted into 'We have to help the utilities as well as the public.'"

A concrete example came from Rick Hackett, who pointed to comments from Public Service Commissioner Chris Recchia on the Vermont Natural Gas pipeline proposal.

"Whose side is he on?" Hackett asked. "If Vermont Gas needs a fast track, let them get their facts together from day one."

He said the way the department does business has shifted in 20 years, going from openly litigating proposals before the Public Service Board to relying on settlements and memoranda of understanding reached behind closed doors.

Hackett said this keeps embarrassing information out of the public eye and prevents the PSB from judging whether a proposal is truly in the public interest.

"Their hands are tied when they don't have all the facts," he said.

"Hiding the facts is not good public policy."

Hackett said Rutland was ill-served by that process in the merger of Green Mountain Power and Central Vermont Public Service.

"The city of Rutland gave it away," he said. "They didn't see the whole picture. They were in a vacuum."

Hackett was dismissive of GMP's efforts in the community.

"They took away a lot of foot traffic downtown," he said. "They took away a lot of property tax."

Political influence on the department was a recurring theme. George Gross, one of the property owners fighting the pipeline, suggested a structure to prevent it.

Gross said Vermont lawyers could be drafted in a system similar to choosing citizens for jury duty. Lawyers would serve one term as advocates and then a second term mentoring their replacements.

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http://www.benningtonbanner.com/news/ci_28999223/pownal-to-seek-offtakers-for-solar-power

Pownal to seek offtakers for solar power

By Edward Damon

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POSTED: 10/20/2015 10:26:01 PM EDT 0 COMMENTS

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POWNAL — As the town works with two prospective solar developers on a solar installation, it will also have to find entities that will purchase electricity.

The Select Board heard an update from two prospective solar development teams at its most recent meeting, after which Vice Chairman Nelson Brownell pushed to find "oftakers," entities that will agree to purchase electricity at a reduced rate. The board must secure oftakers of any project to ensure enough power is purchased to make the project sustainable.

"We need to start talking to the fire department and rescue squad now to get them on board," Brownell said.

The Select Board has met in public meetings with two developers to discuss options for two "brownfield" sites that have been deemed right for solar. The first is a portion of a Superfund site which was once the home of the former Pownal Tanning Company, now a capped landfill next to the Pownal Waste Water Treatment Facility off Dean Road. The second is the town's capped landfill at the transfer station on Maple Grove Road.

Of approximately 725,000 kilowatt-hours used by public buildings, approximately 340,000 kilowatt-hours was used by the elementary school, Brownell said.

Thomas Garden of Triland Partners, a developer in Windham, N.H., advised it would be important to have the school sign on. But Brownell noted the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union is pursuing a union-wide solar project of its own.

The sizes and approximate locations of the installations are still in flux, and developers at the meeting shared the latest plans.

Garden proposed a 1.07 megawatt installation on the transfer station, coupled with a 500 kilowatt-hour installation near the treatment plant.

James Holtzman, managing partner for Clean Energy Design Group, Inc., proposed a 4.2 megawatt installation to be split between the landfill and treatment plant.

The town would host any installation for roughly 20 years, receive an annual lease payment — somewhere \$20,000 and \$50,000 a year — and purchase power from the array cheaper than the grid.

"Your savings in electricity would be significant, but the revenue from leases and property taxes, that's real money for the town," Garden said.

In other business, the board approved the installation of a street light at a bus stop at the intersection of Routes 346 and 7.

Contact Edward Damon at 413-770-6979

<http://www.vnews.com/news/19088957-95/no-opposition-to-hartford-solar-plan>

No Opposition To Hartford Solar Plan

<[http://www.vnews.com/csp/mediapool/sites/dt.common.streams.StreamServer.cls?STREAMOID=U1wR4QXmAYkSHaAfYfB0v8\\$daE2N3K4ZzOUsqbU5sYtx8KKAuyc7qyHvB6kwWlGmWCsjLu883Ygn4B49Lvm9bPe2QeMKQdVeZmXF\\$9!\\$4uCZ8QDXhaHEp3rvzXRJFdy0KqPHLoMevcTL03h8xh70Y6N_U_CryOsw6FTOdKL_jpQ-&%3bCONTENTTYPE=image/jpeg](http://www.vnews.com/csp/mediapool/sites/dt.common.streams.StreamServer.cls?STREAMOID=U1wR4QXmAYkSHaAfYfB0v8$daE2N3K4ZzOUsqbU5sYtx8KKAuyc7qyHvB6kwWlGmWCsjLu883Ygn4B49Lvm9bPe2QeMKQdVeZmXF$9!$4uCZ8QDXhaHEp3rvzXRJFdy0KqPHLoMevcTL03h8xh70Y6N_U_CryOsw6FTOdKL_jpQ-&%3bCONTENTTYPE=image/jpeg)>

By Stephanie Reighart
Valley News Correspondent

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

(Published in print: Tuesday, October 20, 2015)

Hartford — The Vermont Public Service Board held a public hearing Monday night to allow area residents to comment or ask questions about a proposed Green Mountain Power solar array in Hartford.

The company wants to buy a 47-acre parcel just west of the Quechee Gorge off of Quechee-Hartland Road to build a 4.99-megawatt solar array.

The solar panels would generate nearly 8,800 megawatt hours of power per year, or enough energy to power 1,200 homes, said Dorothy Schnure, a spokeswoman for Green Mountain Power.

The meeting was sparsely attended, and Hartford town officials have heard very few complaints from the community.

Bruce Riddle, the planning commission chairman, reviewed the proposal in August when Green Mountain Power met with the group.

“The company is required to address any concerns from abutting landowners, and as I understand, those issues were addressed,” Riddle said.

According to testimony submitted by Green Mountain Power in their application for a certificate of public good, two landowners within view of the proposed site discussed landscaping plans.

Scott Brooks, of Quechee, and his wife, Eileen, attended the meeting, but had no concerns to raise, he said.

“I think GMP would be good neighbors, but I wanted to see what the pulse of the community was like,” he said.

No other members of the public came to comment.

GMPSolar-Hartford, an affiliate of Colchester, Vt.- based Green Mountain Power, worked with groSolar in White River Junction to design the project.

The land has been used in a sandpit operation since the 1960s, groSolar’s Rod Viens said in submitted testimony. GMPSolar intends to grade the land and plant grass beneath the arrays.

The project will cost about \$13 million and GMPSolar hopes to begin construction by late next spring and finish in the fall, Schnure said.

The Twin Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission told GMPSolar that the plan was an “excellent use of a former earth extraction site” and that they would likely consider the project “in conformance” with the regional plan.

GMPSolar designed the site to avoid disturbing a deer wintering habitat along the eastern and northern edges of the property and a wetland that formed in the sand pit where extraction had stopped.

As landowners, GMPSolar anticipates paying \$20,000 in state education taxes and \$50,000 in municipal property taxes per year.

Renewable energy projects are part of Hartford’s Master Plan to incorporate more diversified and resilient sources of power, Riddle said.

“(Renewable energy projects) are popping up,” he said. “And we’re lucky to have a gravel pit where we can stick this thing.”

Study Sees Ecological Risks as Solar Expands <<http://flip.it/rgSOz>>

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From Solar Energy <<http://flip.it/Rklu9>>, a Flipboard Magazine by Anton Prodanovic, Ph.D.

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