

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 viewsapes 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, 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 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

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 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, 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.

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

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

SEP. 18 2015, 7:00 PM

LEAVE A COMMENT

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*

"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."

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.

“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 | Letters

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

Rutland

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/17/solar-task-force-learns-space-demands-of-vermonts-future-energy-needs/>

HIGH SPACE DEMANDS FOR VERMONT'S FUTURE SOLAR FARMS IF ENERGY STAYS LOCAL

MIKE POLHAMUS

SEP. 17 2015, 9:05 PM

31 COMMENTS

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](#)

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

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, ‘Is it in the public good for everybody?’ — you would have absolutely no progress in Vermont going forward,” Shumlin said. “The board considers their opinions, but the board also has to ask under Vermont law, ‘What does this mean for the rest of Vermont?’ That is the standard that we should stick to.”

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/20/uvm-aims-to-add-a-megawatt-of-solar/>

UVM AIMS TO ADD A MEGAWATT OF SOLAR

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, 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.

Neale Lunderville

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 of solar among different parts of campus, he said. This project would increase the university's capacity tenfold.

Any tax benefits, 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

SEP. 17 2015, 8:57 PM

LEAVE A COMMENT

News Release — UVM, BED

September 17, 2015

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*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 | Editorials

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.

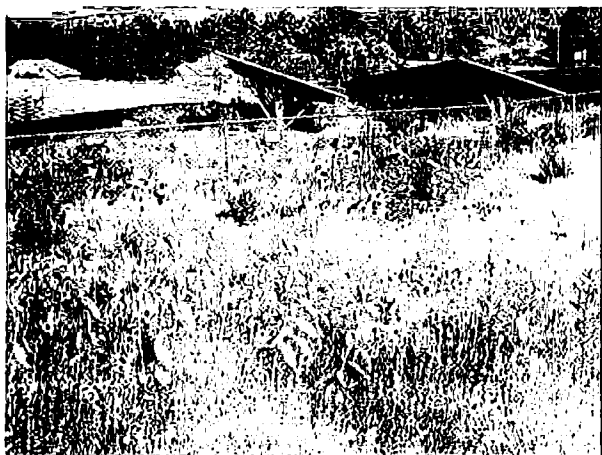
In contrast, GMP views the large utilities as dinosaurs that will soon be replaced by a different model of energy production. The term is "distributed power," which means power generated from small sources distributed throughout the landscape, rather than produced at a large, central generator and sent 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 that effort.

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20150916/NEWS02/709169867>

Complaint heard about weedy Springfield solar field

By Susan Smallheer
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.

<http://timesargus.com/article/20150916/OPINION02/709169937>

Opinion | Letters

Hurting the cause

September 16, 2015

I would like to comment on a recent article covering Rep. Tony Klein's comments about solar if I may. I am a longtime renewable energy advocate. I've been advocating for renewables, especially solar, since the mid-1990s and am largely responsible for the policies that put into place over \$500 million in wind development and \$50 million or so of solar in New Mexico over the previous decade.

I have been following renewable energy development in Vermont very closely for the past eight years. I have to say that I believe Klein's comments in your article are entirely disingenuous and misleading. Rep. Klein has profoundly undermined the integrity of renewable energy in Vermont with his callous disregard for the environmental impacts of wind 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

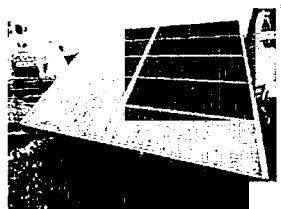
Lyndon

The writer is a professor at Lyndon State College.

Tens of thousands spent on energy lobbying

 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)

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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.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Renewable energy

Lobbyist disclosures

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.

"Vermonters for a Clean Environment or Energize Vermont are the kind of organizations that have been fighting against clean energy for years now, and this was one vehicles for clean energy that were basically opposed to," Burns responded.

Under Act 56, electrical companies must own renewable energy credits or provide renewable electricity equivalent to 55 percent of the companies' total electricity sales by Jan. 1, 2017. That would go up to 75 percent in 2032. At least a portion of the credits must stem from renewable energy generated within the state.

Another facet of the bill requires electricity companies to provide programs that would

encourage customers to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/16/500-kw-solar-project-underway-at-vermont-law-school/>

500-KW SOLAR PROJECT UNDERWAY AT VERMONT LAW SCHOOL

PRESS RELEASE SEP. 16 2015, 11:35 AM LEAVE A COMMENT

News Release — Vermont Law School

Sept. 15, 2015

Contact:

Maryellen Apelquist, Director of Communications, Vermont Law School
office: 802-831-1228, cell: 802-299-5593, mapelquist@vermontlaw.edu

SOUTH ROYALTON, Vt., Sept. 15, 2015—A 500-kilowatt solar photovoltaic project under construction on Gee Hill Road in South Royalton will meet over half of Vermont Law School's current electric energy requirement while reducing its carbon footprint, President and Dean Marc Mihaly 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.

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 or call 802-831-1151.

http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/cj_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 @BE_EDamon on Twitter

POSTED: 09/15/2015 06:04:59 PM EDT

0 COMMENTS

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/>

GMP DECLARES VICTORY ON MERGER PROMISE TO MAKE RUTLAND CITY A SOLAR CAPITAL

ERIN MANSFIELD

SEP. 15 2015, 8:47 PM

LEAVE A COMMENT

 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 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. 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 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."

Rutland solar map

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 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 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.

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 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>

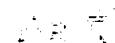
PRESS RELEASE

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

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

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.

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

SOURCE: Kyocera Solar, Inc.

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Solar And EVs Seem Like A Match Made In Heaven, But The Devil Is In The Details

in E-Features

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

 [Email article](#)  [Print](#) [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.