

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

Categories: M-Files

----- 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 |

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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 intervener 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.

/Reporter Gaen Murphree is at gaenm@addisonindependent.com
<<mailto:gaenm@addisonindependent.com>>./

<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.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.

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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

<http://www.manchesterjournal.com/letters/ci_28963574/solar-placement-is-problem>ww.manchesterjournal.com/letters/ci_28963574/solar-placement-is-problem

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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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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

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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

<[consider action to create jobs, build national reputation, and attract young people to our rural communities.](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001eM2qa2Y0r2oHV_zJAKivjbdUnMqGX3ISr7yCoBtIHUbeE3wwQsG0keHVVHzcUz7cbAhUJRQIFWQQz9RFw9L1MpNjGfxWaSGiloVRWEaDMDUjvDrj4JutH8stFiOqXN9V5Y9yw7-FdMcfLONQBc9aI5zQp0NOBYtiTgwL5QosHPdTXAQ_4C0K9BPomDh8Cqf9rIAhiEg_RH28vd42Zi6E60nA==&c=aorqLCxoDqQ3YI9kCCge9s0jAwWfZZ-rLPfV1zTskXVgkXnFhIJ59g==&ch=5o85xTUCRTMIJUU_sluMdTu2WhZZpO4FbiRfZSuF7n0BnT31FJZZGQ==>
and</p></div><div data-bbox=)

To find out more about the VT Climate Change Economy Initiative, visit <http://vtrural.org/programs/climate-economy>

<[We look forward to seeing you on February 22nd!](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001eM2qa2Y0r2oHV_zJAKivjbdUnMqGX3ISr7yCoBtIHUbeE3wwQsG0keLe4dmIPYsFtH_W8Ei3iILQzhPAWePT_P-rEGqVSoiY8riy1iCcTppqXCnxUvYRj49ivwH49yU0qrmxhEMMRtQpLHrg0E8uO_DTzENexHtzUN4nz89NvffgNGIbWEORL_qU-ZUAKbvt-wWRj8oAURFel=&c=aorqLCxoDqQ3YI9kCCge9s0jAwWfZZ-rLPfV1zTskXVgkXnFhIJ59g==&ch=5o85xTUCRTMIJUU_sluMdTu2WhZZpO4FbiRfZSuF7n0BnT31FJZZGQ==></p></div><div data-bbox=)

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

From: Redacted
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:18 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE's Wind Update Oct. 21, 2015 -- Wind turbines proven to be threat to people's health

Categories: M-Files

----- 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?articulo=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-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-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/>

EssexCEPUpdateOct132015?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_

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=2880df1a87&e=ac1b48e383>>

Public_Advocate_policy_2015_1020.mp3

<<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*

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=0a359c56a8&e=ac1b48e383>>*,

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

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=15a3b0c1b3&e=ac1b48e383>>

68 COMMENTS

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=06f8b2887b&e=ac1b48e383>>

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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Darren Spring on the threats to renewables

The Mark Johnson Show

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=c1e8db7fa4&e=ac1b48e383>>

10/8/15 Darren Springer, renewable energy

<<http://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=51c1262844&e=ac1b48e383>>

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 Morrissette 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 WriterNEWARK -- 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."

Caledonian Record

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 Belises? 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 Belises 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 residences 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

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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.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/11/bray-housing-vermont-and-audet-honored-at-renewable-energy-vermont-conference/>

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BRAY, HOUSING VERMONT AND AUDET HONORED AT RENEWABLE ENERGY VERMONT CONFERENCE

OCT. 11, 2015, 9:39 PM BY PRESS RELEASE

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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>

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Opinion: Corporations ruining Vermont environment for profit

* Posted on October 19, 2015 | Opinion

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By Fred Person

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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/>

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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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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

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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

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<<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. Leziye 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/

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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 developed by the Vermont Climate Change Economy Council
<<http://vce.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=56e801c436&e=ac1b48e383>>
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://vce.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5601b87ec7da4f3ca91ebc5f&id=fd4fa0086f&e=ac1b48e383>>.

We look forward to seeing you on February 22nd!

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