Solar Siting Task Force Public Comments

This document will compile public comment received by email and mail (comments provided at Task Force meetings are archived separately). The document will be updated with new comments on a periodic basis. Comments may receive slight reformatting for ease of reading but are not proofread or edited in any way.

Batch 6: 10/22/15-11/10/15

11/2/15

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar is the future, let's look at the most modern techniques and not look at money first. Weigh the options the health of the planet should be our first concern.

Sincerely,

Ehren Miller-Nogueira
PO Box 68
East Calais, VT 05650-0068
emillernog@aol.com

10/31/15

Oct 31, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I support more solar energy for Vermont. If we are to meet our energy goal of 90% renewables by 2050, we need more solar. Vermont should become energy independent. Solar has the least negative impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

Susan Riggen
825 Murray Rd
E Montpelier, VT 05651-4180
sriggen@comcast.net

Oct 31, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Please support energy self sufficiency and greater reliance on renewables. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Bodi Moran

Waterbury, VT 05676
bodi.moran@gmail.com

Oct 31, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar is critical for the energy needs of the state and its citizens.

Electric companies need to support that, and not fight people being reimbursed for feeding energy back into the system.

Sincerely,

Roger Weingarten
74 Liberty St
Montpelier, VT 05602-2421
rogw12@comcast.net

10/28/15

I agree with some of the comments I've read asserting that we cannot let construction projects (whether solar panels, housing, industry, etc.) be managed and directed primarily by the developers who make money from these projects. Why not give Vermont's Towns the responsibility of creating their own solar siting regulations (within their zoning and/or Town Plan systems)?

I'm a firm believer in renewable energy and believe we need to adjust our aesthetics to accommodate solar panels and wind generators. After all, what good are our beautiful mountain views is we have no power to heat our homes, run our computers and washing machines, and such. In addition, we MUST think about the dreadful results of climate change, already in evidence with the harsh storms we get and changing weather patterns. Thus, I'm glad the State is considering how best to regulate location of renewable energy resources, but do hope the needs of local people and the land itself will be taken into consideration.

Anne Bower, South Pomfret

10/26/15

Attention: Vt. Public Service Department and Vermont Public Service Board

The fact that Vermont is the lowest carbon gas emitter in the nation, has not slowed down the desecration of hundreds of acres of open land on our main highways and scenic vistas with solar arrays.

In Rutland Town alone, there is a PSB approved 15 acre solar project under appeal in the Vermont Supreme Court. Adjacent to this project is a 55 acre forested lot which will be stripped for another solar project. Not far from here at the corner of Rt. 7B and Rt. 103 in Clarendon, is another large array. These arrays are on highly traveled roads used by locals and tourists. The West Proctor Road now has two solar arrays surrounding Historical Buildings, definitely a blight on residential neighborhoods. How many tourist dollars will be lost when our fields and meadows are covered with black solar panels.

The Public Service Board seems to be rubber stamping every permit applied for, with no follow-up to see if all conditions are met, and whether all applications are answered honestly. The time has come to allow town siting standards for solar arrays where they are out of sight of public view as much as possible.

Sincerely,

Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Leonard
P.O. Box 215
Center Rutland, Vt.
05736

10/22/15

To whom it does concern:

I am in total support of solar as very important and necessary clean element of our efforts to reduce dependency on fossil fuel and other polluting energy sources. And the more the better.

At the same time, I am also very concerned that the placement of solar arrays should be subject to local control. Any individual, community and environmental concerns must be factored into the design and location. There must be a way to accommodate all parties needs and concerns.

I like the idea of placing large arrays of solar on top of large buildings.

Also placing them in commercial parking lots, with the added benefit of car shading, and protection from rain and snow.

Thank you.

Brenda Lindemann
Plainfield, VT

Batch 5: 9/16/15-10/21/15

10/15/15

Dear Task Force Members

Please find my comments attached. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for your work on this complicated topic.

Regards,

Jean Vissering

Jean Vissering Landscape Architecture

3700 North Street Montpelier VT 05602

Phone: 802-223-3262 Cell: 802-522-0050

Jean Vissering Landscape Architecture

3700 NORTH STREET MONTPELIER VERMONT 05602 802-223-3262/jeanviss@attglobal.net

Memorandum

Date: October 15, 2015

To: The Vermont Solar Siting Evaluation Committee

Re: Issues and Recommendations for Solar Siting

Thank you for the opportunity to pass along some thoughts about solar siting and design. I have been evaluating aesthetic impacts since the 1970's (see my resume attached). In recent years I have served as an independent aesthetics expert for the Department of Public Service, though this letter expresses my own opinions and not those of the Department. To date, I have reviewed at least 35 solar projects for the Department most of them 2.2 MW in size. I have also studied other smaller projects for work I prepared for the Vermont Housing Conservation Board. Most of these solar projects have been well-sited, but an unfortunate few were, in my opinion, poorly sited. Given the speed at which applications are coming in, there is a significant potential for cumulative impacts without planning and reasonable guidance.

In reviewing projects, I have not felt the "Quechee Analysis" afforded me the tools to find that poorly sited projects had an "undue adverse impacts on aesthetics." The "clear written community standard" and "offensive to the average person" tests are high bars, and can be difficult to reach. Take for example, a project located on an open meadow that serves as a scenic foreground to views of distant mountains: most likely it is one of many lovely meadows in town and is not singled out in the Town Plan. "Offensiveness" is hard to measure, and regulators are reluctant to rely solely on this test. "Reasonable mitigation" measures tend to be limited to adding shrub plantings or a less industrial looking fence. State policy and guidance would be a valuable tool.

Vermont has worked hard to encourage development that respects our scenic landscape. Witness, for example the work of Terry Boyle (Office of Terrance Boyle), who developed guidelines for building power lines that have helped to keep this infrastructure's impacts at a minimum compared with other states. State guidelines for development at interstate interchanges have helped defeat some of the worst proposals. Rather than relying solely on a

piecemeal approach, a one-project-at-a-time review, we need sensible guidelines for siting solar projects that encourage developers to select less visually sensitive sites. It is wonderful to see solar power taking off. Now is the time to nudge it in a direction that balances renewable energy development with the protection of valued resources.

General Observations

Before recommending siting criteria, I'd like to mention a few other considerations and concerns:

- As noted above, landscaping too often is the only tool serving as "reasonable mitigation," and this leads to a number of problems. Often the solution is a large number of shrubs immediately around the project fence. Plants must be limited in height so as not to block sun. One of the few smaller evergreen species, white cedar (arborvitae), tends to be eaten by deer leaving ungainly dead branches up to deer head height. Also, these are sites where watering is usually impossible and on-going maintenance is limited. Farmers cannot mow in the planted area so grasses grow up competing with the vigor of the newly planted shrubs. Inevitably some plants die and others struggle. If livestock grazing is permitted, the plantings themselves must be fenced off in order to prevent browsing. The effect can be far from aesthetically pleasing. Additionally, ANR recommends that large meadows open for ground nesting birds like bobolinks and killdeer, and justifiably discourages planting in these areas.
- Developers often control only a small leased area immediately just large enough for the project itself. Plantings may be more logically placed "off-site" plantings, such as along a roadside or supplementing an existing hedgerow, but these are areas "not in the developer's control." Appropriate approaches for landscape screening need to be identified. Developers must retain control over a sufficient area so that landscape screening can be adequately provided for. If insufficient land area is available for landscaping, the project may need to be reduced in size. Guidelines should be established for on-going maintenance and for replacement of dead and dying trees over the life of the project. Compliance with proposed landscape plans is another issue, and I would recommend a post construction assessment of compliance (1-3 years following installation) by the petitioner's landscape architect with a report submitted to the PSB.
- I have found that the visual impacts of associated project infrastructure is too often ignored and not clearly identified on plans or described in documents. This includes the interconnections between the distribution lines and the project. Solar projects may require up to three new power poles or, alternatively, a large transformer unit. These are generally located right next to the road. Often these are poorly planned and executed with equipment slapped up on plywood and without screening. The new

poles are more massive and cluttered than typical roadside distribution poles. In some cases new distribution lines are needed to serve a project site. In addition, inverter structures are large metal boxes that are often taller than the surrounding panels. Unless specified, they are usually white, one of the most visually noticeable colors in the landscape. Better planning and guidelines are needed for this equipment, including the use of appropriate colors (dark gray) and for screening.

- Towns should be aware that the Department and the Board find comments and participation from Town officials to be highly valuable. The participation does not need to involve legal counsel, but a statement of concerns, suggested mitigation (if relevant), and recommended actions provided by a local planning commission or selectboard will be taken seriously. It may be helpful to provide towns with guidance on how to participate and what kinds of comments they can make. It would be also helpful to provide sample language that Towns can include in a Town Plan to ensure that solar projects are appropriately sited and reasonably mitigated.
- At the present time the Department of Public Service focuses primarily on larger solar projects (1MW+), due in part to limited staffing. However, numerous projects between 150 and 500kw are being proposed with little oversight. The cumulative impacts of these projects are becoming noticeable. Guidelines need to include these smaller projects.

Recommended Siting Guidelines

My recommendations are in two parts: 1) siting (location) guidelines, and 2) design guidelines.

1) <u>Siting (Locational) Guidelines</u>

Siting guidelines should encourage developers to select less visually sensitive site. Below is a list of site characteristics that are "desirable" and "undesirable" from the point of view of a visual sensitivity. Encouragement could be given to developers who select "desirable" sites, perhaps by fast-tracking projects. By contrast, developers selecting "undesirable" sites would need to justify the need for selecting a visually or environmentally sensitive location.[1]

[1] Every site has unique attributes, and there are likely to be situations in which a project site with "undesirable" characteristics is nevertheless suitable; or the reverse. For example, although the use of open farmland should generally be discouraged, there are likely to be situations where farmland makes sense for a solar project, e.g the power will be used directly by the agricultural operation itself: the field is not of good quality and has been left fallow for a number of years; the field is well screened from view from public vantage points; or attributes of the site or surroundings reduce the scenic quality of the open field.

Macro-Siting	
Desirable	Undesirable
▪ Commercial and Industrial Sites ▪ Less valuable ag land; reverting to scrub ▪ Sites at least 80% screened by existing vegetation ▪ Areas adjacent to Transmission Lines ▪ Adjacent to Existing Non-residential or non-agricultural development ▪ Adjacent to Existing Hedgerow or Woods Edge ▪ Set back from the roadside by at least 500 feet.[2]	▪ Productive Farmland ▪ Open meadows serving as foreground for distant views ▪ High Quality Woodlands/ Productive Timberland ▪ Sites in close proximity to residences (w/i 200 feet), which cannot be substantially screened ▪ Open meadows with bobolinks ▪ Prominent gateway areas to Villages and Towns ▪ Sites requiring new distribution line infrastructure ▪ Sites adjacent to a public road with no screening

2) <u>Design Guidelines</u>

Below are examples of design guidelines, which could help identify minimum standards, as well as what to avoid. More detail may be needed than the bullet list below. For example, guidelines for landscape screening as discussed above. [3]

Micro-siting and Design	
Encourage	Avoid
▪ Location along edge of a field near hedgerows or near existing development ▪ Continued agricultural use of remaining fields. ▪ Project set back from the road to permit other development or land uses in closer proximity to the roadside. ▪ Minimal, well-planned roadside equipment ▪ All Associated Equipment of dark receding color (e.g. dark gray) ▪ No fencing or farm-style wire fencing ▪ Landscape screening where appropriate and requested by town.	▪ Location in middle of open field ▪ Remaining open land no longer suited to agricultural of other uses. ▪ Project location would prevent the remaining land or parcel from being used for future development. ▪ Visually cluttered and unscreened roadside equipment ▪ Associated equipment is white or light in color and visible off –site. ▪ Chain-link fences

[2] Setbacks serve partly to reduce visual prominence of the project, but also may allow development adjacent to the roadside that may be more visually or functionally appropriate.

[3] Good siting vs. relying on screening will be a better approach. In some cases an open meadow at the edges of a solar project may be a simpler and more appropriate solution. In other cases, screening will be a benefit.

Conclusion

The recommendations above represent what I have learned in my experience to date, and certainly some very preliminary ideas. I very much appreciate the Committee's efforts to address this issue. I would be happy to talk with you if it would be helpful.

9/30/15

Sep 30, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I believe that using solar energy is the very best option we have as a nation and a world. What we need are affordable solar panels that can be installed in individual homes or communities to heat and light our homes. This is the best way to really decrease our "negative energy footprint."

Gas, oil, and wood (not to even think of coal!) are NOT environmentally friendly and will continue to put money in the hands of those who profit from our dependency on them, and strip the rest of us of income needed to meet today's rising costs of living in just about every area.

This info cannot be hard to understand...but or ELECTED government officials seem unwilling to do what it takes to make a difference in the lives of Americans who put them in office.
WHEN will men and women show INTEGRITY and COURAGE to simply do the right thing?
Sincerely,
Linda Agnes Deming
Newport, VT

Sincerely,

Linda Deming
287 Lakeview Dr
Newport, VT 05855-8928
msdeming@gmail.com

9/21/15

As a concerned citizen of Swanton, Vermont and a life-long resident of Vermont (All but 9 years of my 48 was spent in Vermont), I am asking for our governing body to call a moratorium on new wind projects.

While the governor fast tracked green energy products, I believe that this forgoes Vermont's legacy of protecting our environment and the aesthetic beauty of Vermont. Vermont has been prudent with Act 250 in keeping Vermont a unique special state. I can not see how we can have such strong environmental protection laws centered around aesthetically pleasing, protecting wetlands and curbing unnecessary development, yet blindly move forward with a wind project.

This moratorium would allow the government and the state's citizens to examine how the current existing wind projects line up with the developers promises. I believe in sustainability and alternative energy, but I believe we should learn from the past and not just assume that by putting up windmills throughout the state means we are doing our part. Instead of protecting the environment, we may be damaging the environment which will be irreversible. Cement poured, roads made by clear-cutting, upsetting established wet-lands and run-off going into our lakes and ponds may be more detrimental. I

haven't even touched on property values declining which means increased tax-rate or the health issues that arise

This developer is taking full advantage of the governor's promise to have green energy projects. The stamp approval only seems to need the governor's and not the citizens of Vermont.

As more and more wind projects arise, the state of Vermont will have scars throughout their mountain veins and our tourists will not have the same experience. Our Vermont will not look the same nor will have the same experience which is ultimately going to lead to a reduction in the tourist economy.

Respectfully,

Sara Jane Luneau-Swan

9/20/15

Sep 20, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am a PV system owner for three years now. I am very happy with the system. The only problem is with GMP: they currently give a check for surplus power produced by a homeowner's p-v system directly to the homeowner in their northern service area (the vintage GMP area), but DO NOT pay cash to the p-v owners in their southern area (vintage CVPS area). We get only a credit on our bill. The credit keeps accumulating, but our credit is way more than we will ever use in a one-year cycle, so it essentially is useless to us.

Most net metered customers do NOT produce more power than they use over a year's cycle, but a small number of us do, according to GMP. GMP immediately sells that excess power that we "give" to them in the net metering program, but are unwilling to pay us for it. This is a little-known practice that GMP should not be proud of. Their support for solar is admirable, but not as total as their publicity would have the public believe.

Vermont citizens in southern Vermont should be treated the same as citizens in northern Vermont by the same power company, whose rates and practices are controlled by a governmental authority. Please address this, as I will with the PSB.

As far as solar siting is concerned, change is always difficult, but we must change our thinking from the opinion that a solar farm is a destruction of our environment to thinking of the solar farm as a guarantee that we will have an clean energy future. Solar collectors are not ugly and are not a blight on the Vermont scenery. They need to be thought of as a guarantee that our grandchildren may be able to live in a healthier environment.

Sincerely,

Sharen Underwood

170 North St
Middletown Springs, VT 05757-4457
sharend@vermontel.net

9/18/15

Sep 18, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hi there,
I would like to applaud your efforts and encourage land developers to incorporate solar panels to place neighborhoods on a micro-grid. I would very much like our neighborhood (which is mainly wooded lots) to open up our grassy areas to community shared solar panels. I'll speak to my Homeowners Association about this possibility and encourage you folks to likewise reach out!
Thank you!
Cheryl Van Epps

Sincerely,

Cheryl Epps
8 Rustic Dr
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3810
vaneppsfung@comcast.net

Sep 18, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Moving away from fossil fuel is a matter of life and death. As to the small but vocal Vermonters who are terribly upset about having to see solar panels (but are fine with seeing other mdern man-made items like cars, pavement, buildings, power lines, and such), a number of words come to mind. Ignorant and sublimely selfish..Seventy years ago, "the greatest generation" saved us from totalitarianism by landing on beaches under fire, growing victory gardens, rationing gas and lots more, and buying war bonds.Today we want Everything for Nothing. Stupid cowards unwilling to even LOOK at something to save our children. Thank God these were not the people who faced HItler in 1944 or we'd be in a very different world today.

Sincerely,

Bill Christian
19 Hewitt Dr
North Bennington, VT 05257-9131
bill_christian@comcast.net

9/17/15

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Increase the subsidies and incentives.

Raise the cap on renewables on the grid to avoid a future bottleneck.

Plan solar storage and energy backup systems.

Sincerely,

Eva Greene
2179 US Route 5
East Dummerston, VT 05346-9755
efg@sover.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Joining Nick Ziter's Community Solar two years ago was the best move for us ever. No more Sky high propane bills, and plenty of credit left over for back up electric heat. Also I love the concept that we can make electricity in the hot sunny weather and keep the credit until we
need it in the cold dark season . And such clean , renewable energy
! This really makes sense !!

Sincerely,

Ann Kellam
198 S Windmill Hl
Putney, VT 05346
dreamon@sover.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Change should not break the backs of the people, cause irreversible damage to nature, displace or drastically injure wildlife, but as much as is possible go unnoticed. Solar! The sun is already shining, much of the time, and is not going to be changed by using its energy for powering our needs. Moving ahead with responsible solar development is to me quite logical, and necessary!

Sincerely,

James Brown
66 W River Rd
Lincoln, VT 05443-9640
jjmbrown@gmavt.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

We built out home with solar in mind. Have wonderful passive solar which minimizes heating on even the coldest of winter days. Please VT, update the infra-structure so that we can have solar panels on our home and barn. Also, we have a perfect site for a large 50+ acre solar farm. Alas, the infra-structure needs to be upgraded before that can happen.

Sincerely,

Alice Soininen
850 Wood Hill Rd
Sutton, VT 05867-4612
soininen850@gmail.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar energy, particularly solar electricity, has many benefits, and is a good fit for Vermont. It doesn't produce greenhouse gases or other air pollutants, uses an inexhaustible energy source, and can be generated locally. It reduces our state's contribution to climate change along with our dependence on fossil fuels, and allows us to move towards energy independence. It also reduces the need to build large, centralized power plants that use coal, petroleum, or nuclear fuel. It can be sited in places that do not impact prime farmland, such as old landfills, marginal land and rooftops. It allows citizens to choose a clean, renewable power source and as such, is highly democratic.
Vermont has set an ambitious goal of 90% renewables by 2050. Solar will be an essential part of that transition, and should be encouraged through incentives, tax breaks, and low-cost financing.

Sincerely,

Paul Cameron
10 Canal St Apt 15
Brattleboro, VT 05301-6919
pcameron@brattleboro.org

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

86% of Vermonters want to achieve the goal of 90% renewable energy for our state. To accomplish this ambitious goal, we must include solar power! Clean energy, yes! Solar power, YES!

Thank you for making this happen.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Coe de Hernandez

Sincerely,

Dorothy Coe De Hernandez
45 Decatur St
Burlington, VT 05401-3614
dorocoeher@gmail.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

To the Vermont Solar Siting Task Force,

I encourage you to support the growth of Solar Power here in Vermont as much as is practical. Our envirnoment is suffering from the effects of burning fossil fuels and we need to transition to all forms of renewable energy as quickly and practically as possible. Fossil fuel and nuclear alternatives are not a viable option.

Sincerely,

Thomas Simon
PO Box 821
33 Bellows Falls Road
Putney, VT 05346-0821
tomrsimon@yahoo.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

PLEASE green power for the Green Mountain State!

Sincerely,

Lucia Port
201 Hollow Rd Apt 9

Waterbury Center, VT 05677-8328
luport@comcast.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

If we are to provide a live able planet for future generations we must put all our energy into renewable sources, most notably solar and wind.
It's time for us to move forward!

Sincerely,

Sarah Carter
9 Dorrance St
Windsor, VT 05089-1609
sfcarter22@gmail.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

We have had solar for 4 years on our garage roof. We just added another 5 panels of solar by buying into the solar farm recently installed in Alburg. Last year we installed a heat pump in order to reduce our use of oil for heat. Because of that we paid a significant portion of our electric bill for the first time since the solar was installed on our garage. Because our goal is to become as fossil fuel independent as possible we added through the solar farm. We fully support the use of solar power including adding solar farms in order to make solar more completely available to all. Please continue to make the addition of more solar possible.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Kennedy
112 Pearl St
Grand Isle, VT 05458-2010
ckennedy917@gmail.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hello, I live in Newport, Vermont. I support the clean and renewable Solar Energy Program. It makes more sense and is environmentally sound, as well as more affordable. I strongly support the future of Solar Energy in Vermont!

Thank you, Marguerite Catuogno

Sincerely,

Marquerite Catuogno
61 Poutre St
Newport, VT 05855-5871
mcatuogno@sbcglobal.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

That our old fuels of choice destroy the environment is just basic fact. Throwing any more funding at fossil fuels when we have the ability to harness energy from the sun that won't run out and won't taint our air, water or soil like fossil fuel capture, refinement, transport and burning does is just plain dumb. It is costly and will do irreparable harm to the environment and to everyone living in it. We have the knowledge and simply need to act on it to convert from the bad fossil fuels to the good solar and wind sources of energy.

Sincerely,

Toni Tempel Navarro
113 Old Sawmill Rd
Colchester, VT 05446-5805
toni_navarro@usa.net

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Last September, I built a 100kw pv plant at my store. It sits right along route 67 West a couple of miles over the line from New York as you enter Vermont. The single worst comment that I have had on the site is " It's bigger than I thought it would be".
EVERY other comment has been possitive. This plant supplies all the electricty needs for my store, my home, The John G. McCullough Free Library, and some for an appartment on the site. It has been 1 year and I can attest that it is working above expectations.

Sincerely,

Galen Rhode
287 Cold Spring Rd
North Bennington, VT 05257
gurhode@yahoo.com

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I love this state, and I believe it is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Ideally, we would not be placing solar panels, because in an ideal world we would not be dependent on energy. This is not an ideal world, we are dependent, and lifestyle changes are not coming anytime soon. WE MUST DEVELOP A SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM ASAP. And, we should be at the forefront of the movement. Vermont can be and should be.

Sincerely,

Michael Lantagne
45 Meadow Rd
South Burlington, VT 05403-6131
lantagne@rmhsvt.org

Sep 17, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As an organizer for Southshire Community Solar here in Bennington County I am amazed at the push back in our area and the lynch mob attitude by a few locals. If we are indeed a green progressive state we must move forward with the 90 by 50 target. Yes our state is beautiful beyond measure and we CAN site power be it solar or wind to benefit us all.

My wife and I put in a small 3kW system at our home and took out our oil burner installing a cold weather heat pump and we spent $285 last year with GMP to heat and cool our home and $89 on propane. This is something I am hoping every Vermonter can have. I hope the Task Force can stream line the process rather than throw up road blocks.

Sincerely,

Jerry Byrd
160 Brambley Ln
Bennington, VT 05201-8951
byrdnestv@gmail.com

9/16/15 after 4:30 p.m.

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

After over 15 years of making our house more energy efficient, switching to CFL and LED light bulbs, insulating and air sealing, we have greatly reduced our heating and electric energy expense. About a year ago we signed on to a Community Solar project in Springfield, when we found that our lot was too shady to have our own solar panels.Since then the project has produced all the electricity we need, without additional cost.

We feel strongly that solar is one of the best, most sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel generated electricity. Panels can be sited along the edges of pastures, and in marshy areas of land which can't be farmed with heavy equipment.
It is essential that we move toward renewables as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Linda Sturgeon

Putney, VT 05346
endless@sover.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

To the Vermont Solar Task Force :

I can't say enough positives about solar energy and its role in the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan.

My late wife gave my son and me $18,000 for a new 22 panel system on our barn roof. I love those $0.00 monthly energy bills ! I see this solarization as my wife's committing herself to Mother Earth, even though her estate was extremely modest.

For me, my wife lives in the present and future of planet earth. I find the panels to be natural and pleasant to look at. I don't find solar grids unpleasant visually, nor windmills for that matter. To the contrary - seeing them invariably warms my heart about combating climate change, one person or one town at a time.

But do it NOW !

Our town of Strafford is planning to install a large solar farm at the Elizabeth Mine, a historic copper mine that became a toxic waste site and a $7 million Superfund project..

We and our state are environmental leaders. PLEASE maximize solar's potential for reducing Vermont's fossil fusillade.

Thank you and the Task Force for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jackson B. Beecham, M.D.
298 Brook Road
Strafford
05072 - 38

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I very strongly support the use of solar energy here in Vermont. As we are all increasingly aware, fossil fuel use has and will continue to adversely contribute to our severe global warming problem unless we very quickly turn to alternative energy sources such as solar.

Vermont has set an ambitious but totally necessary and attainable goal of getting 90% of our energy from renewable sources by 2050 - a goal supported by 86% of Vermonters. To achieve this goal, we need to generate as much clean, renewable power as possible and solar is a critical part of that energy mix. Keeping our solar installations moving steadily and quickly forward will be imperative.

The clean energy sector is increasingly becoming an integral part of the Vermont economy as well. More than 16,000 people -- nearly one out of every twenty working Vermonters -- are now doing clean energy work. These jobs will continue to keep our economy strong and growing.

Vermont must employ many tools to succeed in creating a sustainable energy future for ourselves and our children. Solar energy is one of the most important.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Yrena Jameson
4292 Hollister Hill Rd
Marshfield, VT 05658-7077
annejameson@yahoo.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

There is no doubt that increasing the amount of energy we obtain from renewable sources and reducing our carbon emissions is critical for our state, country and world. I have a solar array supplying my home with almost all our energy needs through GMP and Net Metering. Beneficial as this is for my family, it represents a very small contribution to what is needed. Therefore, I am compelled to add my voice for the thoughtful implementation of as many far reaching initiatives as possible so that a much larger percentage of our energy needs are achieved through increased renewables in our energy mix. Thank you.

David Bayer

Sincerely,

David Bayer
266 Blue Heron Way

Putney, VT 05346-4403
dbayer66@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

While there should be some restrictions on the siting of solar farms/arrays, these must be minimal to allow solar installations in order to tackle climate change.

Sincerely,

Wayne Michaud
637 Jim Dwire Rd
Bristol, VT 05443-4321
wmichaud@gmavt.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It is vital that Vermont and the nation go solar.

Sincerely,

Arthur Barrows
197 Sweet Pond Rd
Guilford, VT 05301-8346
andy@prolinguaassociates.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Since even in Vermont the sun sends us enough energy every day to sustain all our energy needs, it is simple common sense to tap in to it. But right now, on the cusp of new photovoltaic technologies, we need to be investing a large share of our capital in bringing the next generation panels to market, not just installing the soon to be replaced silicon wafer technology.

Sincerely,

Don Ramey

57 Campbell Ave
West Rutland, VT 05777-9113
yemarnod@yahoo.com

Batch 4: 9/15/15-9/16/15

9/16/15 as of 4:30 p.m.

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar offers one of the best of all options for renewable energy, and we need more -- much more -- in Vermont. We as a state should also continue to set a great example for other states to follow.

Along with solar panels on homes and businesses, we can have many more large solar arrays without fundamentally changing the bucolic nature of our state. I am not against granting the regional planning agencies some responsibilities for thinking through where larger solar arrays can best -- and worst -- be sited within their regions.

- Michael Bosworth, speaking only for himself

Sincerely,

Michael Bosworth

Brattleboro, VT 05301
mlb@sover.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Dear members of the Solar Siting Task Force,

I own and run Soveren Solar in Putney. We have employed more than 20 people in the Southern Vermont area and we are the largest provider of Community Solar in Southern Vermont. We at Soveren find it ironic that as Vermont has passed ambitious legislation toward a clean energy future, at the same time, policy after policy has been enacted that makes it harder to develop small scale distributed clean energy in the State.

For example, we had optioned a 'perfect" site for a 500 kW Community Solar installation in Townshend. It was on 5 acres of land that had been subdivided for commercial purposes and it bordered Rt.

30, though a rise in the land along Rt. 30 would have made the installation virtually invisible to passing motorists. The new solar setback requirements took away so much of the land that it is no longer viable for a solar installation. All it took was a chairperson of the board of Selectmen whose property abutted the proposed development who didn't like the look of solar panels in the field behind her house, and the project was dead.

Another example is the decision at ANR to disallow solar arrays from being sited in "river corridors", though to our knowledge, there is no evidence that ground mounted solar arrays pose an increased risk in such areas. This bureaucratic decision at ANR has removed a significant piece of the land that could be developed for solar in VT.

Other decisions restricting Solar development include; discontinuing solar incentives for VT projects, lowering the solar bonus adder, and removing solar developers ability to claim both the bonus adder and the REC bonus in projects after 2016.

And all of these restrictions are coming just when the Federal 30% ITC is scheduled to expire at the end of 2016. Combined, these policies may well sound the death knell for solar development in VT. After all, solar development is a function of economics, not geography. Germany has 30% less sunshine than VT and leads the world in solar projects!

One point that we wish you would take seriously when considering further actions to restrict solar development in VT is that a solar ground mount field is quite unlike a strip mall. When a strip mall is developed, it essentially takes the land out of productive use for perhaps hundreds of years, and it degrades the land under the development. A solar ground mount installation on the other hand, just holds the land fallow for 25 years or so. It doesn't degrade the land in any way, in fact we at Soveren go out of our way to plant ground cover that will enhance the land for future generations. And a solar array can be removed from land in a matter of days.

Another thing to consider is that the choice isn't really between having a field that grows hay and a solar field. It is between a new fossil fueled power plant and a solar array.

If we in VT are at all serious about a sustainable renewable energy future, we need to figure out how to increase the amount of distributed solar we can develop, not to restrict it.

Sincerely,

Peter Thurrell
President, Soveren Solar

Sincerely,

Peter Thurrell
1917 Rt. 5
Putney, VT 05346
peter@soverensolar.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

A sustainable renewable energy plan is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Jill Charbonneau
17 Elm St
Middlebury, VT 05753-1127
stilljillo@yahoo.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Clean Renewable energy is the single most important part of our growing economy in VT. I would like to encourage you to increase the subsidies and incentives, and maintain the utility adders at current levels while proactively raising the cap on renewables on the grid so there is no bottleneck in the future.

The next major revolution is in progress, and the power companies across the country are revolting against Grid tied PV systems, at the same time PV prices continue to go down, and the balance of system costs continue to be trimmed.

Vermonters have clearly made their voices heard and desires known in favor of Renewable energy.

Lets listen to them, and work towards a sustainable energy future, with energy backup systems in place to handle night time loads.

thanks

Sincerely,

Daniel Hoviss
120 Main St
Putney, VT 05346
daniel@dosolutions.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I would love to have a solar energy farm in my neighborhood. I think they are beautiful! They are creating energy out of sunlight. I am happier and happier the more solar energy farms I see, because it means less environmental degradation in the extraction of fossil fuels, less fossil fuels are being burned,

less greenhouse gases, less reliance on foreign countries, and a happier, sunnier future for our state and our country and for the generations to come!

Sincerely,

Sara Neller
41 Adele Pl Apt 35
Rutland, VT 05701-4936
sneller315@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I do support more solar energy for Vermont, residential, commercial, schools, public facilities. Those standing against renewable energy projects slow down progress toward keeping our planet livable for generations ahead. We must do more right now.

Sincerely,

Islene Runningdeer
167 Camp St
Barre, VT 05641-3202
musicmed@myfairpoint.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It only makes sense to encourage more use of this type of solar. I love to drive by the big solar fields it feels like change is really happening. Hopefully someday it will be easier to use solar at our homes. Net metering as it is now makes it difficult for many.

Sincerely,

Patty Martley
573 Rankin Rd
Moretown, VT 05660-9353
martley@madriver.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Having moved to solar power this January my family now understands more than ever before that solar power is a no brainer. Our small array generates more power than we need and we are helping our neighbors by generating some for them. It is more accessible than we thought and even on overcast and rainy days we generate power. Tax credits, rebates and incentives helped make it possible for us. We strongly support educating and funding widespread solar power and hope those in a position to impact the masses join us in this effort. As a small farm business, with buildings in the sun, we are able to almost eliminate the cost of our system over time through depreciation. Most businesses should be able to do the same.

Sincerely,

Yves-Alain Gonnet
87 Highland Dr
Huntington, VT 05462-7500
cheese@midnightgoatfarm.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It is because Vermonters value their environment that supporting solar development is so important. It is an excellent alternative to fossil fuels and is neither noisy nor hazardous to wildlife. Capturing the sun's energy seems the most harmonious way for Vermonters to wean themselves from fossil fuels - something we wish we had done more of decades ago.

Sincerely,

Polly Allen
135 Lapierre Dr
Richmond, VT 05477-8818
pallen@uvm.edu

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

We need to maximize our use of solar power and renewable energy in general.

Sincerely,

Lewis Franco
105 Industrial Park Dr
Morrisville, VT 05661-8532
lewisf@concept2.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar energy is an important component to meeting our renewable energy needs and to achieving our environmental goals. I think we need to be more savvy about sitings going forward - there's huge potential still going with solar.

Sincerely,

Callie Willis
126 Old Orchard Way
Warren, VT 05674-9798
cwillis@gmavt.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I love seeing more and more solar panels appearing throughout the state. It makes me proud to be a Vermonter. Please allow this trend to continue and show that Vermont is ahead of the wave as it always has been in so many ways.
Thank you!

Sincerely,

Robert Oakes
72 Wellington Hill Rd W
Putney, VT 05346-8569
roakes9@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It is unclear where we are as inhabitants of this planet in terms of crossing the line of creating our own self-destruction. But some scientists give us reason for optimism in reversing the damage we have and are creating. Renewable energy is clearly part of the solution.
Are there compromises? Sure. But the choice seems clear to me: Make some compromises or continue down a path that at some point will be irreversible and not a pretty picture for our children and grandchildren.

Our older home in Bristol has a slate roof so we could not install solar panels on our roof. However, we are delighted to be part of SunCommons CSA in Waltham, just a few miles from home.

We support all efforts to increase access to solar and other renewable sources of energy in our state, our country, and across our planet.

Sincerely,

Lauren Waite
30 Pleasant St
Bristol, VT 05443-1011
lauren.waitecrew@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hello,

I installed 16 solar panels on my garage roof over a year ago. I have been delighted with the results. As an avid recycler & one who respects the environment, I am proud and happy to support solar energy. As I am actually producing more then my needs and just watched some credits expire, I will also be purchasing a efficient electric heater which will help reduce my oil consumption this winter. Every Vermonter should have access to solar options at a reasonable price. I went through Sun Common and fully recommend them as Vermont heroes! As a single mother with four children in college (at that time), I could not have afforded solar panels without their assistance and loan options.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Pelletier
PO Box 19
Montgomery, VT 05470-0019
suzanne.pelletier@neklsvt.org

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am strongly in favor of solar electricity. My family has been utilizing solar power for 30 years and love it. We just updated our grid tied system and hope to be net zero with our energy usage. All buildings should be net zero. For the planets sake and all living things we have to make the right choices in all the decisions we make Renewable energy is safe, healthy and good for the environment.

Charles & Ann Parent

Sincerely,

Charles Parent
PO Box 422

Hinesburg, VT 05461-0422
cparent@gmavt.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Why would solar not make sense? It cuts our use of oils and gas. Makes jobs in this state. Shows the rest of the country thar Vermonters are about doing things not just talking about it. Or would you like a new power plant in our back Yard ? It would have to be in our state and not push it on another state.

Sincerely,

Malcolm McNair
385 Landgrove Rd
Landgrove, VT 05148-9742
mdmcnair@earthlink.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

My husband Bob and I support solar power in Vermont. We installed a solar hot-water system in our front yard 2 years ago. It helps us heat water with less electric power. About a year ago we installed solar electric power on our property, which provides solar energy for our plug-in hybrid Chevy Volt and sends excess energy to the grid. Solar power provides jobs for a sustainable Vermont. Our global crisis requires use of solar energy in Vermont to reduce the use of coal, gas and oil. Aesthetic considerations must give way to a new sense that we all belong to Earth Community and that our economy depends on caring for Earth. Land around solar installations can be mowed by ruminant animals such as goats or sheep and maintained without toxic herbicides, unlike vast cornfields. Large wind installations on sensitive ridge lines are another and more difficult matter.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Knight
273 Lynrick Acres Rd
Charlotte, VT 05445-9554
sknight@gmavt.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I truly believe that we must push on with the installation of solar facilities. The latest (in our local newspaper) complaint that solar panels defeat the purpose of rural preservation that the sign laws are

designed to promote is comparing apples and oranges and I think it is ridiculous. Billboards only benefit the business they promote. Solar panels benefit the earth and everyone on it. Please don't let some of these vociferous people run our state.

Sincerely,

Susan Leonard
3621 Munger St
New Haven, VT 05472-3042
sleonard50@comcast.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar represents our best change now for an energy future - locally, at a state level, nationally, and globally.

Sincerely,

James Burde
97 Old Pump Rd
Essex Junction, VT 05452-2741
james@teiki.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I can currently think of no better alternative to our current outdated energy producing system than solar energy.

Sincerely,

Allen Castellano
6 Gordon Ln
Barre, VT 05641-5379
castellano108@hotmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

No one knows exactly how much fossil fuel exists in the ground, What we do know however is that there is a finite amount and when it's gone, it's gone, and it will take millions of years to make more. Dose it make sense to just keep burning it until it's gone and then scramble to come up with something else. Or

should we make the investment now while we still have time to get the next system up and running, so that we have the next generation of power generation up and running when the fossil fuels run out?

Sincerely,

Steve Cota
980 Lime Pond Rd
Barnard, VT 05031
cotalymepond@aol.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

There is no question I'm my mind that we need to be doing more to support the development of renewable energy. I will not support the public servants who oppose or delay such development.

Thank you for your consideration,

Guy Williamson
South Burlington

Sincerely,

Guy Williamson
5 Adirondack St
South Burlington, VT 05403-7232
williamsonguy@msn.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar energy is not a fossil fuel and it helps to mitigate climate change which is a most serious problem that we all face !

Sincerely,

Edward Dombroski
31 Orr Rd
Jericho, VT 05465-2006
ed.dombroski@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As Vermonters, we are facing the warmest year and decade on record.
This human made extreme global weather will only continue to bring us more Hurricane Irene conditions. Towards our new normal it seems only prudent and wise to move as fast as we can to unplug ourselves from carbon based non-renewable energy sources and to do all we can to transition to decentralized renewable energy.

I would urge the Solar Siting Task Force to do all it can to continue to bring safe, affordable and renewable solar energy to all Vermonters beginning with rooftops, home systems so the energy can be as close and as efficient as possible. We also need to align our solar systems to each town's energy plans so we can keep the power as local and affordable as possible, building and creating a sustainable infrastructure.

I very much appreciate your work to transition Vermont to a solar future.

Many thanks
Joseph Kiefer
136 Morse Road
Montpelier, VT 05602

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Dear Task Force Team,

Two months ago I signed on with SunCommon's CSA (Community Solar Array) and am pleased to say that I am doing my small part with a 2% share of the new CSA in Bradford. I don't think I'll realize a big savings, but it sure feels good to be supporting solar.

The CSA model seems a very good one as it's easy to sign on and requires no financial outlay. And, unlike so many public utilities around the country, Green Mountain Power seems happy to work with solar companies.

Sincerely,

Anne Mckinsey
614 Village Rd
East Corinth, VT 05040-4441
mckinseya@gmail.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Every dollar being used to build future fossil fuel infrastructure should be redirected towards solar. Keep the divestment movement going, and soon the fossil fuel industry will not be able to compete on cost.

Sincerely,

Andrew Rianhard
110 Hyde St # 1
Burlington, VT 05401-3631
andrew@z-interiors.com

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am all in favor of solar energy. I like the idea of putting solar panels on rooftops where possible. My own roof does not receive enough sunlight, so I have joined a community solar array through SunCommon.

However, I recently heard of a plan to build a large solar farm to provide power for New York. I would never support this idea! With over 8 million people in New York City alone, the whole state of Vermont could be made into a giant solar farm, and still might not generate enough power for New York. New York has ample land of its own that could be used for a solar farm, and plenty of rooftops.

Respectfully,

Sincerely,

Dawn Taylor
288 Texas Hill Rd
Huntington, VT 05462-9647
dawn@gmavt.net

Sep 16, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I support more solar energy for VT.
I have two daughters who could use it if they could afford it. Bernie's proposal in Congress could make this possible. I actually live in Germany, but use my daughter's address in Taftsville as my US address so I can support what is happening in the US and particularly my beloved VT.

Sincerely,

Chris Paterson
PO Box 409
Taftsville, VT 05073-0409

c.paterson@gmx.net

9/15/15

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar panels are beautiful reminders of Vermont's commitment to sustainable and clean energy. I support all efforts to expand our solar powered future!

Sincerely,

Jeff Margolis
60 S Maple St
Vergennes, VT 05491-1221
jeff@jmargolisvt.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I support solar energy in Vt. Would much rather see a solar array built then a pipeline any day. I also support industrial wind which I know is not a popular opinion in some instances but I support both wind and solar. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Connie Godin
16 S Main St Apt 303
Barre, VT 05641-4849
connieglna@hotmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It's SO important that Vermont be a leader for renewable energy. And it's obvious that wind is not going to do it for us...neither here in
Vermont nor nationwide. Solar is so friendly, what's to complain
about? And it's working nicely at our house! Please support solar energy!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Kinney

840 Station Rd
North Hero, VT 05474-4402
k8kinney@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I know opponents of renewable energy will be trying to make their same tired arguments, so we need to make sure you hear from the Vermonters, like myself, who believe that changing the state's energy system is essential, and that we need to be moving faster towards renewable energy, not slowing that progress down.

Sincerely,

Peter Rubin
000 E. 00 St Dont Send Sticker
Guilford, VT 05301
maxavision@hotmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Why do I support solar? I support solar because it allows me to meet my responsibilities to a clean environment. It also gives me the ability to build a system that lets me choose where I want it built and a system tailored to how much energy I need.

Sincerely,

Anthony Pietricola Jr
6 Old Town Ln
Grand Isle, VT 05458-2324
tonyvje@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Fossil fuels are finite and polluting. Nuclear energy has yet to solve the waste problem.The use of nuclear energy also poses inherent risk to the community where it resides and to the surrounding environment.
Renewable and readily available solar energy is a logical path to pursue to fill Vermont's growing energy needs. Please help secure Vermont's clean energy future and support more solar energy for Vermont.

Bill, Bonnie, and Richard Duncan

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I have been solar and off grid for 5 years. Solar is clean, renewable and powers my lights, computers, chain saw and my Polaris EV among other things. Along with wind and micro hydro, solar is a way for all Vermonters to be energy independent. What could be better than that in today's world?

Sincerely,

Linda Shekinah
320 Creek Rd
Bethel, VT 05032-9135
jcdirectory@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I very much support solar power use in Vermont.
Please continue to try to make panels affordable for houses and existing buildings - I prefer use on buildings to large solar installations, but will continue to support solar in Vermont.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Melinda Stucker
PO Box 201
Norwich, VT 05055-0201
melindastucker@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As a resident of Vermont and part-time resident of Nevada I fully support the increase of renewable energy sources. Nevada is blessed with ample sunshine, but living almost on the Canadian border I can see that even here solar panels would be beneficial. I am 72 years old and wish I had the opportunity many years ago to install panels on my roof at the cost that is available now. Please give solar energy a priority status as fast as possible.

Thank you,

Kingsley Boyd
Newport Center

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

My family lost their home of 15 years to the flood waters of Irene, a storm whose intensity I firmly believe was caused by the climate changes due to the inordinate use of fossil fuels. This was the primary motive behind my family's decision to go solar in our new home, so I now have first hand experience of the benefits of an alternative energy system that in our case has completely and painlessly replaced the fossil fuel generated energy provided by the power company. We made the choice to use the net-metering option offered by GMP, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that the extra electricity our home system generates is going directly into our neighbors' homes and businesses.
Additionally, my employer, Inner Traditions not only has solar panels on the building housing the company offices, but has dedicated a large piece of property it owns in the town of Randolph to a solar field. The business is now entirely powered by an alternative source of energy with no loss of productivity or reduction of quality in the work space.
It is clear to me that the technology is now there to embrace the transition from the fossil fuel system that we all now know needs to occur to avoid the regular recurrence of catastrophic events like Irene (and the current forest fires in northern California that have driven thousands from their homes). If we stop prioritizing the economic discomfort this transition will cause the few that have done very well for themselves with the system as is, and begin to factor in the economic, social, and psychological costs of these events to the public at large at their true value, it is obvious this change--which based on my experience is not as crippling as some energy industry spokespeople would have us believe--is one that is crucial to embrace--and one that is imperative we choose to make sooner rather than later.

Sincerely,

Jon Graham
52 S Main St
Rochester, VT 05767-9676
theleme@comcast.net

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Responsible, widespread solar development is critically important for Vermont's people and its future. Vermont needs the energy source to power our way of life. Solar is a proven job-creator for Vermont.

Brownfields could be put to work creating energy. Farmers and others with unused land can lease acreage to solar companies. Someday when the panels are retired, the lands will be returned in safe, clean condition
-- no toxic mess left behind, no despoliation of precious Vermont landscape. Vermont must take responsibility for its energy needs, not outsource them to other states, which are suffering the effects of coal (human illnesses, mountaintop destruction), fracked gas, (poisoned water, earthquakes), and nuclear plants (risk of accidents that could destroy entire regions, thousands of years of toxic waste). We must accelerate the pace of solar development and shift our reliance onto an energy source we can count on.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Rapee-Adams
485 Elm St
Montpelier, VT 05602-2008
sheryl@massagevermont.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I heartily support the increased use of responsible solar fields in Vermont. Pristine "wilderness" views are being ruined by acid rain or are supported by power from ruined lakes and rivers in Quebec. Let's make a responsible choice.

Sincerely,

Robert Olsen
1612 Shaw Mansion Rd
Waterbury Center, VT 05677-8247
bolsenvt1950@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I would support more programs teaching people about solar power and encouraging individuals. organizations and state and city government to install units where feasible.

Sincerely,

Claire Cabiles
326 Owl Hill Rd

Pownal, VT 05261-9225
clairenonec@aol.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As a owner of one of Vermonts Solar installation company I have a vested interest in supporting solar in Vermont .Catamount Solar, Vermonts only solar workers' cooperative supports a workforce of 8 full time field staff and the same number of support staff. 16 full time tax paying jobs, good jobs supporting 16 Vermont families.
Keep solar strong in Vermont for our working families that depend on there jobs and are proud of the work they do.

Sincerely,

Dan Kinney
34 Pleasant St
Randolph, VT 05060-1161
dan@catamountsolar.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

We have a share in a solar array and are really pleased with it. We are saving money and helping to save the environment. The community programs that allow people who don't have appropriate land or sites to participate are a wonderful option. We are proud to live in Vermont where the environment is valued.

Sincerely,

Robert Schermer
325 Browns Trace Rd
Jericho, VT 05465-9778
gail.schermer@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I do believe in wind power in place of fossil fuel, however it has been brought to my attention that it will cost more to build and maintain such a large scale project not to mention the wind mills do require an outside source of electricity to run them more than the energy they will produce.
they do however produce enough energy to support a private property aka house, small farm, etc.

Sincerely,

Kevin Savoie
PO Box 1117
Enosburg Falls, VT 05450-1117
quieteagle64@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar power is soundless and odorless. No negative impact to the environment. It relieves us from out of state and out of country big business control of electricity cost. It is like growing your vegetables in your garden versus buying them from a grocery store.

Sincerely,

Larry Benedini
14 Sugarwoods Rd
Barre, VT 05641-8800
ljbsk@yahoo.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

We need as much solar power and other renewable and sustsinable energy sources as possible. I installed solar panels at my house just over a year ago. I did most of the work myself without a simple quick permitting process it would not have been possible. I believe towns should have input on new solar installations in their town especially if the installation will power more than a couple houses but the process needs to remain simple, straightforward, and easy.

Sincerely,

Elias Gardner
405 Culver Hill Rd
Middlesex, VT 05602-9264
zorkerz@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hello,
With regards to Energy Supply, Solar Energy specifically and renewable energy in general are by far the best choices to move forward from where we are. I love to see the development of Solar Farms, Wind Farms, and also small scale residential solar located right where it is used, at peoples homes and businesses. Nuclear Energy is wrong for Humans. The people of Vermont had the foresight to shut down Vermont Yankee. The burning of Fossil fuels will continue, perhaps even as many as a hundred years, but that entire time the air and water will be
getting more toxic. The only logical choice is to immediately stop
polluting, start living in sustainable cycles, and this starts with meeting our energy needs from renewable sources. Vermont is leading the country in the development of Solar due to strong leadership from the Business and Government sectors. Since not all housing sites are perfect for Wind or Solar, it makes total sense that individuals who live in places that are not ideal for these should be able to enter into community deals to buy their power from a nearby place that is a good site. Community Solar, where a person who lives in the shadows of the Green Mountains can buy power from a person who lives right down the road, is the next logical step. Why stop there? Why not reduce the power and influence of the Electric Utilities so that the grid is not a monopoly?

Sincerely,

Timothy Hoopes
329 Swamp Rd
Hinesburg, VT 05461-3127
thoopes@gmavt.net

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar energy is a non toxic energy source that does not disrupt the earth. It creates jobs and makes sensible use of a resource that we already have for free- the sun. There is no rational argument against using it more and more.

Sincerely,

Cori Giroux
1324 Kenyon Rd
Richmond, VT 05477-9579

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

We were very proud to join the ranks of solar generating homeowners two years ago, offsetting not only our entire electrical usage at the time, but allowing us to convert other fossil fuel appliances to electric and cover those as well. This not only saved us money in the long term, but significantly reduced our fossil footprint.

We're a drop in the bucket when considering the entire planet, but it's what we could do. Unfortunately, those opportunities are not available to our neighbors with some of the changes in things like the net metering laws.

We need to be encouraging, not restricting additional solar development. Site selection and design is important, and needs to be done thoughtfully and as aesthetically as possible, but it needs to be done.

The sun is renewable, and safe. Like the t-shirt says, "Whenever there is a huge spill of solar energy, it's just called a nice day."

Please keep us moving forward; our future depends on it. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peter Youngbaer
3606 E Hill Rd
Plainfield, VT 05667-9547
youngbaer4@aol.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar is essential to Vermont's meeting its energy goals by 2020.
Getting off fossil fuels is also essential. Solar creates clean, good paying jobs. I am all for it!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Leiter
143 Norford Lake Rd
Norwich, VT 05055
leitersuzanne@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

GOOD FOR US JILINDA RUSHFORD

Sincerely,

Jilinda Rushford
73 Circle Dr
Chester, VT 05143-9311
jilnkim@vermontel.net

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hello.
My husband and I had solar panels installed I our yard in Oct of
2012 and watched our electric meter run backwards. It was exciting.
Three years later the excitement has waned, but the satisfaction of doing the right thing for the environment has remained strong.
We have been following the discussions concerning large solar installations in New Haven and understand how people react to the loss of potentially productive farmland, the unsightliness of massive arrays, the lack of local preparedness and planning for them. With that in mind, how about promoting solar panels at the edges of fields, by less scenic back roads, on more home and business rooftops? It might save Vermont's scenic beauty and farmland while accomplishing the goal of more solar power without the 'in your face' feeling.
Thanks.

Sincerely,

Patricia Horne
1552 Halladay Rd
Middlebury, VT 05753-9148
doingok@me.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

There should be solar panels on every roof. We need to make it affordable for everyone.

Sincerely,

Elise Marks
87 Fairmont Pl
Burlington, VT 05408-1928
elise_create@yahoo.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am all for solar , wind and water power as our planet has reached the breaking point and we have only experienced the tip of the iceberg.
However if we as a state are going to generate tremendous amounts of energy and put up with the fields of panels, we should share the wealth in major reductions in our power bills. It's great to generate but the citizens of the source should also be a major recipient of the benefits. There is two sides to this, making money off our land is great but let us share the rewards and not the stock holders who have nothing to gain but gains in profits at our expense.

Sincerely,

Walter Duda
51 Furnace St
Poultney, VT 05764-1119
waduda@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am writing to encourage more solar in Vermont. Both scenic views and solar arrays can be compatible.

Sincerely,

Kate Stephenson
61 Prospect St
Montpelier, VT 05602-3542
katemgstephenson@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am proud of Vermont's solar progress and look forward to more and more. It is imperative due to climate change issues.

Sincerely,

Jane Garrett
43 Deer Meadow Dr
Middlebury, VT 05753-5600
jngarrett1@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Please remind Vermonters that although solar panels and wind turbines appear ugly to some folks and they complain about our beautiful views a coal burning power plant or another nuclear plant are far far uglier and much more harmful. When we began putting up electric poles all over did anyone complain about how ugly they are? Perhaps, but does anyone even remember? Those poles every fourty feet or so invade our
views continually. The most beautiful vista I am blessed to see every
day is going south on VT RT 7 down the hill in Charlotte. It has electric lines cutting right through the middle of the view. I have often wished those lines weren't there, but we need electricity and it is a burden we bear to have it. Change is always hard, but we will survive and our children and grandchildren will not even notice them just as we don't notice the power poles and lines.

Sincerely,

Laurie Childers
67 Church St
Vergennes, VT 05491-8888
lchilders@gmavt.net

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I put 24 panels on the roof of my house in November, 2014. It is clear to me now that, over the year, these will generate more than we use over the year. Solar is here now, it works, it is cost effective AND we feel great about it. There's no down side. Today, September 15, we generated 37.4 kWhr - more than twice what we use during an average day.

Sincerely,

Steven Schlussel

PO Box 46
189 Lewis Ed
Rupert, VT 05768-0046
rugcrazy@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

It is incumbent on Vermont to pursue our course in alternative energies and improved efficiencies for the sake of our planet, humanity and as a beacon fortress to follow.

Sincerely,

James Santos
557 High Farms Rd
Stowe, VT 05672-4622
santos@pshift.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Hello,

I most definitely support alternative energy instead of using fossil fuel.

I also believe that we should be erecting panels where we have already assaulted the landscape, on the tops of flat strip mall buildings and warehouses that exist all over the state.

Our landscape is far too rich and beneficial to the entire ecosystem to clutter it with panels everywhere.

Thank you and please consider this,
Jesse

Sincerely,

Jesse Lovasco
32 Main St
Montpelier, VT 05602-2927
contact@jesselovasco.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As many other Vermonters do, I support any steps in moving away from fossil fuel and toward renewable energy systems. It is about time that our elected officials stop pandering to the fossil fuel lobbyists and start getting more serious about alternative energy.

Sincerely,

James Messier
446 Messier Rd
Franklin, VT 05457-9654
jmessier@fnwsu.org

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

As a long time user of solar power (almost 30 years), I can attest to the benefits of using this energy in an average household. We in Vermont can become nearly energy independent by supporting solar power projects around the state. Vermonters can set an example for the rest of the country because if we can do it here any state can. The time is now!

Sincerely,

John Larouche
2211 Vt Route 14
East Calais, VT 05650-8309
chromantique@aol.com

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I support the development of solar power in Vermont and throughout our nation. It is safer for birds and less obtrusive than gigantic wind towers. Converting in part or fully to solar power will not help, though, unless people are educated about consuming less energy.

Sincerely,

Althea Church
342 Chester Knoll Dr
Bennington, VT 05201-2267
4emmalulu@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Renewable energy is important for Vermont and solar is an important piece of the energy pie, but we need to do it in the Vermont way.

A good project will stand up to scrutiny. Abutters, and towns should have a say in commercial sitings. And all projects should have a provision backed up with a bond that when the project is not longer being used to produce electricity that they be dismantled and the land restored. It is done with gravel pits , it can be done with solar sites and wind too, except it is hard to put back a mountaintop once it has been leveled.

Developers should not have free reign to do as they please.

Sincerely,

Richard M Roderick
127 Mountain View Dr
Wells River, VT 05081-9712
maxinpalau@hotmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I strongly support solar energy development, for my community, for Vermont and for the planet. Marshfield's Energy and Climate Change Committee, of which I am a member, oversaw the construction of a very successful solar panel array to provide power to the Old Schoolhouse Common a couple of years ago. We have also encouraged development of private solar facilities in Marshfield and Plainfield. And I have begun to investigate building a solar panel on our property.

The property on which we now live had been the dairy farm of my wife's family. The 40 acres across the road were hay fields which my wife raked with a horse-drawn rake when she was a teenager. They were sold to the town after her father died. The solar panels were erected there, just beyond our dining room window. She had some misgivings about the effect of the solar panels on the land's appearance, but she has become fully adjusted to the scene.

Of the various types of renewable energy, solar is probably the cleanest and has the fewest down-sides. It promises to cost less than fossil fuels within several years of erecting the panels. Use of renewable energy is no longer an option. Climate change is beyond doubt, caused by human activity and requiring human intervention.
Vermont must do its part, perhaps serving as a model for the rest of the country.

Sincerely,

Joel Trupin
143 School St

Marshfield, VT 05658-8047
ktrupin@msn.com

VT Solar Siting Task Force

to the members of the task force for the state of vermont

Vermonters need to bring solar
to the homes scattered over the rural Vermont landscape that are now; primarily heated with oil, propane and wood products. Solar can offer the residents of vermont alternative energy to heat their homes; heat their water. It is clean energy. The solar industry provides jobs for our high school and college graduates. we have the capability; we have the technology. We need incentives for the industry to grow and further develop. Vermonters are in agreement that they don't want open fields crowded with panels; and more windmills scaring the green mountains.
There are presently out of state solar agencies; walking door to door to talk about getting on board with their company. Do we as Vermonters want to sell out jobs and the solar industry to another state?
Let us move forward; together with residential solar energy today. Its smart for our children ; our environment; our wildlife; our earth.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sargent
7 Brownell Dr
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3527
finchjct@comcast.net

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

Solar should have been a priority 30 years ago but the fossil fuel industry did the usual corporate tactic of introducing doubt and denial into the global warming conversation much as the tobacco industry used the same tactic about any adverse health effects from tobacco.
We simply are about to wake up to a world we may find increasingly difficult to live in. Solar and other renewables must find the way to the forefront of our energy production.

Sincerely,

Michael Doran
3 Country Cmns
3a
Vergennes, VT 05491-9815
mkdoran9@gmail.com

Sep 15, 2015

VT Solar Siting Task Force

I am a member of a CSA because my home is too shady for panels. We should endeavor to generate all our electricity with renewable power, including our transportation. I think we need a lot more solar, as much as we can build and as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

John Bauer
54 Dave Culvers Rd
Waterbury, VT 05676-9667
bauer.vt@gmail.com

Batch 3: 9/1/15-9/14/15

9/13/15

Leonard Duffy (lduffy@LYNXfast.com) sent a message using the contact form at http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/contact.

I request the opportunity to speak to the task force at the upcoming meeting on Sept. 17. Five minutes is requested. I intend to speak for a large and rapidly growing group of citizens concerned with the deterioration of our Vermont heritage.

9/10/15

Dear Sir or Madam, Vermont has been very flexible in regards to siting solar. This i support, but as a member of my town's planning commission I have soon this forward thinking abuse (in my opinion). A landowner was complaining about the aesthetics of the solar array being installed, The installer told us after the meeting they were not concerned as "the PSB does not give much weight to aesthetics". We were able to satisfactorily resolve the issue, but this always stuck with me. Such an attitude is not the way to broaden support.

I've also hear complaints from several people (at least 4 installs) that the aesthetics of the install were not as published / promised.

A solution to this would be for the installer to develop 3d models of the install. This would better communicate the final project to the customer and affected parties, and hold the installer to a higher standard than a vague "the project will be screened by trees".

the town of Milton is installing two solar parks, the final size will be from 3.8 to 5 MW. I contacted the SunEdison rep on the idea of a 3d model. He said this is no burden for the installer as it is commonly done.

In summary, a 3d model would add little or no burden to the installer, better communicate the project to those affected and the PSB (if needed). It would also be a clearer commitment of the installer as to how this project will affect the community.

Henry A. Bonges III
Harvard Extension School

9/3/15

I am a landscape architect who routinely provides aesthetic analysis and landscape screening services for solar developments in the 248 process, as well as other types of permitting services in the 248 and 250 process. I recently read the "Siting guidelines for solar" memorandum from Adam Lougee and have a few comments.

Generally, I feel that Adam's memo is on the right track and represents good advice, especially in regards to a suggested standard format of siting policies and criteria that municipalities could consider adopting. After having reviewed all of the Regional Plans and many, many of Vermont's town plans, they typically do not have well defined goals, objectives, policies, or strategies for identifying or protecting their landscapes, road corridors, or public vistas. On the one hand, this could be thought of as good for a solar developer, but on the other it represents many unknowns that may be costly depending on how the process plays out for each project, including time and money spent prior to filing for a CPG. With a few exceptions, the siting language that Adam proposes would help a developer and towns understand the screening implications of a chosen site before moving forward. This is especially true for identified significant viewsheds, corridors or scenic viewpoints.

Some observations:

1. In review of the many Vermont Town Plans, towns are often at a loss for how to identify and safeguard any scenic vistas or viewsheds within their town boundaries. Some towns have taken the steps to identify these areas, but seldom list any recommendations for protecting them. This may be caused by the fact that development and land use is so varied that it is difficult to prescribe a single protection that will protect against all change. However, because we know what solar is, what it looks like, and how large it can be (150 kW up to and perhaps beyond 200 MW), Towns should be requested take a more active stance in identifying scenic landscapes.
2. If a town has not identified publically owned scenic areas or locations, they should be given a short timeline to do so. These could be specific locations (i.e., a community park with a view of the mountains), or town/state highways with a particular scenic character (i.e., Route 22A from the intersection of X to the intersection of X). Per Adam's memo, these should be enumerated by the town specifically to inform 248 processes, and these could have applications beyond solar siting.

3. A specific request for screening and setback requirements should be prepared for the listed scenic areas. This could be very similar to Adam's mitigation methods listed in item 3 on his page 3.

Some exceptions:

A. Landscape mitigation should not always be required. Just because a solar farm is visible does not mean that the landscape is not worth seeing. The visual cadence of a solar array is not dissimilar to that of a roadside storage facility or large wholesale plant greenhouses, which also have their drawbacks but are not always required to be screened from view to protect a viewshed.
B. A given site should not be considered intrinsically "poor" just because it has no natural screening. If landscape mitigation is justified and can be successfully added, then the site is not necessarily poor.
C. A project's size (i.e., 2 MW vs 5 MW) is not an adequate indicator of aesthetic impact. I have reviewed 5 MW projects that have extremely minimal visibility. Size itself should not be a limiting factor enumerated by a town to protect scenic quality, and should be removed from consideration, or at least judged impartially by the PSB on a per project basis.
D. Visual proximity to a protected corridor or location should NOT be considered an exclusion zone, but rather a trigger for the mitigative steps outlined by the municipality. If a town wants to prevent solar development in an area, then that town should work toward acquiring legal easements or outright ownership of that property.

Otherwise, I agree that a draft aesthetic guidelines document should be given to all towns in Vermont, and each town should be given a short timeline for ratifying their proposed changes as an addendum to their municipal plans. It is my opinion that if a town does not prepare a clear document that outlines aesthetic resources and accepted methods for mitigation, then that town has not taken its responsibilities seriously and should not be sheltered for their inaction by the PSB, especially during successive 248 applications within a municipality. Arguing aesthetics can be time consuming, unpredictable, and esoteric, and the lack of clear community standards routinely creates financial impacts to both the developers and the various state agencies.

Jeremy Owens <jeremyvt@gmail.com>

Batch 2: 8/12/15-8/31/15

8/24/15

Larry Kraft (lkraft@springfieldmed.org) sent a message using the contact form at http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/contact.

Springfield Hospital anticipates installing a solar hot water system on its roof in the upcoming year. In fact, we are planning a fund raising campaign to pay for it. The goal is to have the entire project paid for with donations. We believe we are the first hospital in Vermont to do this.
Is this something we should be coordinating with the Solar Siting Task Force?

8/24/15

Anne Margolis,

Please pass this article on to the members of the Solar Siting Task Force.

Thank You,

Kathleen Nelson
Brighton/Island Pond

Stirring the Pot

Stirring the Pot

Different perspectives on public policy

Search for:

"Renewable" Energy – Powerful Words Make Us Do Stupid Things

August 23, 2015Energy Policy, Opinion, Public Policy, Sustainability

By Mark W. Anderson

Tweet

The term "renewable" is now magical when applied to energy policy. We understand intuitively that fossil fuels are fixed, not renewable. Even if they are abundant now, every bit of coal, oil, or natural gas we use means there is less available, and their use causes a host of environmental and national security problems. If an energy supply were renewable, it would be a desirable replacement for fossil fuels. This was the simple logic of the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005, including a provision to establish a renewable fuel standard. Renewability equals goodness. A host of interest groups, including many environmentalists, have lined up to support almost any energy source that can carry the adjective renewable.

We can be smarter than this. It turns out that some of policies to encourage renewable energy look just plain stupid. We need better criteria for evaluating energy alternatives, because we must reduce fossil fuel. (Stay tuned, I'll return to this in the future.)

I suggest three better ways to think about energy policy – energy return on energy invested, also called net energy; power density; and life cycle assessment. All three are more abstract and less intuitive than renewability. Yet all three would contribute to better energy policy.

Energy return on energy invested (EROI) mirrors the idea of returns on financial investments. This metric accounts for the fact that any energy source requires other energy sources to capture, move, and transform that energy source into heat, electricity, or work. So the wood for our winter heating requires gasoline and oil for the chain saw, diesel fuel for the machinery to get the logs out of the, more gas to cut and split the wood, diesel to get the couple of cords of wood to our house, and human work (food energy) to haul, stack, and haul it again to the stove. The EROI for wood is the measure of the amount of heat we get for our house from burning the wood divided by the sum of all the energy needed to harvest, process, and deliver the wood. If the result of that calculation is greater than 1.0 then the net energy or EROI is positive; we got more energy out of the system then we put into the system.

Energy systems should be thought of in the same way we think of saving money. We would not put $100 in the bank today with the promise of getting $95 back a year from now. So we should not promote energy systems that put in 100 units of energy to get 95 units back, even if the system is deemed "renewable." We appear to have done this in the case of ethanol from corn, the primary fuel mandated from the EPA's renewable fuel standard.

There is a vigorous debate in the academic literature about whether corn ethanol's EROI is positive or negative. Scientists supported by the government argue that the EROI is positive, although the amount of net energy is not large. At best the energy out in the form of ethanol is only slightly more than the total energy it took to make this alcohol. Others scientists, notably David Pimentel of Cornell University, suggest that the net returns are negative. The sum of energy to plant, fertilize, irrigate, harvest the corn, to convert the corn to sugars, and to make ethanol from that sugar is greater than the energy in the ethanol. Virtually all of these energy inputs are fossil fuels. If Pimentel and others like him are correct, we are using more fossil fuel energy to make a gallon of ethanol from corn than that gallon of ethanol contains. But it is "renewable," so it must be good. This strikes me as a stupid policy. It would less fossil fuels to just use them directly.

A second metric for evaluating alternative energy systems is power density. This is a measure championed by the Canadian geographer and energy expert Vaclav Smil. Smil's several books on energy are must reads for anyone who wishes to weigh in on energy issues; Energy in Nature and Society is the most comprehensive of them. Power density, which is more abstract than EROI, measures the flow of energy in spatial terms. Think of it as measuring how compact or dense an energy system is. The greater the power density of the system the less space it will consume on the planet per unit of usable energy produced, an important consideration when we are trying to find energy to support more than 7 billion humans. One of the reasons that fossil fuel systems have been so successful is that they exhibit a high power density, therefore take up

less space compared to alternatives. This fact makes finding good alternatives to fossil fuels more challenging than just calling those alternatives "renewable."

Looking at another popular renewable energy — wind power — we see the usefulness of power density as a metric. Since the wind blows often, if not regularly, it is assumed that its renewability makes it a desirable energy alternative. But it has a very low power density, meaning that it will take a lot more space for the wind infrastructure to deliver the same amount of usable energy we get from fossil fuels, as we can see below from estimates made by Smil.

Power Source	Power Density (W/m^2)	
	Low	High
Natural Gas	200	2000
Coal	100	1000
Solar (PV)	4	9
Solar (CSP)	4	10
Wind	0.5	1.5
Biomass	0.5	0.6

This much lower power density explains why even modest wind power development in Maine is so visible, in some cases degrading vista's important to Maine's tourism economy. Wind power's low power density, and therefore big footprint per unit of energy delivered, also accounts for its negative impacts on birds and bats.

A final approach to evaluating alternative energies is Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). Here analysts attempt to measure the full costs of energy systems "from cradle to grave," including what economists call the external effects. These are the spillover costs when an activity imposes costs on other people that are not accounted for by typical markets where energy resources are traded. LCA would attempt to calculate the full costs of the system, from its initial development to its eventual deconstruction once obsolete.

Going back to ethanol from corn, LCA would measure the costs of increased soil erosion and nutrient loading in the Mississippi River and other water bodies adjacent to the dramatically expanded acreage dedicated to corn production because of the Renewable Fuels Standard. It would measure the increased hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico as these nutrients are flushed down

the Mississippi. I t would also measure the costs from a decline in Monarch butterfly populations, partly caused by the displacement of milk weed plants throughout the Mid-West by expanded corn acreage for biofuels.

Renewable is one of those words with many vague meanings. That is part of its power. It was embraced originally by environmentalist keen to find alternative energy systems to fossil fuels. The problem was that it was also embraced by special interests who saw a way to enhance their narrow interests (sell more industrial corn, develop wind farms) in the guise of improving the environment and national security by offering "renewable" energy alternatives. Lurking behind the rhetoric of renewability were serious environmental problems that we ignored at our own risk.

We can be smarter.

Recommend this article

Tweet

About Mark W. Anderson

I am proud to be a Mainer, born in Caribou and schooled at Brewer High School, Bowdoin College, and the University of Maine. I am grateful for a 35 year career at UMaine, the last decade in the School of Economics.

8/14/15

Dear PSB, Anne Margolis,

Attached, please find a public comment I am submitting to aid the Solar Siting Task Force in synthesizing testimony taken this past legislative session. I hope it will be a shorter, yet still effective path to reviewing the documents. I'm available via email or phone for any questions and remain happy to help the group if it chooses to use this information in its deliberations. I look forward to the continued progress of the Task Force.

Sincerely,

Scott Woodward

[SEE ATTACHMENTS]

8/14/15

Lori Barg (watrberry@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/contact.

We need to think about energy policy-integrated with food policy. Food from far away takes a lot of energy. Please protect state-listed ag soils and do not site large solar farms on state-listed ag soils. Good soil can not be replaced! Use rooftops, parking areas, brownfields, poorer quality soils first.

8/12/15

Ann Margolis,

Please forward this information to the Solar Siting Task Force.

Thank You
Kathleen Nelson
Brighton/Island Pond

Subject: Blittersdorf obliterated

Date: Wed, 12 Aug 2015 20:09:38 -0400

From: Kathleen J. Nelson <glasstath@myfairpoint.net>

To:

Ladies and gentlemen,

Here is a shining example of why the public has no faith or trust in what goes on in Montpelier.

http://www.campaignmoney.com/political/contributions/david-blittersdorf.asp?cycle=14
http://vtdigger.org/data/campaign-finance-donor-results/?donor_id=I245&cycle=2013-2014

http://archive.burlingtonfreepress.com/article/20121203/NEWS02/312030010/Georgia-wind-project-fined-10-000
http://watchdog.org/230815/vermonters-must-abandon-the-car/print/

"It's a personal project," Blittersdorf said."

"Its owner said Tuesday that it (the MET tower) is there to test the wind potential of a single, home-style wind turbine, not another major commercial wind turbine project."

Test Wind Tower is for Home Project

http://energizevermont.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Chronicle3-23-11.pdf

Three articles in this email, Barton Chronicle and Caledonian Record coverage of Monday night's Select Board meeting in Irasburg. This is the website for the project http://kidderhillcommunitywind.com/.

http://bartonchronicle.com/kidder-hill-wind-project-draw-fierce-opposition/

In Irasburg

Opposition to wind project is fast and fierce

by Elizabeth Trail

IRASBURG — About 40 people, including two state legislators, came to the Irasburg Select Board meeting on Monday night to protest two commercial scale wind towers proposed for nearby Kidder Hill.

David Blittersdorf, the professional wind developer who plans to put up the turbines and owns the land they would be sited on, also came to the meeting but was not allowed to speak. After listening to well over an hour of public comments, the select board agreed to have some answers at its next meeting to questions about exactly what the town can and cannot do regarding wind development.

Kidder Hill is about four miles northwest of Irasburg. The two towers would produce five megawatts of power and would be nearly 500 feet tall, or as one citizen pointed out, almost a third as tall as Kidder Hill itself.

"Becky Boulanger — wind towers" was the first item on the agenda for the select board's Monday meeting. Ms. Boulanger lives on Kidder

(Continued on page twenty-four.)

Blittersdorf was not allowed to speak

(Continued from page one.)

Hill and has been organizing the opposition to Mr. Blittersdorf's plan.

The meeting was called to order in its regular location at the town clerk's office, then moved to the town hall in order to accommodate the crowd.

The select board made it clear from the outset that people would be allowed to speak only when recognized by the board, and comments should be directed to the board, not to other members of the audience.

"We need to make Irasburg the place where all of these wind turbines come to a stop."

However, when people realized that Mr. Blittersdorf was also at the meeting, he was pelted with name-calling and derisive comments.

"I think it's a little sneaky and underhanded," Kidder Hill resident Tim Clark said.

"Can I say a few words?" Mr. Blittersdorf asked.

"I don't think they want to hear from you," select board Chairman Robin Kay said.

Ms. Boulanger was the first of at least a dozen people who the board officially recognized to speak.

"I want it to be a matter of public record that as soon as the citizens of Irasburg learned that there were to be two industrial wind towers, they came before their public officials to see what can be done," she said.

She was not among the few residents of Kidder Hill who were invited to an August 1 meeting to hear Mr. Blittersdorf's proposal, she said. She had been both surprised and horrified to learn about the proposed wind development.

She said she supports renewable energy, but she has grave concerns about the sight, the sound, the health issues, and the environmental impacts of wind development along ridgelines in Vermont. She wants to see the community translate its concerns into action as quickly as possible, she said.

Michael Sanville of Irasburg read a list he had compiled of 14 arguments against the Kidder Hill wind towers, ranging from aesthetics to health issues to property values.

"If this type of power is so appealing to a select group of people in this state, why not install these towers in Chittenden Country, or Montpelier?" he asked, drawing cheers from the crowd.

Steve Therrien recounted his family's experiences living near Sheffield's wind project.

"The Governor said there would be winners and there would be losers. You're looking at one of the losers," he said.

His family was driven from their 50 acres in Sheffield by the First Wind project there, he said. Over a three-year period the family experienced a series of health issues, including long-term insomnia, which they attributed to wind noise, Mr. Therrien said. Although his hand-held decibel meter showed readings above legal levels, neither the state nor the wind developer was willing to accept his readings as proof in their efforts to negotiate reasonable compensation for their property, Mr. Therrien said.

(Continued on page twenty-five.

David Blittersdorf wants to put up two comm wind towers on his property on Kidder Hill in Iras Here he is at the Irasburg Select Board me Monday night. Photo by Elizabet

Opponents plan to organize

(Continued from page twenty-four.)

"You're dealing with people who won't tell you the truth," he said.

Several speakers compared state and industry response to the health concerns surrounding wind turbine noise to the complacency of previous generations about the dangers of cigarette smoking or radiation exposure. People believed early on that smoking and radiation were safe. It was only later on that the scientific community recognized the dangers.

"It takes years and years to get research done," said Marie Engels, another resident of Kidder Hill.

Kevin McGrath of Lowell described his experiences living near the Lowell wind farm. His house is less than 3,000 feet from turbine number one. He planned to ask for a reduction in his property taxes. While the turbine noise inside his house is generally below the legal limit of 30 decibels, the noise is irritating enough over time that he would not be able to sell his house, he said.

"Visit my house, be my guest, and tell me that you would want a turbine near your home," he said.

There are also many parts of his land on which his decibel meter is recording much higher readings, he said, making it impossible for him to ever subdivide it.

"My land has scrap value now," he said.

"When one person can do something on their land that impacts all of these people, it's immoral and it should be illegal," Ms. Boulanger said.

Two state legislators, Vicki Strong and Gary Viens, also came to the meeting. Mr. Viens expressed his opposition to the wind project. For the record, he voted against H40, the latest Vermont energy legislation, he said.

"We need to make Irasburg the place where all of these wind turbines come to a stop," said Ms. Strong, who is from Albany.

Opponents of the Sheffield and Lowell wind projects lost a lot of time learning the ropes, Ms. Boulanger said. In order to avoid the kinds of missed deadlines and misunderstandings of procedure experienced by opponents in Lowell and Sheffield, it's important to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of people who have done this before, she added.

Ron Holland, who has actively opposed other wind projects, offered to put his energy toward another anti-wind campaign with the Kidder Hill group.

Dr. Holland, who lives in Irasburg, suggested that Mr. Blittersdorf and wind opponents be invited to speak at a special town meeting. The two sides would present their points of view. After a public discussion, residents of Irasburg would then vote yes or no on the question "Shall the town of Irasburg support the Kidder Hill wind project?"

The select board agreed to research the requirements for warning special town meetings, and present their findings at their next meeting.

"It can't be an either-or question between wind and solar. We're going to have to have both if we're going to survive."

"You have to play the political process as well as you can, because the legal process is bought," Dr. Holland said.

That sentiment was echoed several times during the evening, with particular skepticism focused on the Public Service Board (PSB), which regulates such projects.

"The whole thing is stacked," Carol Irons of Albany said.

Ms. Irons also has a history as a wind activist.

"It's an illusion of democracy. Three people who answer only to the Governor will make a decision in favor of the corporation."

Pat Sagui of Westfield cautioned that part of dealing with the PSB is understanding protocols and getting paperwork filed in time to have legal standing to speak at their proceedings.

"If they think they can take down a little town because we're a little town..." Ms. Kay said later. "We'll know by next Monday night wha can legally do."

Mr. Blittersdorf's requests to speak were rejected several times by the select board.

"You are not on the agenda, so I don't thin we'll be making time for you to speak tonight," Ms. Kay told him.

Outside, following the wind portion of the select board's meeting, Mr. Blittersdorf, the C of NRG Systems, said he's passionate about sustainable energy.

"We have to use every possible renewable energy source out there, or it's game over," he said. "And we're going to have to cut our overa energy use by about 75 percent. It would take four planets to sustainably meet our current energy consumption."

His vacation cabin on Kidder Hill is completely energy self-sufficient, powered by b a solar array and a small scale wind turbine, which is tied to the grid, he said.

Was he expecting this kind of objection to proposal?

"I was blindsided by this meeting," he said had no idea that this was on the agenda for tonight. I just happened to come by."

He said he sees evidence of outside organizing, both in the people attending the meeting, and in some of the comments.

Mr. Blittersdorf had brought several site a topographic maps on presentation boards to th meeting. According to the website for Kidder Community Wind, he expects to finish a long l of studies by the end of the summer, and to st applying for permits for his project in the fall. owns a total of 157 acres on Kidder Hill, in tw parcels separated by a road.

According to the maps, he plans to site the turbines within 500 feet on either side of his c cabin. He also has a large area of cut over forestland that might be suitable for a large s solar array. He expects to sell both the power turbines produce, and the renewable energy credits, to Green Mountain Power.

Asked if he'd consider focusing on the sola potential if the community is too opposed to hi wind plans, Mr. Blittersdorf said: "It can't be either-or question between wind and solar. W going to have to have both if we're going to survive."

http://caledonianrecord.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&TM=48820.27

NORTHEAST KINGDOM

HOSTILE CROWD OBLITERATES BLITTERSDORF, WIND

PHOTO BY JENNIFER HERSEY CLEVELAND

Michael Sanville reads from his 14 arguments against industrial wind during the Irasburg select board meeting Monday night.

BY JENNIFER HERSEY CLEVELAND
Staff Writer

Opponents Organizing, Readying To D
Developer Silenced At Select Board M

"This is nothing but corporate greed and corporat

IRASBURG — Residents here are going to have to "raise some particular hell" to fight a proposed industrial wind development on Kidder Hill, according to Carol Irons of Albany.

Irons speaks from experience. She was arrested while protesting the Lowell wind project, as were two other people who attended the Irasburg select board meeting Monday to speak out against a two-turbine project proposed by developer David Blittersdorf.

The Public Service Board (PSB) process is a stacked deck, Irons said. While it may provide the "illusion of democracy," Irons said, "It's a done deal before you start."

A veritable who's who of wind opposition attended the meeting, and had no problem convincing Irasburg residents that industrial wind turbines would not be good for their health, their scenic beauty, their pocketbooks, or

Blittersdorf was not perm during the meeting, havin needed to ask to be placed Thursday prior to the meetin ple, however, whose names w

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Blittersdorf: Irasburg Wind Project Is A Win-Win Deal

BY JEN HERSEY CLEVELAND
Staff Writer

IRASBURG - If ice is thrown from blades on two wind turbines David Blittersdorf hopes to build on Kidder Hill, he'll be the first to know.

Blittersdorf cabin is the closest structure to the 499-foot towers he hopes to build there.

The owner of AllEarth Renewables and a leader in renewable energy projects in Vermont said he wants to build the project on Kidder Hill because it is a good site. It has access to roads and powerlines, and Green Mountain Power already planned the transportation route during its Lowell wind project.

Plus, he said, the low elevation - at 1,750 feet - will mean much fewer issues with icing of blades, one of the concerns raised by opponents at Monday night's select board meeting, where Blittersdorf was not permitted to speak most of the time.

But closer to Blittersdorf's heart is the impact that renewable energy developments will have on the Earth.

These kinds of projects, once built, can run forever with new parts and no fuel, Blittersdorf said. They help stabilize long-term energy needs and provide the best long-term prices for energy.

With petroleum-based generation sources, customers are at the whim of the Middle East, he said. And someday in the near future, Blittersdorf sees this country going the way of other places - like Sweden and British Columbia - where hefty taxes are levied against those who pollute the environment with carbon emissions.

"We will hurt our own economy if we don't take care of energy in a clean way," he said. "We will be at a disadvantage is we don't move to renewables."

Blittersdorf was accused of going about this process in an underhanded and sneaky way, but Blittersdorf says he's given the select board more notice than is required. The select board was given materials a month ago, and Blittersdorf tried to attend a meeting two weeks ago. There was no quorum that night, and the meeting was canceled, but he spoke with Selectman Brian Sanville and assistant town clerk Priscilla Stebenne. Blittersdorf was unaware that the board held a make-up meeting August 3.

About 20 people attended a gathering at Blittersdorf's cabin, where he said about half were against the project and half either for it or at least open-minded about it.

Blittersdorf said any other delay was simply him trying to get his data in line so he had plenty of information before moving into the permitting stage.

Benefits to Irasburg

Irasburg would likely receive about $40,000 a year in tax credits, Blittersdorf said, basing that on the same size projects in Georgia and Milton at the Georgia Mountain project he owns in part.

The development would additionally pay three-tenths of a cent toward school taxes for each kilowatt hour, while using no town services.

Blittersdorf plans to net-meter 10 percent of the output, which could be sold to Green Mountain Power (GMP) customers at a discount. As of now, only GMP customers could avail themselves of that due to current law. But Blittersdorf is hoping that the law will change so that net metering is allowed across utilities.

Irasburg residents are on the Vermont Electric Co-op system now.

Concerns

A few people raised concerns Monday night about people being forced off their land during blasting, excessive noise, wind turbine syndrome, and other issues.

Blittersdorf responded to them by phone Tuesday.

Whenever rock is blasted, a safety zone with a 1,000-foot radius is required, and opponents at Georgia have tried to use that to their advantage, Blittersdorf said.

Annette Smith, executive director of Vermonters for a Clean Environment, was one such opponent. She knew that if she could delay construction, Blittersdorf would miss his deadline to receive federal tax credits, Blittersdorf said.

A family had their kids camp out in a tent inside the blast zone, and Blittersdorf said he had to get a restraining order to keep them safe during blasting.

"They went and put kids in harm's way to try to stop us, which I think is really irresponsible," he said.

For that issue, Blittersdorf admittedly used a law firm where House Speaker Shap Smith is employed, but Smith had nothing to do with the restraining order.

At the Irasburg meeting, a woman said Blittersdorf was fined at Georgia Mountain for illegal blasting, but Blittersdorf said that's not true. He was fined $10,000, but it was because the contractor's crew was not allowed to work on holidays. They inadvertently worked on Bennington Battle Day, he said.

Irasburg opponents accused the developer of being in "bed with" Governor Peter Shumlin.

Blittersdorf has contributed to Shumlin's campaign, as he has contributed at the maximum level to Bernie Sanders' campaign. He contributes to both because they believe global warming is real and are committed to doing something about it, Blittersdorf said.

"If $4,000 can buy someone who has a million-dollar campaign, that's pretty sad," he said.

As for wind turbine syndrome, Blittersdorf said, "It's not scientifically valid."

Like the placebo effect can have a good effect on one's health, the "nocebo effect" can be harmful, Blittersdorf said. "If you have it in your head something's going to happen, you can get results," he said.

As for noise, sound has been monitored at the Georgia Mt. site and found to be within acceptable ranges - 45 decibels outside and 30 inside. A library with no one talking produces about 35 decibels, Blittersdorf said, whereas the Irasburg selectmen's meeting Monday night was probably about 70 to 80 decibels.

The main person complaining about noise at the Georgia Mt. site has been found to be dishonest, Blittersdorf said. She has reported noises like jet engines when turbines were not even running, he said.

As for complaints that wind turbines don't work, Blittersdorf wonders how he can be the greedy, rich guy spoken about in Irasburg if his turbines don't operate.

Wind power does contribute to baseload power, despite what opponents said, Blittersdorf said, as will be proven with ISO capacity credits which are only given to baseload sources.

As for Blittersdorf raking in the dough in tax credits, the credits are only for energy produced. The project would be eligible for 2.3 cents in tax credits for each kilowatt generated over ten years, he said.

In contrast, solar projects get upfront credits for building the project, while gasoline is so heavily subsidized and incentivized that customers pay less than $4 a gallon for a product that should cost $10.

Batch 1: 8/1/15-8/11/15

8/8/15

I attended the task force meeting in Montpelier and have to say it was nothing but another dog and pony show. Many of the committee members were primarily affiliated with many of the developers and there appeared to be a lack of transparency. While they take several months to come up with a plan or proposal projects continue to get approved and built despite the problems they have and are causing. The same thing happened when the Industrial Wind Siting Task Force was formed; absolutely nothing. The PSB still can approve a project whether it meets the conditions or not. This is nothing but a joke and Vermonter's are paying the price whether it be higher energy prices, loss of property value, loss of wildlife habitat and loss of revenue due to the decrease in tourism.

For the life of me I could not figure out why there were no engineers in this committee. It would seem to me that this the most important part of this discussion when siting these energy projects; whether or not certain conditions are feasible for siting; such as using industrial barns, parking lots, transmission corridors etc.

Last but not least. I would hope that you would include langue where the developers would have to pay impact fees to the neighbors of these industrial projects. We neighbors have to deal with the impacts on a daily basis and this has not been addressed. Just our property devaluation alone is a huge problem for those of us who have everything invested in our homes and property. Also the possibility of long term health effects on the neighbors is another issue not being addressed. We need more than lip service!!!!!!!!!

Thank you for taking comments,

Robbin Clark

8/5/15

Anne Margolis,

Please forward this information to the Solar Siting Task Force.

Kathleen J. Nelson
Brighton, VT

Solar is booming but solar parks could have unintended climate consequences

http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/solar-power-parks-impact-environment-soil-plants-climate

The roof is on fire: Do solar panels hinder firefighters?

http://www.mnn.com/your-home/at-home/blogs/the-roof-is-on-fire-do-solar-panels-hinder-firefighters?hpt=hp_bn18

Issue 92 - Fire Concerns with Roof-Mounted Solar Panels

http://magazine.sfpe.org/issue-92-fire-concerns-roof-mounted-solar-panels

8/3/15

To the members of the Solar Siting Task Force,

On July 28, 2015, at the first meeting of the Solar Siting Task Force (SSTF) the representative from Renewable Energy Vermont (REV), Gabrielle Stebbins, advised the SSTF that she intended to replace her seat on the SSTF with a lawyer from Dunkiel, Saunders & Raubvogel, a group known for its representation of "renewable" energy developers. This law firm has a history of abusive behavior toward public opposition to poorly sited or unwanted projects. This request by Gabrielle Stebbins should be denied.

It must also be considered that while it is evident that the SSTF is obviously developer driven it should at least pay some consideration to the *appearance* of public consideration and honest inquiry into energy generation siting. For the members of the SSTF to be accepting input from a totally biased lawyer without considering input from an independent legal source degrades any result that the task force might conclude. It would be very likely that this present group assigned to the SSTF would take the statute and legislation interpretations of a developer's lawyer in stride with no question as to alternative interpretations or options.

The request for a lawyer substitution for REV must be denied.

Kathleen J. Nelson
P.O. Box 147
Island Pond, VT 05846

8/1/15

After a lengthy "battle" to protect my property from harm, I have reflected on a poorly executed process for the establishment of solar projects. I happen to believe that these observations are no brain ears, but apparently not.

1) the choice of an " appropriate " site should reflect not on the testimony of a hired opinion for the petitioner as in the following example. The Vermont Solar Farmers, LLC has proposed a site on a ridge of hard ledge , zoned residential, which is situated between two residential areas..close proximity. These homeowners don not have the financial resources to defend themselves and the process is largely legal requiring legal representation. Being on a ridge, the clear cutting of 15 plus acres of trees affects erosion and ensuring water damage to our land, our homes, and our septic systems. We have natural springs on this ridge that keep the land moist, even wet most of the year so the additional water is unmanageable. The wind that comes across will take down many trees...perhaps on our buildings. And we will also be affected by the decrease in our home values due to our close proximity to the ugly view of solar panels.

2) Not enough attention is being put on the financial stability of the owner/ developers. LLCS should be prohibited and a substantial escrow account should be required for ensuring damages. Investigations into the financial backgrounds, ie. Bankruptcies should be considered. I our situation, atleast one of the partners has declared bankruptcy atleast once. This does not exude confidence in the responsibility of the organization of the project. The PSB needs to be more responsible in issueing permits.

3) the overall issueing of permits needs to be reigned in to preserve our state's beauty. People come to Vermont to see foliage ; not solar farms. Our state is struggling to survive economically and we are shooting ourselves in the foot by erecting these solar farms in the middle of our money producing areas...ie. Stratton/ Winhall. We already have a surplus of real estate for sale and now the home values will plummet further. There are many indirect anddirectconsequeces to these projects.

So far these are the prime issues that I would like to see addressed. The permit has not yet been issued but not one application has been denied yet.

Sincerely,Jeanne MacIntyre, Winhall