

ENERGY GENERATION SITING POLICY COMMISSION
FIRST PUBLIC HEARING

held on the 23rd day of January, 2013, at
5:00 p.m., at Brattleboro Union High School,
131 Fairground Road, Brattleboro, Vermont.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jan Eastman, Chair

Tom Bodett

Louise McCarren

Gaye Symington

Chris Recchia

Linda McGinnis-Director

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1 JAN EASTMAN: Hi, good
2 evening. My name is Jan Eastman, and I'm the
3 chair of the five member Energy Generation
4 Siting Policy Commission. I always have to
5 look at the name because I never get that
6 right. We were -- it was a commission that
7 was appointed by Governor Shumlin in October
8 2012, and we've been asked to provide
9 recommendations to the Governor and the
10 legislature on best practices for improving
11 the processes surrounding the site approval of
12 electric generation projects and for public
13 participation and representation in the siting
14 process.

15 And, so, for this
16 purpose, for our purpose, electric generation
17 projects relates to all facilities other than
18 net-metered and group net-metered facilities.
19 So, we are not doing the really small ones,
20 but we are here for sort of everything else.
21 So, all electric generation sitings. Specific
22 information on the charges of the, of the
23 Commission are available in the Executive
24 Order and that -- there are copies of the
25 Executive Order on the back table, okay? And

1 additional information on the meetings that
2 we've held and will be holding can be found at
3 our website. Don't you love technology? So,
4 you go can going to
5 SitingCommission.Vermont.Gov and you'll find
6 copies of everything, all of the information
7 that we're seeing.

8 We have a court reporter
9 here, so everything tonight will be taken down
10 by the court reporter. We also have someone
11 who's, who's taping us live as well. And all
12 of this information will go up on the
13 website. For those of you who don't wish to
14 make public comments tonight or if we've
15 limited your time too much, you can go to the
16 website and provide more comment. We have --
17 we started our process, as we say, in late
18 October. We've had a number of informational
19 sessions. We have listened to information
20 from other states. Today we made our first
21 site visit. We went to a gas plant in
22 Londonderry, New Hampshire.

23 We'll be doing site
24 visits at -- solar site visit and at the
25 McNeil plant in Burlington on the 30th, and

1 we're going to the Northeast Kingdom to two
2 wind projects on February 12th.

3 We are in our
4 deliberative stages as we call them. We have
5 another full hearing day on February 5th. Our
6 goal is to have some draft recommendations for
7 everybody by late March and we will have two
8 -- let's see, we have public hearing in
9 Burlington on January 30th and then a public
10 hearing in the Northeast Kingdom on February
11 12th.

12 We've tried to do our
13 site visit and public hearing dates together
14 because we are from various places. We will
15 be doing two additional public hearings once
16 we have draft recommendations. One will
17 probably be in the Rutland area and one will
18 be in Montpelier, but we'll use interactive
19 television. Okay. And as we get these things
20 scheduled, as I say, you can always go to the
21 website and find out what's going on with us,
22 all right?

23 Tom Bodett is a member of
24 the commission. He's from here, down south;
25 you know, we needed a guy from south of Route

1 4. So, we've got Tom. Gaye Symington is
2 here. Louise McCarren, another member of the
3 commission, is on her way. I guess, you know,
4 going east/west. She was with us at the
5 plant. Chris Recchia, who is the Commissioner
6 of the Department of Public Service, is here.
7 He is also sort of an ad hoc member of the
8 Commission. I'm sorry, Scott Johnstone, our
9 fifth member, and Deb Markowitz, the Secretary
10 of the Agency of Natural Resources, couldn't
11 be here tonight; so, we are trying, but they
12 will read all of the transcripts of everything
13 that you say.

14 So, this is our first
15 public hearing on this matter. So, we're
16 going to learn along with you. We are asking
17 you to focus, if you can, on the charges of
18 the Commission. And that means that we are
19 relating to energy siting only and not whether
20 certain generation is appropriate in Vermont
21 or not. We're looking at electric generation
22 and what should the siting processes be.

23 I've got a list --
24 whoops, some more people are adding their
25 names to the list. I've got a starting of a

1 list here of people who have signed up and, I
2 believe, to make public comment. Some thought
3 it was a sign-up sheet. So, I still think I
4 should be able to go with three minutes a
5 person and then we'll see where we are. And
6 if there are those of you who haven't signed
7 up and we still have time, I'll -- we'll
8 provide another opportunity then.

9 Well, let's see, so limit
10 the time and, as we say, please be respectful
11 of your fellow citizens. This looks like a
12 good group. I don't think we'll have any
13 problem with that so -- oh, yeah. Linda is
14 going to help doing the timing for us. So,
15 when you see this orange one come up, you got
16 one minute left, and when you see the red one,
17 it is time to stop and Anne, who was right
18 here, is going to -- we thought you might be
19 more comfortable if we took the microphone to
20 you so you don't have to come up front. Does
21 that work for you all?

22 (A discussion was held of the
23 record.)

24 JAN EASTMAN: All right. Will
25 you do me a favor? We are going to try and do

1 it that way but that means you really need to
2 speak up and slowly so the court reporter can
3 get everything you are saying. And I will go
4 through the list with your names, but I'm sure
5 I am going to mispronounce more than 50
6 percent of them, and, so, if you will then
7 repeat your name and perhaps spell it for the
8 court reporter, that would be most
9 appreciative. Yes.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can we use
11 the podium if you want to to support
12 materials?

13 JAN EASTMAN: Yes, you can.
14 If you wish to use the podium, you may.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

16 JAN EASTMAN: Okay. Are you
17 good to go? Any other questions before we get
18 started? Thank you for coming out on such a
19 cold day. So, first up is George Harvey. Mr.
20 Harvey.

21 GEORGE HARVEY: I'll use the
22 podium.

23 JAN EASTMAN: You'll use the
24 podium.

25 GEORGE HARVEY: My name is

1 George Harvey. I operate an energy blog. I
2 spend two to three hours every day, first
3 thing, looking at news. And I have been doing
4 this for quite a while, eight months on a
5 blog, and before that for a long time as an
6 E-mail report. And I wanted to bring to
7 people's attention the fact that there has
8 been a lot dealing with global warming
9 recently, and this has an impact on how
10 electrical generation should be sited, how it
11 should go through the process.

12 In November the CIA
13 issued a report on global warming that said we
14 are expecting to get into a lot of wars in the
15 near future because there are going to be a
16 lot of people starving and poor access to
17 water. They blamed global warming very
18 clearly on carbon emissions and greenhouse
19 gases. Same month, PricewaterhouseCoopers
20 issued its report. They said, basically, if
21 we act very fast, things are going to be very
22 bad, but if we don't act very fast, they are
23 going to be apocalyptic.

24 In December, BHP Billiton
25 said that they were going to be rebuilding a

1 Harvard facility to take care of the storms
2 that would be coming in the future that would
3 be far more often and far worse than they had
4 been in the past. It was not lost on the
5 media that BHP Billiton was the largest mining
6 concern in the world and that the port
7 facility was one that carried coal. They
8 blamed this on global warming.

9 Yesterday, there was a
10 very interesting article that I only found in
11 one paper that said that people in Congress in
12 the United States have been surprised that
13 they were being lobbied by organizations, big
14 companies. One of the examples was Starbucks
15 Coffee that has nothing to do, really, with
16 energy but which was concerned about global
17 warming and was pushing for, for wind
18 generation to be sited as quickly as
19 possible.

20 I want to point out that
21 global warming is not a problem of New York
22 City having an extra foot or two of water and
23 2 degrees of increase in temperature. If you
24 go down in Massachusetts, you'll see that the
25 spruce trees are all dying; the forests are

1 being destroyed. This is the wooly adelgid.
2 It is expected to kill every spruce tree in
3 Vermont. The other conifers in Vermont will
4 all be destroyed according to mainstream
5 science. Our deciduous trees will all be
6 destroyed except for oaks and hickories. We
7 are, by midcentury, to have uniform brown fall
8 colors.

9 The New England Aquarium
10 has an interesting article on global warming
11 on their website. They said that the things
12 that we call 100-year floods today are going
13 to happen every other year up to every fourth
14 year in midcentury.

15 We have to act on siting
16 and establishing, wind especially but also
17 solar, as rapidly as we possibly can in order
18 to prevent things from being apocalyptic. We
19 don't want to lose the oaks and hickories in
20 addition to everything else.

21 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
22 up is John --

23 JOHN ROBOHM: Robohm.

24 JAN EASTMAN: -- Robohm.

25 Thank you, sir.

1 JOHN ROBOHM: I'm John Robohm
2 of Jacksonville. It is R-O-B-O-H-M. I've --
3 we've lived in the site of the Searsburg Wind
4 Farm and because of that fact we were prompted
5 to install wind turbines on our property
6 figuring we would use their wind, and one of
7 the things that has happened to us over this
8 period of time is, number one, we have found
9 out that having a wind turbine very close by,
10 within a couple hundred feet of our house, has
11 meant a virtually no destruction of the bird
12 population and nothing has been detrimental to
13 our property. That's not to say it's the same
14 as a large wind turbine, so I don't want to
15 try to make that balance, but I do want to say
16 that I'm a very strong proponent having looked
17 at this more and more, of distributed power
18 generation. And I think that's one of the key
19 things that we all need to focus on, let
20 alone, the green energy; it is the distributed
21 energy.

22 And when you compare the
23 mega power plants that we have not too far
24 from here or the other power plants of other
25 kinds of power sources like biomass or the gas

1 or coal, the size of those plants and the
2 impact they have on the relatively near
3 environments is extremely destructive.

4 You need only go down on
5 Route 91 toward Springfield to see the size of
6 that power plant and the effect that that has
7 on the neighborhood area. Rather than belabor
8 this too much more, I think I will just end.

9 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can we ask
11 questions?

12 JOHN ROBOHM: You may.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I would just
14 like to understand what you mean by using the
15 wind from the --

16 JOHN ROBOHM: Our thought was,
17 we are east of the Searsburg Wind Farm, and we
18 can see them from the base of our towers. And
19 we said the wind comes blowing through them
20 and we'll just be the second users of that
21 same wind.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I see.

23 JOHN ROBOHM: And it has
24 worked out very well for us. That's what I
25 meant by that.

1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

2 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
3 up, is it Jim Morey?

4 JIM MOREY: I'm Jim Morey.
5 I'm from Windham. I am a native Vermonter,
6 eighth generation. I have a degree in
7 Wildlife Biology, University of Vermont. I
8 think I have as much stake in the future of
9 this state, hopefully, as anybody in the room,
10 and I would just like to address a few
11 comments on what I think is a key issue that I
12 think has been pretty much ignored in this
13 entire procedure, and it is not unusual either
14 in Vermont or across the nation or, actually,
15 internationally.

16 And, so, my point is
17 this, in consideration of the Siting
18 Commission's charge to study how cumulative
19 energy projects impact and the need to develop
20 siting guidelines, I would like to address the
21 impact on property values of wind farms close
22 to residences. And I understand that -- the
23 village charge, the Commission must address
24 all major areas of impact: Environment
25 aesthetics; physical structures and grids;

1 current laws and regulations; but if the
2 Commission is going to propose actions that
3 will positively change Vermont's energy
4 policies in a substantial and substantive way,
5 then the issue of Vermonters losing a major
6 portion of their property value with no
7 recourse or compensation must be addressed;
8 otherwise, we are going to have endless
9 lawsuits.

10 So, in reviewing the
11 Commission's meeting notes and expert
12 testimony on-line, which is a wonderful thing,
13 I agree, I noticed that I have seen almost no
14 discussion at all on the impact of wind farms
15 on real estate values. We all remember
16 watching on television when tropical storm
17 Sandy, weeks ago, destroyed the homes of
18 people in New York and New Jersey. That is a
19 very strong visual impact. People lost
20 substantially all or most of their property
21 value. This was an act of nature or, if you
22 will, an act of God.

23 If we continue to allow
24 450-foot turbines to be sited within a half
25 mile of people's homes in Vermont, we are

1 going to lose the same amount of value. They
2 are going to lose a major portion, if not all
3 of the value of their home, but this will not
4 be an act of God; it will be an act of
5 government.

6 So, you could argue
7 whether this is a real issue or not. We
8 could, we could quote Ben Hoen's study done by
9 the Department of Energy and their Division of
10 Renewable Energy which, quite frankly, if you
11 believe a study that was funded by DOE's
12 department for building more wind turbines, I
13 think we are a bit naive.

14 There are studies done by
15 certified appraisers like Mr. McCann from
16 Illinois, and Ben Lansink of Ontario, Canada.
17 There are studies done by professionals such
18 as Martin Hinselman of Clarkson, and the
19 interesting thing is, not that they've done
20 these studies, but they all come up with the
21 same conclusion: You are going to lose 30 to
22 45 percent of your property value unless you
23 are in a really bad situation where your house
24 will be impossible to sell.

25 So, the question

1 becomes: What do we do about this? And it is
2 a serious question because now I'm out of time
3 already. So, I guess the hundreds of hours of
4 research I've done on this will not be heard.
5 Thank you very much.

6 LINDA MCGINNIS: Please write.

7 CHRIS RECCHIA: Please write.

8 JIM MOREY: I'm sorry?

9 LINDA MCGINNIS: Please
10 write. We really encourage everybody who has
11 comments that don't have enough time to
12 write. The Commissioners will all read what's
13 written in public comments.

14 JIM MOREY: If you give me 30
15 seconds, I will just say the last thing and
16 that the fact is, that I can prove to you that
17 this happens and the Board really needs to be
18 looking at property value guarantees, and
19 Hammond in New York, I have a 10-page document
20 on it by an attorney. And as soon as you have
21 property value guarantees, you'll start to
22 solve a lot of these problems.

23 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

24 JIM MOREY: Thank you very
25 much.

1 JAN EASTMAN: Next up is
2 Leslie Morey.

3 LESLIE MOREY: My name is
4 Leslie Morey. My husband Jim just spoke. We
5 are residents of Windham, UVM graduates. I
6 also have a degree in the Natural Resources
7 area, but the past 30 years I've been an
8 estate planner involved in financial
9 planning.

10 Currently I do long-term
11 care insurance. I have been a bank trust
12 officer. I deal a lot with people's net
13 worth. And what I find with the elder
14 population, and if you look particularly in
15 Vermont which we all know is an aging
16 population but particularly in Windham County
17 which is the oldest aging population, that we
18 are going to have a significant impact on the
19 elderly whose homes are sited in a small
20 community like Windham where we are looking at
21 towers being probably about a half mile within
22 very many residents of that town.

23 So, what I would like to
24 comment about, is that in the age group of age
25 65 to 74, 85 percent of the -- 85 percent of

1 these people own properties and more than 50
2 percent of their net worth is tied up in these
3 properties, and in Vermont, more like 70
4 percent of their net worth is tied up in these
5 properties. And as they age in my industry
6 what we find is, when the first person dies,
7 one person tries to stay in the home and,
8 ultimately, they have to sell it for the care
9 of that second person.

10 And I'm very concerned
11 about the loss of the property value or the
12 fact that they can't even sell a home which we
13 are already finding out from local Realtors
14 that people will not look at homes in Windham
15 because of that, homes that are currently for
16 sale.

17 So, I would like to,
18 again, address the charge that we are
19 impacting an elderly population that is in
20 need of their net worth. The other part of
21 this, and it is an aside, is if you have 5,000
22 acres in your property, what's impacting us is
23 between Windham and Grafton, and if the PSB
24 does decide that towers will be built there,
25 why can they not be build in the center of

1 that property of 5,000 acres rather than on
2 the outskirts of towns within a half mile of
3 people's homes or even a mile where there is a
4 definite property impact as well as a health
5 impact on these people? Thank you.

6 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
7 up is Jan Ameen.

8 JAN AMEEN: Wow, it is amazing
9 to be taller than somebody before me.

10 LESLIE MOREY: Thank you.

11 JAN AMEEN: My name is Jan
12 Ameen. I am a resident of Westminster and
13 first I want thank the Commission for all of
14 the good work that you've been doing. I
15 looked at your website, and I know you have
16 been very, very busy taking a lot of -- taking
17 in a lot of information. I also want to thank
18 you for having this hearing down in
19 Brattleboro; as many of you will soon find
20 out, except for Tom, it is a long drive to
21 Montpelier, and I hope you all arrive home
22 safely this evening.

23 I'm here to talk about a
24 type of energy generation that could ruin more
25 Vermont land than wind turbines, will spew

1 over 400,000 tons of greenhouse gas into the
2 air each year and potentially kill Vermonters
3 with respiratory illnesses, that would be
4 industrial biomass including the proposed
5 35-megawatt facility in North Springfield.

6 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry,
7 can you slow down a bit?

8 JAN AMEEN: Sure.

9 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

10 JAN AMEEN: Wind turbines have
11 received a lot of airtime lately, and I'm
12 going to leave that issue for others to
13 address. My immediate concern as a resident
14 in the state is the proposed North Springfield
15 biomass plant sited in a residential area that
16 will consume 550 tons of green wood per year,
17 that's 20,000 acre -- I'm sorry, 550 tons of
18 green wood per day; 20,000 acres per year, is
19 supposed to generate 1,176 tons of greenhouse
20 gas emissions per day, that's 429,000 tons per
21 year, which, by the way, is about half of what
22 Efficiency Vermont has done to reduce
23 greenhouse gas emissions, and it will release,
24 roughly, the same amount of particulate matter
25 as burning coal.

1 Particulate matter, for
2 those of you who don't know, increases
3 respiratory illnesses such as asthma. Right
4 now Vermont has an asthma rate higher than the
5 U.S. average. And see if I can get this, the
6 American Cancer Society; American Lung
7 Association; and the Heart Association are all
8 opposed to biomass because of the health
9 effects. Importing wood from neighboring
10 states to feed this plant's appetite raises
11 the risk of importing invasive species.

12 Everyone I have talked to
13 about this plant can't believe that our green
14 state would allow such a thing. They ask:
15 Isn't this going backwards? Yes, it is, but
16 alls this facility has to do is convince the
17 PSB that the electricity that they will
18 generate at 25 percent efficiency is in the
19 public good.

20 By 2025 this plant will
21 only be generating 1 percent of Vermont's
22 energy load. I've talked to Commissioner
23 Snyder in the ANR Forestry Division, and he is
24 participating in the PSB hearings but,
25 obviously, his hands -- his recourse is

1 limited, and he is very concerned about forest
2 harvesting plans; he is concerned about the
3 ecological destruction of whole tree
4 harvesting and the invasive species threats.
5 This is a man who told me that he spent his
6 entire life working to protect Vermont
7 forests.

8 I urge you to put the
9 siting and the operation of electric
10 generating facilities into the Act 250 process
11 first like we do with all of our major
12 developments and then the PSB process second.
13 I also urge you to create a department or
14 division that will map the need for energy
15 production facilities on a statewide basis and
16 not in a piecemeal fashion that it appears to
17 be now. Preservation of our environmental
18 health depends on it.

19 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

20 JAN AMEEN: And I would also
21 like to give you a document that I put
22 together, pass this down, on biomass issues
23 for you.

24 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

25 Thank you very much.

1 JAN AMEEN: Thank you.

2 JAN EASTMAN: Robert Kischko.

3 ROBERT KISCHKO: Good

4 evening. Sorry, Jan. Good evening. My name
5 is Robert Kischko. I'm a resident of North
6 Springfield, Vermont. And I'm here to talk to
7 the Commission and, by the way, thank you; it
8 will be my second time having an opportunity
9 to talk in front of the Commission.

10 I have got several
11 points. I actually have a letter that I'm
12 going to go through partially that my wife
13 helped put together. It is mostly her
14 thoughts. One of the issues that we see is
15 the siting issue. I had the great and
16 fortunate opportunity to speak in front of the
17 Senate Committee for Natural Resources and
18 Energy last year, and I gave them a
19 challenge. I said, "Shame on you for not
20 putting together a committee or a group to
21 study where power plants ought to go," because
22 in our situation -- and I'm the chairman of
23 the North Springfield Action Group -- we have
24 a developer who has come into our community
25 and said: We're going to put this power plant

1 here because it suits our needs. It suits the
2 needs of the people that are not from this
3 state. And guess what? It's a merchant
4 facility. They are going to be using our wood
5 and the neighboring woods from New Hampshire
6 and surrounding states to generate power
7 that's going to be sold not for necessarily
8 our utility to use, Green Mountain Power
9 essentially, but it could be sold anywhere.

10 So, there is things like
11 renewable energy -- renewable tax credit or
12 tax credits that we're questioning. There is
13 just a number of things, but I think what I
14 want to leave the Commission with tonight is
15 my key concern when I actually had a meeting
16 with the Governor as well, and he wrote back
17 to me, and I think it was a heartfelt letter,
18 he said that the decision to build a biomass
19 plant is a decision that must be weighed
20 carefully by the potential host community.
21 So, that got my wife thinking. She said, "I'm
22 going to do some research, and I'm going to
23 find out what our selectboard has done as far
24 as the research here and when have they
25 presented this to our community."

1 So, in doing that, she
2 found that not one time did the biomass plant
3 -- was the biomass plant put on the agenda at
4 any of our selectboard meetings. It was
5 mentioned several times as public comment, and
6 we were really taken aback by that because now
7 we're faced with the Public Service Board and
8 all of the costs and everything that's
9 involved in trying to do the right thing for
10 our state.

11 So, I urge people to
12 write the Commission, the Public Service
13 Board, the Department of Public Service, and
14 do the right thing. We do not need an
15 inefficient, as Jan mentioned, a 26 percent --
16 it is actually 26.1 percent -- generating
17 facility in our community here in Vermont.
18 So, thank you, and I've got a nice handout --

19 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

20 ROBERT KISCHKO: -- with all
21 of the backup that my wife spent hours in
22 putting together.

23 CHRIS RECCHIA: Excellent,
24 yeah.

25 JAN EASTMAN: Thanks. Thank

1 you. We appreciate all of the research. Next
2 up is Walter Dodd.

3 WALTER DODD: Hello, my name
4 is Walter Dodd. I also live in North
5 Springfield. I'm also participating in the
6 North Springfield Action Group. The first
7 thing I would like to do is, I would like to
8 ask members of the panel here, and any of the
9 rest of you, write down this address: 36
10 Precision Drive. I'm going to ask you when
11 you get back to your desks; when you get back
12 to your computers, look up Google Maps or
13 Apple Maps, plug in that address. You will
14 find a large building in North Springfield.
15 Immediately to the east of that building is a
16 20-acre open parcel. Zero in on that parcel
17 and then back out, zoom out until you see the
18 airport with the major runway aiming straight
19 at that parcel. That is where this biomass
20 plant is proposed to go.

21 The biomass plant would
22 normally have a 250 or so foot stack. It is
23 limited to 140 because it is right at the end
24 of the runway. Also, take a look at all of
25 the residences. There is a village right

1 adjacent, and there is residences all around
2 this area. Look at the roads leading into
3 it. Every one of them is a residential
4 street. And if you also look at a topal map
5 or if you have the 3D effect, look at the
6 hills, because that 140-foot stack is lower
7 than a lot of the surrounding hills.

8 What we're dealing with
9 here is a bowl, and they are going to put a
10 35-megawatt plant in there emitting all --
11 and, by the way, mostly it is emitting as much
12 co2 as an equivalent sized coal plant.

13 Now, the industry calls
14 this renewable. The industry calls this --
15 mental block here.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Green.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Carbon
18 neutral.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER:
20 Sustainable.

21 WALTER DODD: Carbon neutral.
22 Yeah, it's carbon neutral, I suppose, if you
23 got 50 years to wait for the trees to grow
24 back that you harvested to burn and put into
25 the atmosphere.

1 Okay. Now, on top of all
2 of this, picking up on a point that Bob made,
3 the town -- there was -- this was, basically,
4 kept entirely out of the news. We were
5 totally blindsided by this thing being
6 presented to the Public Service Board. So, it
7 went before the Public Service Board; a docket
8 was created, that's when it hit the
9 newspapers, that's when we found out we had
10 this thing to deal with.

11 All of these things are
12 issues that I think you people need to pay
13 close attention to. Thank you very much.

14 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.
15 Linda Gray.

16 LINDA GRAY: Hi. My name is
17 Linda Gray and that is G-R-A-Y. Thank you as
18 well to the Commission. I have come to this
19 hearing because I have been active for several
20 years with our town Energy Committee. I have
21 been on our Energy Committee because I'm
22 extremely worried about our future locally and
23 globally on a warmed planet. Our committee is
24 working on energy efficiency, a town and
25 school solar project. We have been promoting

1 residential solar. We have been doing all
2 that we can.

3 The bottom line is, to
4 stabilize temperature, global emissions really
5 must peak within five to ten years and decline
6 rapidly every year after. So, we all, from
7 households to the state to the nation, should
8 be doing all that we can to save energy and
9 use renewable energy. If we don't, all we
10 have to do is think about Hurricanes Irene and
11 Sandy to understand what we face.

12 So, our committee is
13 supporting Vermont's comprehensive energy
14 plan, and, in fact, we are working on a
15 similar goal for our town. So, my message to
16 the Siting Committee is, to recognize that the
17 goals of the statewide plan simply cannot be
18 met unless we develop all of our renewable
19 sources.

20 I'm here specifically to
21 support wind energy. I feel that most of the
22 concerns that relate to wind project siting
23 are rebutted by research or can be resolved
24 through a good siting process. What remains,
25 it pretty much boils down to aesthetics,

1 that's very subjective, and for every person
2 who hates the look of wind turbines, I could
3 find you another person who thinks that they
4 are beautiful sculpture.

5 I also -- I think the
6 permitting process should take into
7 consideration the impact of climate change
8 because that is a crucial element that we
9 face, and the connection with energy is
10 obvious.

11 I'm also a relatively new
12 alternate member of the District III
13 Environmental Commission, so that's one of the
14 state's Act 250 boards. The siting process
15 under Section 248, that is for energy
16 generation, closely parallels Act 250;
17 provides excellent safeguards in my view. The
18 key difference is, that Section 248 calls for
19 due consideration having been given to
20 recommendations of municipal regional
21 planning, while Act 250, that conformance with
22 town regional plans is one of the ten criteria
23 that must be met.

24 I feel like for Act 24 --
25 or, excuse me, Section 248 that that allows

1 some leeway, and while towns and individuals
2 should be able to actively participate in the
3 siting project, I think it is perfectly
4 appropriate that energy-generated projects be
5 evaluated on a statewide basis given that the
6 network that provides the energy is
7 statewide. Thank you.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: What town
9 are you from?

10 LINDA GRAY: Norwich.

11 JAN EASTMAN: Norwich.

12 LINDA GRAY: I'm sorry, I
13 thought I said it.

14 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
15 up is Charles McKenna.

16 CHARLES MCKENNA: I want to
17 thank all of you for being here and doing
18 this. It is very important. My name is
19 Charles McKenna, and I'm an Executive
20 Committee Member of Sierra Club, Vermont
21 Chapter.

22 Our greatest economic and
23 environmental challenge today is climate
24 change caused primarily by carbon dioxide
25 emissions. And, although it is a global

1 issue, corrective action must be taken
2 locally, and Vermont is in the process of
3 doing just that.

4 Vermont pumps
5 approximately 8 million metric tons of
6 greenhouse gas into its atmosphere every
7 year. So, to do its part in fighting climate
8 change, it is urgent that Vermont displace
9 fossil fuels with carbon-free energy,
10 particularly, primarily wind and solar, in all
11 sectors and as soon as possible. Cost
12 effective wind energy requires two major
13 ingredients: Maximum available wind speeds
14 and large, efficient wind turbines.

15 In Vermont, because the
16 best wind speeds exist primarily on our
17 ridgelines, that is where most must be
18 located. Proceeding as rapidly as possible
19 with wind turbine installations is an urgent
20 matter, both to avert the damage of increased
21 climate change and to develop the energy
22 independence and economic opportunity an
23 advanced carbon-free energy network will offer
24 with new business opportunities and more good
25 jobs for Vermonters.

1 The relatively minor and
2 limited short-term disruption caused during
3 large wind turbine installation on our
4 ridgelines will pale in comparison to the very
5 long-term, severe, and costly damage unchecked
6 climate change will cause to those same
7 ridgelines and our entire state.

8 Vermont contributes only
9 a small portion of global greenhouse gas, but
10 the responsibility is ours for dealing with
11 the pollution we ourselves cause. In doing it
12 proactively and early will open our economy to
13 exceptional growth as others seek to replicate
14 our success and use our technology. Thank
15 you.

16 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
17 up is Jennifer Ely.

18 JENNIFER ELY: Hello. My
19 name is Jennifer Ely. I want to thank the
20 Commission for their hard work. I'm from
21 Burlington, but, if it counts at all, I used
22 to live in Rupert, a little closer to here.
23 My remarks focus on wildlife, especially the
24 bobcat; fisher; and the bear that are the best
25 indicators of the ecological health of

1 Vermont's landscapes.

2 I'm a biologist, and I
3 have a Master's Degree in Natural Resources.
4 Today, I'm retired, however, for 30 years I
5 worked in acquiring, designing, and managing
6 natural areas in Vermont, trying to strike a
7 balance of respect for park visitors and
8 resident wildlife so that both groups could
9 peacefully coexist with one another.

10 I would like to offer my
11 perspective on two design restrictions to be
12 placed on future ridgeline turbine projects as
13 a condition of a proposal being considered.
14 Please understand that any development of
15 Vermont's ridges is a fundamental loss to a
16 critical habitat. I would rather that the
17 state focus on energy conservation and
18 increased efficiency and revisiting our frugal
19 roots, which is part of Vermont's culture, but
20 to tackle climate change, however, if society
21 is determined to develop the ridges for energy
22 generation, then I offer these two design
23 restrictions; they are very specific, and I
24 hope they become a recommendation in the
25 Commission's final report. Another avenue for

1 given the massive road building on Vermont's
2 ridges.

3 And the second design
4 consideration is to demand that the developer
5 restrict motorized public access to the road
6 -- to the ridge, not only during construction
7 but thereafter. The roads shouldn't become
8 public thoroughfares. The animals or larger
9 mammals here just need more privacy than
10 that.

11 So, if we can reduce the
12 traffic down to the occasional hikers;
13 snowshoer; the hunter, that will be --
14 probably be tolerated. I'm not saying
15 eliminate uses that are already on the ridge
16 but just don't introduce new ones or higher
17 levels of use, and the reason I'm focusing on
18 that is, from this perspective, that before we
19 settled here in Vermont the bobcat; the
20 fisher; and the bear roamed the valleys
21 freely. We don't see them down there now.
22 They have been driven up to the ridges and
23 especially the higher ridges where the
24 turbines are more likely to be put. And at
25 this point in a warming world they are relying

1 on those ridges as travel corridors. So, they
2 are going to become just more important for
3 those animals.

4 So, to reduce the impact
5 by reducing the footprint on the ridges, not
6 stopping there, but demanding that those
7 servicing the turbines keep them remote and
8 only then I think can we realistically hope
9 that the new ridgeline wind turbines can
10 peacefully coexist with the local wildlife.
11 Thank you.

12 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.
13 Thank you. Next up is Teo, and I can't read
14 your last name.

15 TEO SENNI: Senni.

16 JAN EASTMAN: Senni. Thank
17 you. Sorry, sir.

18 TEO SENNI: We are here to
19 talk about creating energy. It seems to me
20 solar takes a very small part and, yet, we
21 have the technology to make every window in
22 our house a solar collector. You know, we
23 have nanotechnology. We could solve a lot of
24 these problems everybody has been talking
25 about. There is -- you know, and there is

1 more that could be done without bothering
2 somebody else.

3 Where is all of this
4 money going to come from? Well, the money
5 always shows up; the money always shows up.
6 You know, they are going to put up a turbine.
7 It is going to cost a bunch of bucks. And it
8 is the same, it is the same with going after
9 technology. We can do that little by little,
10 spend a little less money on wind turbines;
11 put a little bit more money toward
12 nanotechnology. In the end, we come out, in
13 the end we come out way ahead.

14 You know, you look at
15 this high school. It is so in the sun. How
16 come it doesn't get a lot of solar energy?
17 You know, why are these lights going out? And
18 we have other ways. Sewage, if we could
19 master the power of sewage it would help us
20 toward that goal and by buying intelligently.
21 You realize there is a car on the road today
22 that gets more than 100 miles an hour? You
23 look at your computer, look it up. It's a car
24 that runs on air. It uses very, very little
25 gas. And that's where all of the money is

1 going to come from. Thanks.

2 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you very
3 much. Next up is Paul Cameron.

4 PAUL CAMERON: Good evening
5 everyone. My name is Paul Cameron, and I'm
6 the Director of Brattleboro Climate
7 Protection, and I also serve as Town of
8 Brattleboro's Energy Coordinator. And I would
9 like to speak in favor of appropriately sited
10 wind development in Vermont.

11 While some see a threat
12 to our ridgelines, I see a worse danger, a
13 climate crisis marked by extreme weather
14 events such as Hurricanes Irene and Sandy.
15 Our beautiful state with its rich variety of
16 landscapes and natural communities is under
17 tremendous threat by climate disruption. Our
18 vibrant fall colors; winter sports; and maple
19 sugaring, things that make us unique and
20 special, may all disappear if we do not take
21 action.

22 For better or worse, we
23 all use electricity and it must come from
24 somewhere. If we as a state don't step up and
25 produce our share of power, we will have to

1 import electricity from oil, coal, and nuclear
2 plants outside our borders, plants that are in
3 other people's backyards. We will be
4 dependent on energy sources that are polluting
5 and degrading our planet. This is not in the
6 Vermont tradition.

7 As Vermonters, we have a
8 tradition of self-reliance and
9 responsibility. Wind power is clean energy
10 locally produced that does not generate carbon
11 pollution. When I see a wind farm, I see
12 hope, hope that we will break our crippling
13 dependence on fossil fuels and make the
14 transition to clean renewable energy while
15 avoiding the worst offense of climate change.

16 We owe it to future
17 generations to make responsible choices and
18 encourage the development of wind energy in
19 Vermont. Thank you.

20 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
21 up is Alain Rattell.

22 ALAIN RATTELL: Quickly, wind
23 energy has been used in Europe, in Denmark.
24 It is -- over 24 percent of their production
25 is wind. It is really important. And the

1 State of Vermont could also benefit from it.
2 It seems that if we look at the history of
3 this last 20 years, we have been doing a bad
4 job.

5 I know there is some
6 people who are going to be pro or hopelessly
7 against wind but, basically, the -- I would
8 say the consensus is to consider and to
9 continue working towards the expression of
10 value, of their property value being
11 diminished, should also be taken into account
12 that you have income coming to the town.

13 We visited Lake Lamprey,
14 the wind, the wind farm in New Hampshire.
15 People are very happy to have this wind
16 metered there. They are. And you would even
17 if you go there -- have you visited?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Many times.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I've been
20 there. And that's not the case.

21 ALAIN RATTELL: Okay. But,
22 essentially, the State of Vermont is not doing
23 too much -- too bad of a job and we should
24 continue to do that.

25 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.

1 ALAIN RATTELL: That's it.

2 JAN EASTMAN: Next up is
3 Michael Bosworth.

4 MICHAEL BOSWORTH: I am
5 Michael Bosworth. I live in Brattleboro. My
6 remarks are primarily about siting wind power
7 facilities and primarily from a recreation
8 impact perspective. I come to the discussion
9 with a background in two areas. I have been
10 and intend to continue to be personally
11 involved with siting renewable energy
12 facilities, including a rooftop solar ray that
13 has been installed and a community-scale wood
14 fuel co-generation system that has not yet
15 happened.

16 Two, I have spent a fair
17 amount of my time in the outdoors in my life
18 including some time backpacking and a lot of
19 time hiking and cross-country skiing. I'm a
20 member of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the
21 Green Mountain Club and the Catamount Trail
22 Association. I believe the following: A:
23 Having renewable energy facilities in Vermont
24 is highly desirable, most particularly in
25 light of climate change but also for more

1 local control of our energy resources.

2 B: Vermont needs to do
3 its fair share of siting renewable energy
4 facilities and should want to be a leader in
5 siting such facilities.

6 C: Wind power in
7 particular, I think, can cause conflicts with
8 landscape level issues such as a recreation
9 experience and, yes, even Vermont's landscape
10 grand that is so important to its tourist
11 economy.

12 D: Both the scale and
13 location of wind power are important. One
14 wind turbine at a ski area where there is also
15 developed infrastructure is much different
16 than a whole set of turbines on a heretofore
17 undeveloped ridgeline.

18 E: The state should
19 prioritize locations where wind power makes
20 the most sense and not the locations where it
21 does not make as much sense. I would assume
22 this Commission is already aware of the Wind
23 Energy Facility Development Policy of the
24 Green Mountain Club and the even more detailed
25 conceptual wind power siting guidelines put

1 together by the Appalachian Mountain Club and
2 Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Neither of
3 those documents state that there should be no
4 new wind power facilities, rather, they set
5 frameworks for evaluating the suitability of
6 wind power proposals.

7 F: From a recreational
8 point of view, the Appalachian Trail corridor;
9 the Long Trail corridor; and the Catamount
10 Trail corridor should receive special
11 consideration. Also, public lands and
12 wilderness areas should receive special
13 consideration.

14 Wind power proposals in
15 those areas should receive a higher level of
16 review, particularly for the hiking trails.
17 The view sheds from the ridgeline portions of
18 those trails --

19 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry,
20 could you slow down a bit and just back up a
21 couple sentences.

22 MICHAEL BOSWORTH: Also,
23 public lands in wilderness areas should
24 receive special consideration. Wind power
25 proposals in those areas should receive a

1 higher level of review, particularly for the
2 hiking trails. The view sheds from the
3 ridgeline portions of those trails should be
4 an important factor given consideration.

5 G: The Green Mountain
6 Club has brought the issue of cumulative
7 impacts, that is, multiple wind power
8 developments in one area has the potential of
9 overwhelming the recreation experience. I
10 agree with that sentiment. I also realize
11 that individual communities, right down to
12 individual household level, can sometimes be
13 the most impacted by particular wind
14 proposals, but I do not think either of those
15 communities or the regions they lie within
16 should have veto power over such proposals
17 because of the great importance of renewable
18 energy facilities. Thank you.

19 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
20 up is Becky Jones.

21 BECKY JONES: Thanks. Hi, I'm
22 Becky Jones. I'm a doctor here in town, and I
23 volunteer with 350 Vermont, so I'm going to
24 sort of speak from the 350 Vermont perspective
25 a little just to mention that we're -- we are

1 sort of coming up with a white paper on energy
2 siting as it relates to human rights, and I
3 think a lot of the things that have been
4 coming up are sort of jostling around that
5 issue of human rights and energy production.
6 And, you know, a lot of the issues that come
7 up are: Will things like wind turbines impact
8 a person's own home? And I think our, our
9 paradigm with energy right now is so
10 centralized and topped down, and that's very
11 problematic, but as we go forward we can
12 really consider energy in a decentralized
13 fashion.

14 And, so, I just wanted to
15 make that point, that we don't have to choose
16 either/or. We can consider people's rights.
17 Like when we are creating facilities, consider
18 accountability and transparency and the rights
19 of the people who are impacted as we create
20 these facilities. So, I just, I think, human
21 rights is a great constraint when we are going
22 forward, so.

23 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
24 up, Mary Durland.

25 MARY DURLAND: Mary Durland,

1 West Brattleboro. I spent many years on the
2 front range in Colorado and mountains above
3 Boulder. Now, days that have 30- or
4 40-mile-per-hour winds weren't worthy of
5 mention. They were common. The spell when it
6 blew over 90 miles per hour on a fairly
7 regular basis for three days in a row, that
8 was something.

9 Vermont by these
10 standards doesn't have wind. It has breezes.
11 Now, why do I start this way? Because I would
12 hope that in the process of siting and taking
13 measurements of what the breezes are, we will
14 get an idea of what might really be a cost
15 effective kind of arrangement for various
16 kinds of wind turbines.

17 I'm suspicious of a
18 turbine with blades that looks -- true, it's
19 gargantuan and it's sleek, but it looks like
20 windmills we've had for centuries. I have
21 trouble believing that we can't come up with
22 something that is smaller in footprint and
23 more efficient in the use of the breezes that
24 we do have.

25 And I would not like us

1 to rush into the modification of our
2 ridgelines. I would think that in 20 years we
3 might look back on what we did today, as far
4 as putting existing turbines as we think of
5 them now on our ridgelines, and we might look
6 at those as dinosaurs.

7 It was mentioned that the
8 ridgelines are critical habitat, and I have
9 here an article done over in New Hampshire
10 very quite recently, some good verdicts. They
11 are going to have some site testing done over
12 there, and they are started in Antrim and near
13 an audubon reserve, and several people went up
14 and nighthawks, very scarce; ovenbirds;
15 red-eyed vieroos nesting. You are going to
16 find a lot of birds and animals on the
17 ridgelines that you wouldn't have that had to
18 go because it is their last resort.

19 So, I think I would just
20 conclude by saying that wind is good; energy
21 from wind is good, but we should move forward
22 with the ratio in mind, that it is hard to
23 undue what we've done to our ridgelines and
24 that very soon there may be -- especially if
25 we say: Wait a minute, this is not a good

1 ratio. You know, do some more research, make
2 the footprint smaller, make it more
3 efficient. And I bet we would see that very
4 soon.

5 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
6 up is Michael Boylen.

7 MICHAEL BOYLEN: I'll pass and
8 I'll give you a written, written statement.

9 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you very
10 much, sir. And then Carol Levin.

11 CAROL LEVIN: Thank you, too.
12 I think the previous speakers were allowing us
13 vertically challenged people to be able to
14 speak as well. I think we got the mic in the
15 right place. I'm Carol Levin and I'm, I
16 guess, representing the New England
17 Collation. I'm now on the Board of the
18 Collation, and energy, particularly in
19 generation of electricity, is really
20 important. We do have to look at
21 alternatives. We certainly have to look at
22 conservation because the use of electricity
23 can be cut in half without any loss of, you
24 know, watching TV or cold beers or, you know,
25 other things that are important to people.

1 We can do things much
2 more efficiently than we're doing them now.
3 And if we don't need the extra like 50 percent
4 of the electricity, we don't need to generate
5 it. We can, you know, we can talk about a
6 smaller quantity.

7 So, instead of a typical
8 house in -- a typical house in the United
9 States using about 600-kilowatt hours a month,
10 it is totally realistic to look at
11 300-kilowatt hours a month. So, I think
12 that's certainly our first thing to do.

13 The New England Collation
14 of courses is -- focuses is allowing the
15 public to become knowledgeable in the
16 terrible, terrible dangers of nuclear power
17 and nuclear energy and certainly with
18 Fukushima we can see what's -- and Chernobyl,
19 we can see what's happened to both those
20 sections of the world and their close
21 environments plus the impact on the rest of
22 the world which is not inconsequential.

23 There is no reason that
24 even in Vermont we can't really focus on
25 renewables, particularly solar and wind.

1 Germany is, and most of Europe, is way ahead
2 of the United States. The United States
3 probably has about less than 1 percent
4 renewables as part of their energy mix. Many
5 of the countries in Germany are close to 20 or
6 above 20 percent of their energy being made
7 from renewables. And Germany is even higher
8 than we are. They are kind of like the level
9 of Montreal.

10 So, I mean, if they can
11 do it; we can do it. Vermonters have like
12 incredible ability to look into the future and
13 do the right thing. About 25 years ago a
14 colleague of ours in Montpelier was given the
15 task of surveying per capita use of solar.
16 This is 25 years ago. And he did that and we
17 were privy to the results which was very
18 interesting. Vermont and Arizona were the
19 same amount per capita in the use of solar,
20 which was about 5 percent, and, you know, they
21 say: Well, you know, there is no sun up in
22 Vermont because it is in the blue area --
23 there is this very famous map of solar
24 radiation -- but we can certainly make it work
25 and we can make it work in the summer and the

1 spring and fall.

2 We really need to look at
3 renewables and siting is really important.

4 And I think that since most of the towns like
5 to be self-determining there is no reason that
6 we can't do distributed energy, which is solar
7 and wind, and have, you know, the state kind
8 of set the pace of what we can and can't do
9 but have the individual towns look at what
10 they want for their community. Thank you.

11 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
12 up is Peter Cooper.

13 PETER COOPER: I appreciate
14 the Commission holding the hearing but I'm
15 going to pass.

16 JAN EASTMAN: Okay. Thank
17 you, Mr. Cooper. Next, then, is Chad
18 Simmons.

19 CHAD SIMMONS: Good evening.
20 Thank you for having us here this evening. My
21 name is Chad Simmons. I'm a resident here in
22 Brattleboro. I'm actually in the process of
23 applying to be on the Energy Committee.
24 Fingers crossed. So, I hope to be more
25 involved in asking these questions that we are

1 asking tonight.

2 I have two things. One
3 is an observation. In terms of the process
4 that this Commission should go through in the
5 siting of energy generation, I think tonight
6 is a really good example of the citizens have
7 a lot to offer. I am so -- I am constantly
8 amazed and proud of how involved our residents
9 are in doing the research and looking at the
10 science and informing ourselves about the
11 impacts and the processes and what we need to
12 do to produce our own power.

13 So, I would encourage the
14 Commission to really look at the knowledge
15 that sits out here, because it is very
16 apparent that a lot of people have done a lot
17 of work and a lot of research. The second
18 thing is, that I -- and I tried to dig a
19 little bit to find a model, but I would
20 encourage the Commission to look at either
21 developing or finding models that exist. A
22 couple of people have referenced Europe as
23 being further ahead than the United States
24 and, so, look there as maybe a start,
25 essentially a model or a major matrix that

1 would in a way kind of logically look at all
2 of the different types of -- both the types of
3 energy production available as well as the
4 siting and where might be the most appropriate
5 to site some of the various types of
6 electricity.

7 I think that would be
8 helpful for me as a resident and as someone
9 who would want to look at these possibilities
10 and to look at a matrix to kind of logically
11 and rationally guide my decision-making
12 process and, therefore, yours.

13 So, I would put that
14 suggestion. So, thank you very much for,
15 again, for being here tonight.

16 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
17 up, David Russell.

18 DAVID RUSSELL: My name is
19 David Russell. I am a project
20 development-type person who deals with solar
21 projects as well as hydroelectric projects. I
22 think it is sort of an interesting observation
23 -- even though the Commission is not dealing
24 with net-metering types of projects, that's
25 the sort of thing that I focus on, but I

1 commend them for their efforts.

2 One of the observations I
3 was thinking of as I was sitting there was, it
4 is somewhat paradoxical that I, as a native
5 New Yorker, came here 15 years ago because of
6 the pristine beauty of the state and was
7 always impressed with the fact that there
8 weren't any billboards; it was nice, clean
9 air; there were very few major transportation
10 corridors, and I cannot imagine in a state
11 where the number two industry is tourism why
12 we would want to litter our ridgelines with
13 wind power when there are alternatives that
14 are perfectly reasonable and can achieve the
15 same effect.

16 I have been involved with
17 the alternative energy business since 1979
18 when the second price strike or price hike
19 took place with the OPEC nations and have been
20 very much concerned over that period to find
21 ways to integrate in all of the above strategy
22 into the American system, mostly for an
23 energy-independence type of a motivation at
24 least initially, of being dependent on foreign
25 oil and knowing the problems that it was going

1 to create for the country.

2 The fact of the matter
3 is, the technology is moving very quickly even
4 though it is old technology and it exists
5 right as we speak where you can use solar
6 energy for doing virtually anything you want
7 in the way of generation of electricity; solar
8 heating; heat pumps, the sorts of things that
9 would allow us to have energy independence,
10 and it is not as obtrusive or invasive as
11 something that becomes an eyesore, becomes
12 controversial for people like myself that
13 really don't want to have to look at turbines
14 sitting on the tons of ridgelines, and I
15 recognize some of the real estate issues that
16 are involved in it, and I think they are real
17 issues and they become a real problem.

18 Solar projects that we
19 are involved in are essentially those that are
20 compatible with the community as a net-metered
21 type of project. When we go out and permit a
22 project, we notify all of the abutting
23 landowners as to our intentions with respect
24 to the land. If it is agricultural land, we
25 invite farmers to graze animals on the

1 property alongside the solar modules. It
2 becomes something that is really compatible.
3 That net-metering legislation needs to be
4 improved, streamlined, and increased to the
5 extent that it can be to allow for people like
6 myself to go out and create these projects and
7 do it in a somewhat economical manner.

8 I was invited by the
9 Joint Committee on Natural Resources and
10 Energy to make comments on streamlining. What
11 I've given the Committee or the Commission,
12 rather, is my letter to Tony Kline, the head
13 of the Joint Committee, my ideas about ways to
14 streamline it. I would hope that you would
15 look at those. I think it is a proper
16 alternative to what it is that would get into
17 the controversy of siting larger projects that
18 are these big commercial interests associated
19 with it. Thank you.

20 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
21 is J., is it Holan?

22 J. HOLAN: I pass. I don't
23 need to comment.

24 JAN EASTMAN: Okay. Thank
25 you.

1 J. HOLAN: Yep.

2 JAN EASTMAN: Then Jonathan
3 Morse.

4 JONATHAN MORSE: Hi. My name
5 is Jonathan Morse. I have been a general
6 contractor for 30-plus years concentrating on
7 energy efficiency and energy production in
8 residential construction. I'm also a charter
9 member of a new organization called the
10 Sustainable Energy Outreach Network which is
11 -- has been formed in this area to encourage
12 and facilitate energy -- alternative energy
13 production and conservation efforts on a
14 commercial scale and to educate the public on
15 the advantages of those things.

16 I came today not really
17 realizing that this was a siting commission
18 hearing but now I know it. I've been educated
19 in the last few minutes. So, in relation to
20 siting, I'll just share a couple of things
21 about -- I'm going to talk about first wind
22 and then solar.

23 When the Green Mountain
24 Power Corporation put up the first towers on,
25 turbines on Searsburg, the first time that I

1 drove across Route 9 and saw them, I went
2 "Whoa." To me, that is a beautiful sight
3 just personally.

4 A fellow member of,
5 charter member of the SEON, the Sustainable
6 Energy Outreach Network, and I went to a
7 conference in Ontario last spring, and as we
8 were driving up we passed a wind farm that
9 must have had 100 turbines and, to me, it was
10 a gorgeous site and I later learned -- and
11 these were in Canada -- I later learned that
12 there are whole communities who are supporting
13 themselves with wind turbine generation. So,
14 I'll let that be.

15 As far as solar goes,
16 there have been some calculations by people in
17 this area that, if we had PVA rays on
18 20-square miles of roof in Vermont, that we
19 would totally generate all of the electricity
20 that we need in this state, and you think that
21 20-square miles is a lot until you think about
22 all of the flat roofs and then -- I'm not
23 talking about agricultural land now. I'm
24 talking about parking lots, flat roofs, and
25 south-facing peak roofs. There is plenty of

1 square footage on those roof surfaces and
2 those paved surfaces to provide lots and lots
3 of our energy. And it just requires a
4 commitment on our part to do that, and it will
5 require some creative thinking about: How do
6 you fund that? How do we encourage people to
7 put it on their property? And, anyway, that's
8 the main thing that I want to say about the
9 solar.

10 And I hope that those of
11 you who are against wind production on the
12 ridgelines think about what we in this 10-mile
13 radius of Vermont Yankee are facing. Right
14 now there is -- when Hiroshima, the bomb in
15 Hiroshima was exploded, there were 3,000
16 curies released. Right now in the spent
17 storage pool at Vermont Yankee there are
18 75-million curies stored. Do we want that in
19 our neighborhood? Is that worse than wind? I
20 don't think so. I mean the other way around.
21 Is wind worse than that?

22 We are creating a legacy
23 for generations upon generations of poison in
24 our atmosphere and in our water, and, so --
25 and we are not going to do that with wind.

1 Thank you.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

3 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
4 up is Alex Gilbert.

5 ALEX GILBERT: Hi there. I'm
6 Alex Gilbert. I'm a Master's of Energy
7 Regulation and Law student from Vermont Law
8 School, and I think this Commission's purpose
9 and this task is actually incredibly important
10 right now. With possible expiration of our
11 contracts with HydroQuebec and the possible
12 closure of Vermont Yankee, figuring out siting
13 for new energy projects is critically
14 important.

15 Now, there is a lot of
16 questions about the siting of wind and siting
17 of other resources in Vermont. And the thing
18 to keep in mind is, that if we don't use wind,
19 we are going to have to use other resources,
20 and the likely alternative if we don't use
21 wind or solar is natural gas. And natural gas
22 has many other problems and one of the biggest
23 problem is that, is that it contributes to
24 climate change.

25 So, we have to figure out

1 how to do siting for wind energy in a way that
2 recognizes both concerns. So, one of the
3 biggest things that we need to do is to make
4 sure that when we are doing these transmission
5 projects, these siting projects, we need to
6 figure out, first of all: Okay, how can we
7 get local people involved? How can we make
8 sure that locals have a say how things are
9 working? How can we make sure that any wind
10 projects that we have benefit local tax bases,
11 that they benefit local communities by having
12 leases so the money goes back into the
13 community to make sure there is actually some
14 value instead of just wind that is an eyesore,
15 that there is some sort of benefit to the
16 local community?

17 The other major point I
18 would like to make is related to transmission,
19 and transmission is critically important as a
20 delivery mechanism for electricity, and this
21 is especially true for wind energy. Wind
22 energy, because it's errant in nature, needs
23 to have sufficient transmission lines to both
24 link it to larger energy sources and to the
25 electric system at large.

1 Now, there are plenty
2 areas of Vermont where we have sufficient
3 transmission, however, there are other areas
4 where transmission is not currently adequate.
5 When we are designing siting procedures, we
6 need to take into account what possible
7 transmission might be needed in order to site
8 a new wind farm in an area. If we, if we are
9 concerned about the development of pristine
10 land; we are concerned about making sure that
11 we can minimize the human impacts on the
12 environment, we need to find areas that have
13 the least transmission needs. We need to make
14 sure we find areas that will not need
15 additional transmission lines because those
16 will do a lot more damage than one wind farm
17 on a ridgeline.

18 One final point is, that
19 we should try and maximize, specifically with
20 wind, areas that are already developed or
21 already have roads upon them. We should make
22 sure to use areas that are going to have a
23 minimal amount of environmental impact. So
24 that when we do have project development, we
25 should make sure the siting decision should

1 include environment impact assessment of the
2 area; make sure that there are alternatives to
3 that, to the proposed project, and then try
4 and minimize additional impacts; if there is
5 already a road on the ridgeline, that could be
6 preferable to building a new road.

7 So, thank you,
8 Commission, and I hope you guys make some good
9 decisions.

10 LINDA MCGINNIS: Thank you.

11 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. Next
12 up is Matt Accardi.

13 MATT ACCARDI: Hi, my name is
14 Matt Accardi. I am also from Vermont Law
15 School. I'm not going to repeat too much of
16 what Alex said, but I do want to point out
17 that Vermont Law School is a community. We
18 are -- we love the State of Vermont there, and
19 I think that we are a great resource for this
20 Commission. We have an Energy Institute; we
21 have Ph.D.s; we have people with JDs; and
22 people who are studying energy around the
23 world, within this country, and I think that
24 as a representative of the Vermont Law School,
25 I urge the Commission to look towards us as a

1 resource and assistance in this effort. So,
2 thank you.

3 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. So,
4 we -- that's it for people who signed up.
5 Whoops, there is one more. Is it Eric
6 Stenholm?

7 ERIC STENHOLM: Yeah.

8 JAN EASTMAN: Okay.

9 ERIC STENHOLM: Hi. My name
10 is Eric Stenholm. I'm from Saxtons River.
11 I'm coming at this from a "small is beautiful"
12 perspective. I wanted to be here to hear
13 about all of these -- you know, the big wind
14 generation siting considerations and power
15 generation in general in Vermont. I'm
16 concerned about all of that myself, not only
17 from the climate change point of view but a
18 lot of the other points that have been brought
19 up tonight.

20 The two gentlemen right
21 before me pretty much said everything I was
22 planning on saying. From a small point of
23 view, we have lots and lots of room here in
24 the state and plenty of sun to generate all of
25 the power we could ever want without putting

1 giant towers up everywhere.

2 Although I don't mind the
3 way wind turbines look, but people who think
4 the sun doesn't shine in Vermont, that's just
5 -- you know, if you live here and you look at
6 the data that has been collected over the
7 last, you know, 30; 40 years, there is plenty
8 of sun here.

9 One of the things I'm
10 concerned about is that the Public Service
11 Board keep control of -- or, I don't know,
12 "control" isn't the right word, but that this
13 does not go to an Act 250 consideration for
14 permitting because for small solar projects
15 the process is already cumbersome enough, and
16 I wouldn't want to see it go. So that if I
17 want to go put in a 30- or 40-panel system, I
18 have to go through Act 250 for the permitting
19 process.

20 I'm trying to put
21 together a little system, a little community
22 solar-net-metering thing, and I've already got
23 to go through the Vermont Historic Commission,
24 and archeologicals, you know, all kinds of
25 stuff to just get permission to put a system

1 on my property which is completely
2 unobtrusive, right up against the bank, you
3 know, facing south. But, anyway, the
4 permitting process is already, I think,
5 enough, so, but, again, I'm talking about
6 small systems. I'm sure it's -- I would like
7 to see the Public Service Board just be the
8 guys that decide, and they could streamline
9 their own process a lot. So, thank you.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

11 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. So,
12 anyone else? Yes, ma'am, we'll take you and
13 then, yes.

14 DEBRA KRASNER: I'm Debra
15 Krasner; I live in Westminster, and I would
16 like to just speak to the very last line in
17 Governor Shumlin's charge in which he says:
18 "Consider whether the state should," and I'm
19 eliding over a part of it, "whether the state
20 should provide guidelines on environmental
21 impacts, location and aesthetics and other
22 common issues."

23 So, I've just recently
24 read a story in the New York Times about an
25 innovative thing that New York City did, which

1 was, that they made a contest for architects
2 and designers, and anyone who is interested,
3 to come up with a very small, under
4 400-square-foot, apartment that could be
5 rented affordably and they -- the contest has
6 been won by a company, and it's this fabulous
7 little apartment that is convertible in lots
8 of ways, but I started thinking: What would
9 happen if the State of Vermont created a
10 contest asking for entries for innovative wind
11 and solar and other alternative energy
12 projects that could be implemented in the
13 State of Vermont and offered as a prize the
14 opportunity to actually build such a project?
15 It seems to me that that would -- well, it is
16 obvious what that would do. So, that's my
17 first suggestion.

18 My second suggestion is
19 that -- so, that first thing is to create
20 innovation scaled to Vermont. My second
21 suggestion is to create a business climate
22 that gives preference to Vermont-owned
23 companies, because I think as a state we have
24 a unique understanding of our needs, and I
25 think that when we have people from other

1 states, they don't understand our culture.
2 And, so, I would suggest that the state create
3 a loan pool for -- to aid Vermont-owned
4 businesses to create and implement alternative
5 energy generation so that there is a climate
6 of preference for Vermont-owned businesses.

7 And the third is, maybe
8 the most whacky, but I wonder if we couldn't
9 consider using the medians of roads, like 91,
10 as a place to site solar energy panels. It
11 seems to me driving up 91 and driving up 89
12 there is this huge amount of state-owned land
13 which isn't doing anything. And what if that
14 were lined with solar panels at a height high
15 enough so that, were a car to go off the road
16 and into a median, they wouldn't get even more
17 damage themselves by the solar panels and
18 perhaps there could even be a state -- and did
19 -- you know, who would collect that solar
20 energy and who would pay for it and who would
21 buy it. It seems to me that if there were a
22 state agency that was in effect the Vermont
23 electric bank, then that energy could be
24 distributed to every citizen of the state.
25 So, thank you.

1 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. So
2 Annette and then there and then --

3 ANNETTE SMITH: Thank you,
4 Commission, for hearing from me again. My
5 name is Annette Smith. I'm with Vermonters
6 For Clean Environment, and I made a
7 presentation to the Siting Commission about a
8 community-based staple process and about doing
9 a community development project that I
10 encourage you to look at.

11 I was one of the three
12 members of the public chosen to go on the
13 natural gas plant tour today, and there is a
14 question that I have had about wind that I'd
15 really would like you to try and find the
16 answer to. I understand solar. I have lived
17 off the grid with solar for 25 years in
18 Vermont; I had a really great hot solar-heated
19 shower this morning. I understand how solar
20 works. What I have been trying to understand
21 about wind is, how it is integrated into the
22 grid, and does it reduce greenhouse gas
23 emissions? I have been trying to get the
24 answer to this question for nearly four
25 years.

1 I found studies from out
2 west that indicate that there is a, perhaps, a
3 10 to 1 ratio: For every 10 megawatts of wind
4 that is produced, that offsets 1 megawatt of
5 fossil fuel consumption. Today at the gas
6 plant after we were finished I asked the
7 president of the company, "What's going on?"
8 And I said, "You know, it said that there is a
9 1 to 1 ratio." "No," that's what he said.

10 I've heard that our
11 natural gas plants, which are what are firming
12 the wind energy, whether we like natural gas
13 or not -- and I'll take credit for helping
14 stop a big natural gas project in southwestern
15 Vermont 14 years ago, but that is the reality
16 of what's firming with the wind. So, I said,
17 "Do you think it's more like 10 to 1?" He
18 said, "Well, you know, the plant has to come
19 up to a certain temperature."

20 Well, we have about 750
21 megawatts of wind on the grid now in New
22 England. I want an answer to this question,
23 and I think it is imperative that this
24 commission have ISO wind come in and talk
25 about how that 750 megawatts of wind is

1 integrating and what fossil fuel emissions are
2 being reduced and is this useful energy.

3 I was also struck by
4 something today. We just saw a plant that
5 would cost 600-million dollars to build and is
6 producing 750 megawatts of base load plant but
7 also ramping up and down. We have had now
8 three big wind projects built, and they are
9 estimated to cost something like 300-million
10 dollars, so roughly half the cost of that
11 750-megawatt base load plant, and the
12 nameplate capacity is roughly 115 megawatts
13 which means, roughly, 30 percent capacity
14 value. We are getting actually about 38
15 megawatts of electricity for 300-million
16 dollars. Is this cost effective? Can't we do
17 better with that 300-million dollars in how we
18 deploy renewable energy to actually address
19 the problems rather than just basing this on
20 faith?

21 And, so, I'm really
22 imploring you to, please, find out what is
23 happening in New England grid with these 750
24 megawatts of natural earth, of wind energy,
25 and is it displacing fossil fuel emissions or

1 isn't it? We need to know that answer. Thank
2 you.

3 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you.
4 Next? Yes.

5 JUSTIN LINDHOLM: Okay. My
6 name is Justin Lindholm from Mendon, Vermont.
7 And first about solar. I think it is
8 imperative that we look at our solar siting,
9 and it should be very simple to do this, to
10 put solar in places where we don't have prime
11 agricultural fields. I think that is a
12 no-brainer. And, also, where it possible, I
13 think they should be shielded, and I don't
14 think shielding is very difficult. It can be
15 done with cedar trees and, whatever. We need
16 to keep the bucolic landscape appearance of
17 Vermont, and we don't have too many solar
18 projects yet but within 20 years we are going
19 to have solar projects everywhere. So, I
20 think this kind of siting foresight is very
21 important. So, I would say that for solar,
22 those two things.

23 And on wind generation, I
24 have had the warm desire to get up on these
25 ridges before they were developed with wind

1 generation, and I've had the burning desire to
2 get up on these same ridges after the
3 development. The difference is absolutely
4 stunning between the before and the after. I
5 hear lots of people talk that they are
6 pro-large wind generation on our very rare
7 ecological ridgelines. I have not heard one
8 of them that has the warm desire first to get
9 up there before the project and the burning
10 desire afterward to see it.

11 I went to a symposium or
12 an exposition this weekend where thousands of
13 people came by my booth. I showed them
14 pictures of the destruction on some of
15 Vermont's and neighboring states' wind
16 projects. The number one comment I got is: I
17 didn't believe it was that bad. And I didn't
18 even really show the worst pictures. You
19 can't get that on film. And that's what I
20 would just like to let you folks know, that we
21 need to do something better.

22 The New York and
23 Pennsylvania siting, they don't blast and blow
24 their places. We talked to a New York
25 developer, wind developer, a couple of years

1 ago, and he couldn't understand that we blow
2 with explosive our sites. All they do is lay
3 down gravel or they wouldn't build it.

4 Try something else, that
5 electricity is a very small part of our carbon
6 footprint, and even if we all use electric
7 vehicles, it still will not be the major part
8 of our carbon footprint, and all we seem to be
9 talking about is electricity. Thank you.

10 JAN EASTMAN: Thank you. So,
11 so thank you very much. Oh, I guess I have to
12 use this. So, thank you very much for coming
13 out on this cold night. We appreciate your
14 comments and they are helpful. And the idea
15 of a contest, doesn't that sound fun? I just
16 wish I was creative enough to enter.

17 Thanks so much,
18 everybody, and please remember, we look at all
19 of the public comments on the website as well,
20 and you can go on there to watch what we are
21 doing and, as I say, hopefully by the end of
22 March we'll have some proposed
23 recommendations.

24 (PUBLIC HEARING WAS CONCLUDED
25 AT 6:40 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa M. Hindes-Moody, Court Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbered 1 through 76, inclusive, are a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes of the public hearing taken before me on January 23, 2013.

Commission Expires: 2/10/15