

VT Energy Generation Siting Process Strengths & Weaknesses (Participant) perspective

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Vermont PSB Energy Project Siting - Strengths

- PSB is staffed by experts:
 - highly trained
 - knowledgeable
 - non-partisan
- Substantive criteria and standards
 - Robust and thorough
 - Obtaining CPG is not easy
 - Permits address many environmental, cultural resource, electrical, construction criteria
- Public engagement is well incorporated and valued
 - Public notice and local hearings are part of the process

Vermont PSB Energy Project Siting - Weaknesses

- Timeliness of milestones, decisions, hearings, etc.
 - Codified time limits would help
 - Similar to utility requirements for IC processes?
- Reliance on developer trial and error
 - If locations that could / should be favored, create guidelines and incentives for projects to be located there (or if project locations should be avoided, identify restricted areas)
- Over reliance of public comment / intervention can bog down process
 - Energy projects are complicated, require expert review to determine public benefits / detriments
 - Need to separate scientific fact from non-peer reviewed fiction

Case Study – Derby Line Wind Project

- Two turbine 4.4 MW project
- Project sited on two working dairy farms in a strong wind regime
- Financial benefits for farmers, local communities
- Clean electricity for > 2,000 average VT homes
- Job creation opportunities for local contractors
- Responding to legislative intent
- Project stopped by misinformation and unsubstantiated, non-scientific based claims from a few individuals before the full CPG process could be completed
 - Smaller developers cannot withstand the time and costs of having to defend against misinformation non-scientific based claims
 - Result is absence of smaller community scale projects

Thoughts Recommendations

- Project ombudsmen?
 - Coordinate all permits, serve as project liaison for community, etc.
- Provide robust guidelines
 - If the project is constructed in accordance with XYZ, it can be built
 - Provide setbacks (as opposed to noise thresholds or subjective viewshed studies)
 - Provide mapped areas to be avoided (significant migratory pathways, etc.)
 - Rely on peer-reviewed data / scientifically based conclusions
- Allow the experts to provide the level of expertise required to evaluate public good
 - Bad projects will be thrown out
 - Vermont's energy future will be determined by those who are sufficiently qualified to evaluate the numerous aspects of projects and rule accordingly

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