

VT Energy Generation Siting Process Strengths & Weaknesses

VPIRG perspective

Presented to:

***VT Energy Generation
Siting Policy Commission***

Meeting #3 – Learning from Participants in the
Process

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Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses: Recommendations

- Strengths
 - The PSB is an independent, professional body tasked with determining and safeguarding the public good in Vermont.
 - The decision-making process is evidence-based and relatively inclusive. It relies greatly on scientific investigation and invites broad public participation.
 - The Board works closely with experts in other agencies to collect the information necessary to evaluate project proposals.

Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses: Recommendations

- Weaknesses
 - Insufficient prioritization of state energy plan and global warming emission reduction goals.
 - Lack of effective public engagement and transparency regarding how public comments or other criteria will be evaluated by the Board.
 - The process of obtaining approval from both the Board and environmental agencies may be unnecessarily time-consuming and expensive for all parties.

Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses: Recommendations

- Weaknesses (*continued*)
 - It's difficult and expensive for the public to participate in technical hearings.
 - The Department of Public Service has recently adopted a position granting “local veto authority” to potential host municipalities.

Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses: Recommendations

- Key recommendations
 - There should be no “local veto authority” as a matter of public policy for projects that are consistent with the state’s energy plan and carbon reduction goals and present no bona fide threat to public health.
 - Consider intervenor funding, especially to provide with technical expertise to those participating. There should be appropriate criteria by which citizens or municipalities could qualify for support.

Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses: Recommendations

- Key recommendations (*continued*)
 - Increase the predictability and transparency of the decision-making process for all participants.
 - Under the permitting criteria, give a weighted preference to projects that advance the state energy plan and global warming emission reduction goals.
 - Consider streamlining the separate PSB and environmental agency approval processes.