



Net Metering

House Natural Resources and Energy Committee

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VBSR members believe that climate change is the number one policy issue facing Vermont. VBSR thanks this committee and Rep. Klein for leadership on this issue over the last several years.

The most important strategy to ensure a secure energy future is a vastly increased commitment to energy conservation, energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy. The value of these resources cannot be overstated. These investments will save Vermonters money, create well-paying jobs for our citizens, create value-added economic development activity, and help Vermont become energy independent.

89% of VBSR members believe investing in renewable energy projects in Vermont is good for the state's economy. – 2012 VBSR Policy Survey

Net metering is perhaps the most successful renewable energy program in the state. Vermonters and Vermont businesses all have a role to play in transitioning to a renewable energy future and net metering fulfills that promise by allowing middle class households and small business owners to generate their own electricity to offset their energy bill.

But uncertainty around the future of the program has been disruptive to the renewable energy economy and companies that make or install net metering projects. Since several utilities hit their state-mandated caps and ceased accepting new net metering projects, VBSR members who work on these projects have had to turn away new

customers. We are closing the door right now to new small-scale renewable energy projects and that is damaging to our renewable energy goals and the state's renewable energy economy.

That said, VBSR members are also concerned about the long-term sustainability of the net metering program for Vermont utilities. The experience of utilities with this program is varied and often depends on their customer base and region. We would like to see a solution to this problem that gives the utilities some certainty over fixed infrastructure costs and continues to allow Vermonters to get a good price for the energy they produce at their homes, businesses and farms.

VBSR supports:

- Raising the net metering cap from 4 to 15 percent of peak load.
- Streamlining the approval process for net metering projects of less than 15KW.
- Working with all stakeholders to determine a sustainable future for the program that works for the renewable energy industry, Vermont utilities.

In considering the future of net metering, the Vermont Legislature faces a "good" problem to have – the program been so popular and successful that utilities hit the cap sooner than many expected.

VBSR believes we should not turn away Vermonters who want to take part in the renewable energy economy and that expanding net metering will grow our state's economy, protect our natural resources and help the state become more energy independent.