

March 22, 2015

Dear Senators and Representatives on the Natural Resources and Energy Committees,

I am a resident of Bennington where two large solar projects are proposed by a company based on Wall Street in New York City for a 30 acre forested property near my home.

When I received notice of the project when the application was filed in June, 2014, I was challenged to understand what to do. There is nobody to talk to at the Public Service Board to get assistance with the permitting process.

The developers planned to use a road that runs past my house. However my property and all the lands around me are part of a homeowners' association that has deed restrictions against commercial development. The association decided to intervene but were denied because the Public Service Board says they do not deal with property issues. Their response was to tell us to take those issues to another court. The association instead was pressured by the developer to sign an MOU that violate our deed restrictions.

The town boards say there is no role for them and it is all up to the Public Service Board. This seems very wrong, as this project would create a 30 acre field of glass and steel at a gateway to the region, visible from the Bennington Battle Monument and the new \$8 million welcome center, and requires cutting 30 acres of trees. The final 4 MW project will be highly visible as it is next to the on-ramp for Route 7 heading north out of Bennington.

These same developers told residents of another town where they are proposing a project on an open field that the reason they chose that site is because it is open and if it involved cutting 15 acres of trees, they would not be there. But that is exactly what they are planning to do next to my home, and in cutting the trees it will possibly expose my property to even stronger winds than I currently experience. We need some ethical standards; or is it all right for developers to lie to people in one town about what they are doing in another town?

I am now trying to participate in the PSB process as an individual. It really requires paying a lawyer because it is all very legalistic, but there also does not seem to be any point because as a neighbor the PSB will dismiss my issues as they have done with all other neighbors.

This solar development has made me feel helpless and I cannot understand how our state government has allowed an industry to be favored over regular Vermonters the consequences being that they win and we lose.

To do renewable energy the right way, you should stop all applications right now and that will give you some incentive to put a better process in place before moving forward with more.

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