

Email received 3/17/15 as Public Comment for the 3/24/15 Public Hearing on Renewable Energy Siting

Attn: Legislative Council Member Katie Pickens:

My wife and I purchased a Sun Tracker for our home a few years ago. I cite this as evidence of our commitment to solar energy and accommodation to climate change.

I think that the construction of large solar installations along Route 7 in our neighboring towns is having a profound effect on the appearance of our local 'Main Street' Vermont.

I suspect that these installations are driven in part by their proximity to 3 phase electrical service. This seems to me a profound, short sighted public subsidy of this development.

When my wife, Louise Giovanella, and I planned our installation, we considered both wind and solar and decided that solar would have the least impact on our neighbors. We also sited the Sun Tracker where it was not visible to our nearest neighbor.

The installations along RT 7 that I reference are clearly commercial or industrial installations. There is no need for them to be so publicly visible. For example, in our town of Panton, there are sites that would not be visible to any residence or traveler where large commercial installations could be sited. Connections to the grid would make them more expensive to develop, but current accounting and business development plans ignore the cost to Vermont's perceived value as a brand. Many of these current large installations, were they regular commercial/industrial developments, would never have cleared local regulation.

Consider that both Burlington, Shelburne and Middlebury have industrial parks where large scale commercial/industrial development takes place.

We need renewable energy development. The current system of siting said development results in a considerable diminishment of 'Vermont's brand'.

Sincerely,

J. Paul Sokal
1530 Hopkins Road
Panton, VT 05491