

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

Thanks to Chris Bray for keeping this topic in public discussion.

My husband and I have 3 pv panels in our yard. We have a long driveway, and the panels are not very noticeable from the road we live on (VT Rte. 116) or from adjacent properties.

My husband, Jerry, is thrilled about the amount of money we're saving; I'm pleased that we're creating green energy that more than compensates for our power usage.

Private residential solar panels serve a very useful purpose, have continuity and maintenance responsibilities that run with the property owner.

Large scale pv panel developments have several primary problems: they frequently are an eyesore to the passing public, and to my knowledge have no requirements for putting up a bond with the municipality in which they are located to take care of abandoned or damaged facilities. In addition, they are so above-and-beyond the security that property owners look for in zoning regulations, that they have created a level of resentment that has turned even renewable energy advocates into critics. There is also some question as to whether or not the municipality in which these farms are located gains any measurable tax money. They also take good, sometimes prime, agricultural soils out of production.

My recommendations:

Create and enforce zoning regulations that will provide setbacks, visual screening, maintenance (including field maintenance practices.) Consider developing regulations that require the acres used for pv panels be put into permanent conservation easements.

Require bonds for dismantling solar arrays.

Develop clear and predictable tax benefits to home municipality.

And I sure hope that in all the studies that have been performed during the development of solar panels, they have addressed solar reflectivity of the panels and the localized increase in ambient air temperature. Those panels get HOT.

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