

Written testimony received from Peggy Barter on January 19, 2016

Dear Representative Klein:

Because I cannot be present tomorrow, I offer my comments here.

I am writing to encourage and support efforts to change Vermont's policies regarding the siting of renewable energy projects, specifically solar and wind. It seems to me that the present policies completely disregard any good will efforts of municipalities to reach out to developers to mutually plan for the siting of such facilities. As Water Quality Committee Chairman for Seymour Lake Association I have lead actions by the Association to learn about VTDEC's Lay Monitoring Data and to advocate for actions to preserve high water quality in Seymour Lake. That has included participation in monitoring Seymour's tributaries and meeting with Morgan's Selectmen, Zoning Board and citizens to act to protect that lake.

Please create a more equitable method of the siting of solar and wind projects to include the needs of the communities. Presently, developers of industrial sized solar and wind projects have no obligation to protect the water quality of Vermont's surface waters. Developers are exempt from the best practices to protect the water quality of Vermont's lakes and streams which Vermont law requires those who live on lake shores and those who farm to follow. My husband and I own a summer place on Seymour Lake and have been active in Seymour Lake Association which encourages all who dwell in that lake's watershed, which is in Morgan, to adopt practices which maintain high water quality. We have been amazed to learn that developers of industrial solar and wind projects are not required to follow practices which adequately protect the State's surface waters.

This fall Morgan's Selectmen convened an informational meeting of the residents and taxpayers of the Town at which the developer, David Blittersdorf, explained his proposal for an industrial solar project on Valley Road in Morgan. Overwhelmingly at that meeting, 90% of those present voted to oppose the Valley Road site for industrial solar development. This site is not only within an area designated as scenic by the Town, but also is on agricultural land closely bounded by Sucker Brook and one of its tributaries. Sucker Brook is the largest tributary of Seymour Lake. This site, which is proposed to have 100 rotating solar panels, is just 2,112 feet from the lake. Additionally, the Public Service Board allows a developer to count only the posts on which the panels rest as impervious surface when calculating storm water runoff into the watershed. The much larger surface of the panels is not included in the runoff calculations! Perhaps Act 250 regulations are more appropriate to use for vetting sites for industrial solar and wind development.

It appears that the developer bought the land without any conversation regarding its anticipated use with the Town Selectmen or Zoning officials, who are well aware that Seymour Lake is designated with water quality severely threatened by development. Neither farmers nor lake shore property owners are allowed to alter their land by adding this large amount of impervious surface on their agricultural or lake shore properties. Morgan does not need the energy that the

panels will produce, but the citizens of Morgan do need locally sourced food and high water quality in their most valuable resource, Seymour Lake.

The current Public Service Board process does not protect the needs of the towns.

Please adopt regulations regarding industrial solar and wind projects which consider the needs of all of Vermont's citizens.

Best Regards,

Peggy Barter
Morgan, Vermont