

H.40 codifies bad policy enacted a decade ago that is resulting in harm to public health, property rights, the environment and our sense of community. The renewable energy industry is no different than the fossil fuel industry in externalizing costs onto victims who are being sacrificed.

H.40 allows for the continued proliferation of big wind and solar development to meet Massachusetts and Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standards, while providing no protections for our communities, environment, property owners, or the state's valuable aesthetics.

H.40 assures that virtually all big wind and solar built in Vermont will NOT be renewable energy for Vermonters. Instead, Vermonters will receive renewable energy almost exclusively using Hydro-Quebec's "environmental attributes" that have virtually no value outside Vermont.

H.40 does not require the phase-out or retirement of RECs for any installed or future solar and wind projects, except for the small amount of distributed generation required in Tier 2.

VCE opposes H.40 because it serves utility and renewable energy industry interests at the expense of our land, air, water and people. There is no evidence that deploying massive amounts of wind and solar in the New England grid system reduces emissions or fossil fuel consumption under the current system's generation make-up.

The promise and future of renewable energy is locally distributed, and Vermont with its small average load of 800 MW is beautifully poised to develop renewable energy to serve our communities. This legislation throws that opportunity away and assures that Vermonters will be tied to the interests of utilities and the renewable energy industry, with the interests of our communities coming last. H.40 magnifies the bad policies that have created problems for Vermonters and our environment, problems which must be addressed by this legislature now.

We recommend:

Tier 1

- Require phase-out and retirement of RECs for installed renewables now and into the future
- Fix the aesthetic/Quechee analysis problem by adjusting language already in statute
- Adopt stop-gap protections for neighboring landowners in the form of a requirement for posting a Compensation Bond that implements a Property Value Guarantee, to be replaced with siting legislation once it is ready.

Tier 2

- Require its enactment to coincide with the adoption of siting legislation.
- Solar only, unless cost shifting issues for wind addressed.

Tier 3

- Convene ratepayer, consumer and community interests to balance the utility and industry interests that created this bill and improve this portion of the legislation so its moving parts are understood and the public's interests are protected and enhanced.

Most Vermonters think that the wind and solar they see on our mountains and fields is renewable energy... for Vermont. It is not now, and with H.40, we will see thousands more MW of solar and wind, almost all of which will be rightfully claimed as renewable energy for Massachusetts and Connecticut. Do you think this is the renewable energy future most Vermonters envision?

H.40 is a two year bill. Please take the time to get this right. Vermont cannot afford more of the same.