

Email re: Public hearing on Renewable Energy Siting  
Rec'd 3/17/15

Dear Ms. Pickens,

I am unable to attend the meeting, but would like to submit a letter for the hearing.

To the members of the Public Service Board and legislative committees:

I implore you, do not allow solar developers to move forward with projects in our state until you have strict regulations that protect it and us.

I have already been warned, you don't care to hear about the aesthetics, noise, or views regarding large scale ground mounted solar farms. Or what I call, "solar power plants." So, although this directly affects me and where my family has lived for years, I will concede I drew the unlucky card in those regards.

What I would like to ask those of you, in charge of deciding the "public good", is to consider the long term effects of these solar farms on our beautiful state.

Because of the lack of siting regulations and oversight, solar developers are the new gold miners. They are scooping up every ounce of open land from Pownal to the Canadian border with large financiers behind them. Let's make something clear: Solar Developers are not environmentalist, conservationist or residents. They are business men/women with an agenda. They want free reign to run their business under the ruse of saving the planet. They throw chump change to our state and receive almost 100% of the profits and their expenses from state and federal energy credits. They are idolized by people who have no idea the developers are not putting the electricity back in their town-but selling it. In my case, having a 4 acre solar farm 100 feet away from my home, will do nothing to lower my water bill or my electric, they made that crystal clear. These developers have an artillery of their own studies, propaganda and lawyers to essentially quiet those who stand in their way. What they may not

realize, is many Vermonters like myself are not afraid of them, or impressed by them.

I am not against renewable energy. That seems to be the go-to response when you express concerns. But I do believe in being solar responsible. And those in charge of our state have not done due diligence to make sure the impact on our lands, people, wildlife and habitat is secured. There are places for solar farms. Brownfield sites, landfill areas, and other unusable, unsuitable land. Other countries utilize bridges, rooftops, railways, and overpasses to harness solar power while being minimally invasive to people, and nature. Doesn't that make sense?

According to the Brookings Institute, solar power is by far the least effective energy source. Solar farms are only 15% efficient. It costs \$189,000 to replace 1 megawatt per year of power from coal. Moreover, there is no reduction in our carbon footprint with solar farms when you consider the machinery and land disturbances that are in tandem with creating, maintenance and decommission of solar farms.

Vermont, which profits off of it's natural state of beauty will be littered in a billboard style way with solar panels that are not creating jobs for Vermonters, not reducing their costs, and not in any way promoting the idyllic preservation of our state. Do you think tourist will be in awe of our rolling hills glaring with back to back chain link fences and large signs saying, "Danger, high voltage" next to our covered bridges and historical landmarks? I think not. I've never seen a postcard with a solar field on it selling anywhere!

The sportsmen, hikers, hunters, and conservationists are beginning to quietly emerge asking how this will impact our state. Will deer, bear and moose be displaced with hundreds, possibly thousands of acres fenced off? Will birds who mistake the panels for water disappear from once populated areas, or sensitive ferns and hermit thrush be desecrated in excavation? You know there will be disruption, you just don't know the extent of it.

Lastly, I'd like to talk to you a minute about safety. No one, not you, me or anyone can tell you what the future holds. But as history has proven with

cigarettes, lead based paint, asbestos agent orange, and others, you never really know what the long term affects are of something until it's too late. The World Health Organization has said the following, "UV radiation, and in particular, solar radiation is carcinogenic to humans, causing all major types of cancer." They also list solar panels themselves as a possible carcinogen and the EPA has stated solar panels are "extremely toxic." And we want to expose our small communities to this? Put solar fields with highly concentrated amounts of radiation next to homes with families and ignorantly say it's safe? Really?

With that said, are local towns, the state and the PSB prepared for any lawsuits from residents who over the course of the next 20-25 years develop any negative effects? Are you prepared to pay for the Leukemia patients final expenses, the farmer who lost everything when a tractor trailer hits a row of solar panels and releases cadmium arsenic all over his crops, or residents in Pownal, who could have their well water tainted?

You may recall a town in Hinkley California, that had an energy company lining towers with a chemical that leached into the drinking water. This didn't happen overnight. Over the years, people became sick with all sorts of various diseases. You may also recall that those people didn't have a say or big wealthy lawyers pushing their concerns. In fact, for many years, they were largely ignored. In the end, years later, when the effects of what developers did was made very apparent, everyone paid. Some paid fines, and others with their lives.

I'm sure you know, that by giving the green light to these projects, you could be held liable along with developers. You don't have 25 years of studies to definitively say solar power plants are safe. And quite frankly, I find it grossly inappropriate that you have the decision making abilities over something that does not directly affect you. But since you are in that position, you should also be held accountable during this 20 year experiment with our state and residents. If my children are forced to grow up across from a solar power plant and become sick due to it, I will sue each and everyone of you whose only concern is about money and prophesied, "green." Your good intentions could have real consequences.

Are you prepared to take responsibility if Vermont and Vermonters become a victim of your negligence?

If you are, I salute your confidence and conscious. It'll be a hell of a price to our land, wildlife, and people if you are wrong.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L Lauzon