

Date: April 23, 2015

To: Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee, Senate Finance Committee

Re: H. 40

We are writing as members of various town energy committees in the Upper Valley, in support of H. 40, essentially as passed by the House.

Our work in our town committees includes extensive efforts to get municipal facilities, businesses, and homes to conserve energy, be efficient in their energy use, and switch to renewable energy.

We support the very ambitious – but crucial – energy goals that the legislature and state agencies have set: weatherize 25% of Vermont homes by 2020, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2050, 90% renewable energy by 2050.

We are the “ground troops” trying to actually achieve these goals, house by house, town by town.

All the elements of H. 40 are a welcome strengthening of our current energy policy framework. The mandatory requirement for our utilities to generate electricity from renewable sources AND to retain the RECs (Tier I) will improve the portfolio for both Vermont and New England. The requirement for distributed generation within the utility portfolio (Tier II) will support continued development of residential and small-scale renewable energy.

Tier III's requirement for utility programs that reduce fossil fuel use may have the most impact on and provide the biggest boost to action by individual homeowners and businesses. It has tremendous potential for both energy and cost savings, and speeding up our rate of progress on our overall goals.

We urge you to keep Tier III as a mandatory utility requirement.

We'd like to note that we have some concerns about the provision in Tier II relating to whether/how net-metering customers retain the RECs for the renewable equipment they invest in. Homeowners, for example, “go solar” both because they know that they will save money AND because they want to do the right thing. Our state policies need to support their ability to do both.

We do not support the provision of H. 40, added at the last-minute, that caps Efficiency Vermont's budget at 2015 levels. EVT's budget is set through a rigorous regulatory process, which requires a two-to-one payback. We think that speaks for itself.

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