

Introduction:

I am Don Cummings from South Burlington, a member of the South Burlington Energy Committee, but I am speaking today only for myself.

Point 1:

There has been a lot of discussion lately about sustainability. In my view, the biggest issue in sustaining life as we know it is how do we slow the progress of climate change?

The fact that Vermont's current electricity portfolio produces very little CO₂ is a point of pride for most of us.

However, those sources of power do have their own impacts to people who live near them. A major portion of GMP's power comes from Hydro Quebec which has been developed at the expense of hundreds of thousands of acres of northern Quebec, impacting land the First Nations people cherish and wanted to protect. Another part comes from Seabrook Nuclear plant – a power plant that is sited near 100s of thousands of people. Our peak energy requirements are met through other energy producers on the New England grid, produced at facilities impacting the lives of the many people living near them and those far away where the fossil fuels to power them are produced through large strip mines, mountain top removal mining and through drilling for gas and oil that produces huge amounts of waste byproducts that contaminate the surrounding landscape and water supplies. Surely we can do our part to provide some of our own energy with the relatively benign sources of power through solar and wind.

See Photos in Appendix A.

Point 2:

Some will argue we don't need to do anything because our power is low carbon. However, if Vermont can save energy through conservation and efficiency and if we can generate some of our own local renewable energy some of that low CO₂ power can be sent elsewhere to help others reduce their contribution to global warming.

Point 3:

Solar on roof tops, under the right conditions, can be excellent way to generate electricity and should be promoted but there are many considerations to its development. The roof must be oriented to appropriately, unshaded for most of the day

and must be new or nearly so to last as long as the array – 25+ years and in the case of flat commercial roofs meet all those conditions and be designed with enough clear space to site an array. Yes, it will be an important source but will be limited in its impact.

Conclusion:

It is time for Vermont to take responsibility for the energy we use and accept that solar and wind have far fewer impacts than the energy sources on which we currently rely – sources where other communities have made significant sacrifices so that we can keep our lights on and we don't have to be bothered to look at it.

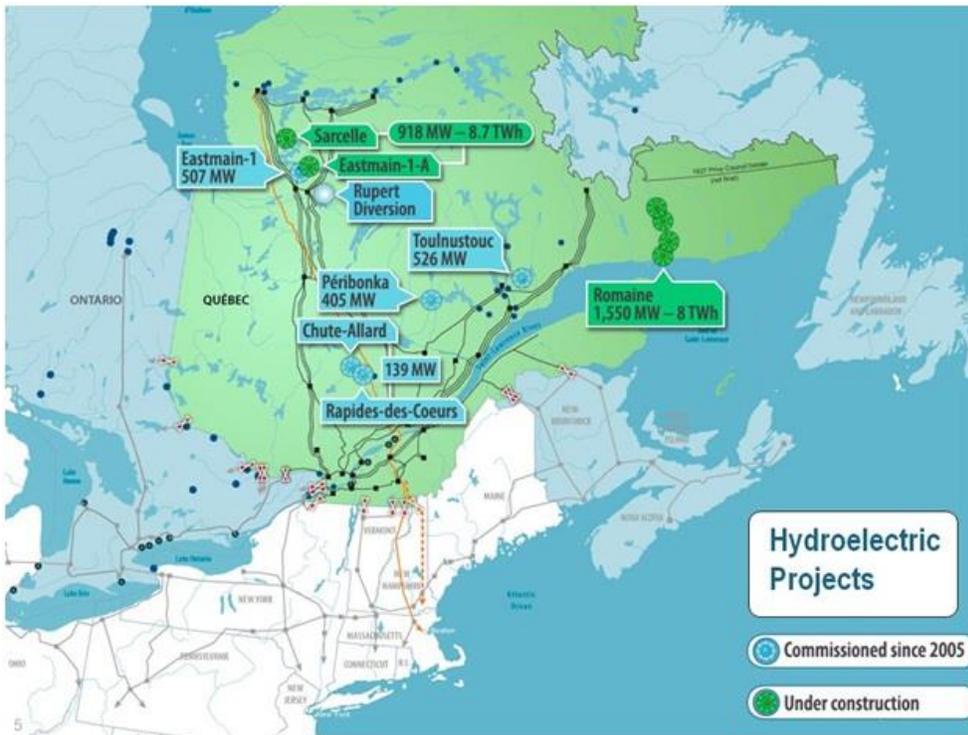
I support community sized and large scale renewable energy production in Vermont when it is done with all of the appropriate care and I think the current review process provides that care although every site needs to be checked for compliance to permit conditions during and after it is built.

The faster we and our country can develop these projects the less difficulty we, our children and our grandchildren will have in adapting to the changes that Climate Change is bringing and will continue to bring in the future.

Appendix A: Vermont Energy Sources and Their Consequences:

Hydro Quebec:





Natural Gas:

Powers much of the peak power that we get from the New England Grid and it produces less CO₂ than oil & way less than coal, however new extraction technologies have led to some serious concerns with ground water contamination.



Coal is by far the worst fossil fuel in use to generate electricity in terms of impact on air quality and CO₂ emissions and mining has tremendous impacts to water quality and health of neighboring communities:



Mountaintop Removal:

Nuclear Power Plants can affect people for hundreds miles and for generations even after the plant is shut down as we are seeing with the Vernon Power plant.

Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant

