

Public Hearing on Renewable Energy Siting

Joint Public Hearing on Renewable Energy Siting March 24, 2015

Foreword: We don't allow citizens to drive without strict testing, we don't allow our homes to be wired without strict licensing, we don't allow pharmacies to issue controlled drugs without procedures.....but somehow Vermont allows the PSB to grant permission to every renewable energy project that comes before them. The PSB is a "Quasi Judiciary Board" with "discretionary" powers that have eliminated legitimate inputs from impacted citizens, does not have the expertise to review large generation projects and in recent years has become very political. This is wrong and the issue of siting needs to be corrected or taken out of the hands of PSB.

Testimony at the March 24, 2015 Meeting:

Good evening.

My name is Kim Fried, I'm the Chair of Newark Town's Planning Commission.

Thanks you for taking my testimony this hearing.

I have two observations I would like to share with you this evening. We basically have two groups at all of the Siting commissions, studies and hearings, such as this evening's hearing.

One group is basically made up of out of state, out of country, and some in state developers, their lobbyists, their lawyers, their industry groups and their special interest groups. This group claims everything is just fine with siting, it just needs to go faster and faster and faster. This is Vermont's "money group".

The second group is made up of concerned Vermont citizens, citizens that have been negatively impacted by energy siting decisions by the PSB. This group also includes Vermont Citizen Groups, Vermont Select Board members, Municipal and Regional Planning Commission members, and Vermont Town Managers. This group is growing every day in numbers and is becoming more and more frustrated with the existing siting process. This second group feels strongly that the system is seriously broken and needs to be changed to allow the "non-developer" Vermont citizens and communities to have a real and strong say in how their Towns and communities are developed.

If the system is working so well, as the first group will assure you, why are there so many law suits? Why did the Governor appoint a Special Generation Siting Commission, and why did the PSB order Docket 8167? In addition there are presently nine House bills and two Senate siting bills being proposed, and a larger and larger group of Vermont citizens and Towns are demanding change.

I ask you as members of the Legislature to finally make the necessary changes to maintain citizen faith in our government which will allow real citizen participation in achieving future energy goals. Please reinstate democracy into the process of developing our communities.

Thanks you.