

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

House Resolution

H.R. 20

House resolution opposing the proposed NewVistas development project in the rural areas of the towns of Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, and Tunbridge

Offered by: Representatives Briglin of Thetford, Ainsworth of Royalton, Buckholz of Hartford, Christie of Hartford, Conquest of Newbury, Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Frenier of Chelsea, Graham of Williamstown, Haas of Rochester, Hooper of Randolph, Jickling of Randolph, Lucke of Hartford, and Masland of Thetford

Whereas, the NewVistas Foundation, a Utah nonprofit corporation, and its founder, David R. Hall, have proposed a long-term plan to construct a 2.88-square-mile, up to 20,000 resident, mixed-used industrial, commercial, and residential development in rural areas of the towns of Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, and Tunbridge, and

Whereas, Sharon, Strafford, and Tunbridge were founded in 1761 and Royalton in 1769, and each includes many historic homes, barns, and other structures characteristic of classic Vermont villages, and

Whereas, these towns have compact village centers surrounded by rural areas that include productive agricultural lands and forestlands, and

Whereas, many landowners in these communities have enrolled in the Vermont Current Use Program in order to manage their lands on a long-term basis for productive agricultural and silvicultural uses, and

Whereas, many landowners in the four communities, working in cooperation with the Upper Valley Land Trust, the Vermont Land Trust, and other organizations, have conserved thousands of acres of farms and forest to preserve productive lands and maintain the scenic beauty of the area, and

Whereas, at their town meetings in March 2017, the voters of these towns overwhelmingly supported resolutions expressing opposition to the NewVistas development, and

Whereas, a primary Vermont land use goal, codified at 24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1), is "To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside," and

Whereas, David Hall is the sole member of the Vermont registered limited liability company, WINDSORANGE L.L.C. that has purchased over 1,500 acres of land in the four towns and unsettled the local real estate market, and

Whereas, the NewVistas project would destroy the traditional and compact settlement pattern in the four towns, convert large amounts of productive

agricultural lands and forestland into development, undermine the historic character of these towns, degrade the area's natural resources, and reduce game and wildlife populations, and

Whereas, similarly, David Hall's related interests have acquired scores of homes in the Pleasant View Neighborhood in Provo, Utah, with the goal of demolishing the existing neighborhood and constructing a mixed-use industrial, commercial, and residential development similar to the development proposed in Vermont, and

Whereas, these threatened Utah homeowners, as well as locally elected officials there, have expressed opposition to the proposed development because it would be inconsistent with the existing settlement pattern and the character of the neighborhood, and

Whereas, various organizations, including the Alliance for Vermont Communities and Building A Local Economy, are working with citizens in the four towns to develop and implement an economically vibrant and environmentally resilient vision for the future of the area, and

Whereas, the Vermont NewVistas development project would be inconsistent with the adopted town plan in each of the four involved municipalities, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body expresses its opposition to the proposed Vermont NewVistas development project, and be it further

Resolved: That this legislative body urges David Hall and the NewVistas Foundation to abandon the NewVistas development and to manage the lands for which they are responsible in accordance with Vermont's land use goals, and be it further

Resolved: That this legislative body urges the State of Vermont to ensure that the NewVistas Foundation operates in accordance with the laws of this State, and be it further

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to David R. Hall, to the NewVistas Foundation, to Governor Philip Scott, to Attorney General T.J. Donovan, to Utah Governor Gary Hebert, and to Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes.