



**Richford Wood Products**

Premium Shavings



**Made in Vermont**

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Testimony to House Committee on Energy and Technology, Act 77  
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Good morning. My name is Bill OBrien, and I work in the role of Business Development/ Sales and Marketing for Richford Wood Products, in Richford, VT. I am here today to testify in favor of the establishment of a pilot program for the self-administration of Efficiency Vermont funds.

Richford Wood Products produces dry wood shavings, used for large animal bedding, which is supplied to local dairy farms in bulk deliveries and supplied to local retail stores in compressed bags for horses. We currently employ eleven full time employees and are actively hiring to add an additional shift. We are also in the process of adding a wood pellet mill, which we hope to be on line this summer. We are an important part of the supply chain for loggers and woodlot landowners in Northern Vermont.

We are an extremely high energy consumer, for the size of our business. We believe that the funds that we send to Efficiency Vermont can be used more effectively, if we were able to determine how they can best be used to increase the efficiencies of our business. We are located in a region where low cost shavings from Canada can make it extremely challenging for our business.

One of the goals of this pilot project is to improve the economic competitiveness of rural businesses and the challenges that they face with increasing electric costs. We are located in an economically depressed area of northern Vermont and have seen tremendous growth over the past six months. We have plans to continue this growth going forward, and are very excited about the work that VEC, FCIDC, and local legislators have put in place.

Richford Wood Products has worked with the Vermont Electric Cooperative and the Public Utilities Commission to get approval for expansion of an existing pilot (TOU) time of use rate schedule. We believe that this was a great first step to helping us control our electric expenses. We have been in the past, and will continue in the future, to be open to work toward lowering our energy expenses.

Richford Wood Products has reached out to Efficiency VT in the past, but the capital investment needed to initiate the projects that they were suggesting was price prohibited, at that time. After four years of investment into the startup of this company, the owners are just starting to see a return on their investment. This is encouraging and will allow them to continue to make necessary investments to continue to grow the business.

I want to thank you for your time this morning and your continued efforts to assist with the economic development of businesses in Vermont.

