

**From:** James Maroney [mailto:maroney.james@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 29, 2018 10:16 AM  
**To:** Christy Ketchel  
**Subject:** Re: Invitation to testify

The Essex Plan, of which I am otherwise in support, disposes of the problem of fossil fuel use by farms in one paragraph:

"The ESSEX Plan benefits Vermont's farms – some of which have electricity bills of \$10,000 a month – by reducing electricity costs by over 25% and doing so without raising the costs of driving a tractor. Farm diesel is exempt under The ESSEX Plan because there are no ready low-carbon alternatives available on the market for heavy equipment."

There are two huge problems with this:

First, with the rapid build out of solar panels, conventional agriculture has surpassed electrical and heat generation and become the leading cause of atmospheric greenhouse gas generation.

Second, conventional farming is the proximate cause of two of Vermont's most vexing and expensive problems, farm attrition and lake pollution. The state has been trying for fifty years to solve these two problems by subsidizing conventional dairy with the empirical result that both problems have steadily increased.

If the Essex Plan furthers this policy failure, and reduces the electrical bills of Vermont's 600 remaining conventional dairy farmers, they will respond by converting the savings to new capacity with which to expand, to gobble up their neighbors, to buy new land, to house more cows, to cultivate more corn grown with artificial fertilizer, which means more lake pollution and more milk they cannot sell, which drives the value of milk down, which in turn drives farm attrition.

The simple answer would be to make farmers subject to the tax like every other person or industry.