

Mark Hughes
Act 250 Testimony
House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
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If the work that you are doing to ensure that Act 250 supports ALL “Vermont’s economic, environmental, and land use planning goals”, It is important in this process that you as leaders in government are listening to community and building an inclusive vision. You must hold yourselves accountable for the strategies necessary to make that vision reality.

This means that the status quo must be challenged. We must willingly go to the places where we are able to confront the historical and current injustices experienced by communities of color in Vermont and the role that government institutions have played in creating and maintaining racial inequities. As uncomfortable and frustrating as that might feel, it is the charge of those who lead and govern.

It is my hope that you not race to marking up a land use bill that has all be certainly caused racial inequity and disparities in Vermont for the past 50 years. Embrace this part of the work as a normal and expected part of listening to the community because this is where we will build the trust necessary to arrive at community owned visions, needs, and solutions.

We’re going to have to make some structural changes to address history of inequality. This include changing public policies to ensure that they promote racial equity; making sure money goes to the people who need it most; adapting processes to enable us to effectively do the work and including communication feedback loops that hold us accountable to community priorities.

The only way we can get to equity is by our elected and appointed representatives listening and responding with bold and decisive action.

Please ensure that you place a “racial equity” period of open testimony on your agenda. Closing testimony without doing so will adversely impact racial equity and diversity in Vermont for years to come.

I stand by prepared to offer additional testimony.

Thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

Mark Hughes

ED, Justice For All