

Public Comment on H.51, H.175, H.214  
April 23, 2019

If I could have arranged to get to the Statehouse in time to sign up to testify in person, I would have made a very short speech:

How bad must Climate Change get before our legislators get serious about what needs to be done? I have a strong feeling that most of the folks we voted into office believe that climate change is “real”. But what will it take to get you to act? Don’t tell me it’s going to cost a lot of money - that’s a given. But it’s a pittance compared to the cost of rebuilding after devastating storms. Just look at Route 107 after the rains of the past few weeks.

House Bills 51 and 175 are a start, but there’s a long way to go and time is running short. It’s pretty simple: building new pipelines cost a great deal of money. Taking land via eminent domain can lead to protracted - and expensive - legal wrangling. The corporations that build pipelines need to recoup their expenses and make a profit. That means many years of use. This is not a “short-term solution” while we figure out how to create energy using renewable resources. We already know how to do that. The roadblock is corporate profits.

Face the problem squarely. Pass the bills and then get on to the bigger question. Do you have the courage to pass a non-regressive carbon tax? British Columbia has had a successful program since 2008. The legislators who passed the law were voted back into office. If you frame the discussion properly (BC called it a “Fee and Dividend” program) and make sure it does not hurt those the lower income brackets, we can go a long way toward hitting our sustainability goals as set forth in Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan.

Dotty Kyle