

Testimony in Support of S.190; BASELOAD RENEWABLE POWER PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT

Renewing the Ryegate Power Plant Legislation

13 February, 2020

My name is Alan Robertson. I'm a retired engineer and own 60 acres of well- managed forest in Sheffield, Vermont. I've been a member of the Vermont Woodlands Association for over 25 years and have been the Secretary for over 15 years; I have also been the Co-Chair of the Vermont American Tree Farm System program for over ten years. I'm honored and pleased to provide the following testimony on behalf VWA for the enactment of senate Bill 190.

VWA is a Non-Profit (501(c)(3)) association of approximately 1000 landowners dedicated to the health and enhancement of the working forest in Vermont. Through education, outreach, and advocacy we are a Voice for Healthy Forests in the Green Mountain State. VWA believes in the sustainable management of our private forests, but successful management needs good markets for wood products, and most notably right now in Vermont, good markets for low quality wood. At present the low quality wood market is suffering due to several recent political decisions including New Hampshire's failure to support their biomass power plants. Not only does forest management suffer because of this but so too, do the harvesting industry and all their employees. This plant's consumption of low quality wood represents a critical component in the forest products economy.

The VWA board met on January 17th and discussed the Ryegate legislation. We note that the Ryegate operation wood procurement policies are very similar to the exceptional BED operation, and that the plant has invested in air quality upgrades recently. Given the need for a robust low quality wood market in order to further the Associations mission of sustainable forestry on private lands, we are very supportive of the continued operation of the Ryegate plant.

We are hopeful that during the legislative process the Ryegate plant will negotiate a fair price for the future power costs, ensure appropriate procurement and continue the excellent harvesting procedures to support forest health, and that the plant will investigate potential efficiency increases through the development of uses for the waste heat the plant emits, as the Burlington Electric Department is doing.