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Cc: Faith Brown <FBrown@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: [External] Ryegate Power Plant - Senate Bill 1

[External]

Good Afternoon All,

The value of the Ryegate chip plant to the Vermont forest economy is extremely high. This is due to the fact that other low-grade markets for especially soft wood pulp, chips, etc. are disappearing. Pulp mills are leaving the northeast, either by choice as they are obsolete or problems evolved like the Jay, Maine mill exploding and shutting down.

The school wood chips for heating has become quite prevalent in this state. There are approximately forty entities in the State of Vermont using chips for heating schools and other public buildings, as in state buildings. Saving those heating entities hundreds of thousands of dollars per year as heating chips are approximately 85% efficient, which is more so than any other subsidized heating product. Producing school chips only requires work for part of a year. In order for there to be someone to produce the chips and pay for equipment, it will only be sustainable if there is some year-round work for the logging and chipping equipment. Any contractor would need a fulltime year-round work to stay in business. Or the school chips will no longer be available because there won't be anyone to do the work.

The Ryegate plant employs roughly 50 people. The jobs in producing the chips, including cutting, skidding, chipping, of the wood chips to Ryegate is roughly 350 people. These people pay taxes and have a full-time job.

Every logging job has some good wood on it. The poor wood, the low-grade product such as chips or pulp, on the average job is roughly 75% of the all the wood. It won't be feasible to do the job unless you have somewhere to take this low-grade wood. In order to do these jobs and comply to the Vermont Current Use statues it is totally necessary to have low grade markets. Without these the VT forest will suffer drastically. Taking care of the forest and removing low grade products is like weeding your garden. You remove the poor trees to improve the log trees that are left standing and make a better forest economy.

There is also the issue of doing conversion jobs; turning some woodland into agricultural productive land. We have done a lot of this type of work creating more land for organic crops, horse pastures and trails, cow pastures, so if we have no market for this produce what do we do with it? I'm sure burning or burying are not solutions. It only makes sense to utilize this wood. We have done hundreds of these projects in the last 20 years.

The chipping entities have to be paid a large enough percentage of this in order to stay in business.

If you have any questions or would like to further discuss this I can be reached by email or by calling (802) 439-5995.

Thank you,

Bruce Limlaw, President

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