

Judy Dow Testimony to the Vermont Senate Natural Resources Committee on bill H. 715, the Clean Heat Standard - April 6, 2022,

Hello Members of the **Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy**:

Thank you for the invitation to speak today. I 'd like to share a little history of the last 18 months. My name is Judy Dow. I have degrees in Education, Native Studies and a Masters in Teaching for social justice. I have been teaching traditional ecological Knowledge for over 35 years. I apologize in advance if I say something to you that might be offensive or shocking. My filter is broken after a year and a half of serving on the Ag. and Eco Systems committee and the biomass task force. I've seen more lies, blatant deceit, political manipulation and lack of understanding for Indigenous science during this time, than I ever care to see. So much so, that I now completely understand what my ancestors have gone through for over the last four hundred years, colonization is rough.

First, I would like to tell you that the Ag and Ecosystems sub-committee did not agree on Biomass as a recommendation because we did not have sufficient time to research this topic. In addition, the Ag and Ecosystems sub-committee expertise wasn't consulted by the Cross-sector mitigation subcommittee in the crafting of the white paper nor the bill. We, the committee has often been told something is technical or mathematical and we don't have the expertise to participate in the creation of something. Many on this committee work with the land and on the land. We have a relationship with the land that those in offices do not. So Now, I have so many questions. Why is the climate council only interested in their silos of knowledge? Why don't they want to braid Traditional Ecological knowledge and western science together? I often ask myself why? Is it because they don't want to hear our answers and wants to silent our voices? Or is it because they want one answer - that of the agency? I can't help but wonder.

Scientific consensus is that global warming results from an atmospheric buildup of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide. Of the carbon dioxide that we humans contribute, roughly two-thirds is from the burning of fossil fuels and one-third is from the burning of biomass, such as forests, grasslands and agricultural crops. We understand that forestry is a part of the Industrial Agriculture taking over this country and contributing to make biomass power plants the next biggest

carbon polluter over coal. We just didn't have the time to research and put together a recommendation- the time schedule was too short.

I would like you to know that according to ANR's own calculations, McNeil Generating plant annually emits 503,000 metric tons of CO₂ and over 10,000 metric tons of Nitrous Oxide and methane. Here's a helpful comparison...according to the US Environmental Protection Agency one of their calculators indicates, the amount of CO₂ emitted by McNeil every year is the same amount of CO₂ sequestered by a forest of 595,268 acres over one year. This is more than the total sequestered carbon annually from the entire Green Mountain Forest, which is about 400,000 acres. Rygate is not far behind in these figures. Please, don't fall into the same trap Ag and Ecosystems did by not asking proper questions. It's a learning curve I understand, you must take the time to learn and not make the same mistake we did by not "questioning authority". It's important to our children and grandchildren. The agencies of Vermont have a one-mind way of thinking and are not easily accepting of other opinions- this way of thinking is not good.

McNeil was built in a floodplain on top of the most highly sensitive archeological site in the state. At least twenty-three state archaeological reports have confirmed this. The division of Historic Preservation and I created the Burlington Intervale Archaeological District, and placed it on the State Register of Historic Places. This land is protected by placing the 1700-acre Intervale the McNeil is located in on the state of Vermont's historical archaeological site list. Any continued building or expansion would be difficult and certainly not equitable to the burial sites in this area or the people living above the smoke stacks on the hill. These people are often ill, so much so that Senator Leahy had a Community Medical Center built right in their neighborhood.

The Burlington Intervale is a Pasahana, a bowl of food for the Abenaki people, never once traded or sold because it was so important to the people's survival. To McNeil it's a place to be surrounded by a manmade four-foot berm and a barbed wire fence to block off the natural flow of water and animals while interrupting an ecosystem that has been in place for over 10,000 years. We must look at equity for all, including the land and water. I pray for you to understand this, because if our water and soil are not healthy we will not be healthy either.

Let's talk about equity. The Global warming solution act, clearly stated there should be discussion about equity at every step of the process. Half way through the process I was suggesting a lack of equity at every step. Pointing out this was not a box to be checked off but rather something to be discussed regularly. I suggested four sustainable questions be placed into the guiding principles and that economy not be the primary thing to be consider but rather placing the land in the forefront and economy next. I believe these questions will be helpful for you to consider as well.

The Four sustainability questions are?

- Does the practice support reducing energy use?
- Can the practice contribute to lessening man-made waste?
- Does the practice reduce destruction of the natural environment?
- Is there fairness to all living things (human and non-human)?

My suggestions were considered and added to the guiding principles. This then gave equity to the land and water as a Non-living thing. Then, the guiding principles were ignored. Economy always came first over equity to the land, water and the people that care for them, this happened every time. Kiah Morris was hired to make an equity assessment tool for the sub-committees. We received this tool just a week before our final reports were to be finished. Every committee I've spoken with has said in writing their reports, that they had no time to use the tool. Equity was not considered in the writing of the report, please don't think it was. Equity is not a box to be checked off by folks that casually talk about it, without any understanding of what equity truly is.

My concerns continue with the lack of asking for reductions in S 715. Instead of working to meet demands, let's reduce. People no longer understand the difference between a want and a need. You can provide them with all the electricity they want with this so-called clean electricity, but if they don't reduce their use, their wants will only continue to grow. Folks need to reduce their consumption, and be given some education around the difference between a want and a need that can happen. I would suggest an incentive for simply turning the thermostat down ten degrees. Put on a sweater, everyone knows our winters

are so much milder now, skiers complain all the time about it, so button up and turn the dial down.

And let's talk about electricity. I've been told by Jared Duval that the increase need for electricity will come from Hydro Quebec. I've heard you say we need to talk more often about local issues not international issues. Boundaries are arbitrary when we are talking about climate change. This is a perfect example of why we should look at the impact our state is having on the world and the world on us. Just so you know, 11 Indigenous Nations have already been relocated and has had over 3.8 million acres of land taken from them and then flooded by Hydro Quebec to provide electricity to their neighbors to the south. Mercury found its way into the food chain because of its release from the flooding waters. These Indigenous people now pay \$17 for a litter bottle of drinking water and have lost their traditional fishing and hunting grounds. Please tell me how this is equitable? If you can find balance in your heart and mind you know it is not equitable! Think of the biodiversity that has been lost forever, the very biodiversity that would store carbon. Think about what you actually need. In addition, to meet our future needs Hydro Quebec wants the land from five additional Indigenous Nations. This is not only inequitable but breaking yet another treaty and making Hydro Quebec not a renewable energy at all, unless they plan on taking more Indigenous lands ever time the want is there. This is not clean energy, this is rape! So, please no false climate solutions, instead ask questions and find answers, the true answers will help you to find the true solutions. This will take time, don't rush it, that box has sides just waiting for you to jump out of.

Again, thank you for listening to my words, now, please don't dismiss them in your haste to pass this bill. Take your time to do it right, listen to all voices and do your research. Remember this earth is your mother. Place yourself in the middle of seven generations, know that your actions and words will be seen by those yet unborn three generations forward and look back three generations to those that have passed on, they will also see and hear your words and actions.

Thank you