

## **S-325 House Environment Committee Testimony-Part 2**

**2026-04-21- Paul Costello, former executive director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development.**

- **Neutrality and Trust:** Effective engagement requires the facilitator to remain neutral, setting aside personal biases to practice "deep listening" and ensure every voice is respected.
- **Purpose and Clarity:** It is critical to be transparent about the meeting's goals.
- **Positive Framing:** Instead of focusing on problems or grievances, facilitators should ask questions that encourage participants to share their visions, aspirations, and values to build a sense of collective ownership.
- **Structured Participation:** High-quality facilitation involves maintaining discipline to ensure everyone has a chance to speak without being dominated by a few individuals, and using "cluster analysis" to identify common trends in public feedback

**2026-04-22- Ben Doyle(Preservation Trust of Vermont), Thomas Weiss(Civil Engineer), Peter Tucker(Vermont Association of Realtors), Matt Boulanger(Williston Planning Director)**

- **Ben Doyle (Preservation Trust of Vermont):** Discusses the importance of supporting historic downtowns and village settlement patterns. He emphasizes that while new growth in emerging centers is potentially beneficial, it must not dilute investment from existing historic centers. He advocates for a "trust but verify" approach, suggesting a three-year look-back study to monitor outcomes.
- **Thomas Weiss (Civil Engineer):** Raises concerns regarding the process of transferring Act 250 permit conditions to municipal permits. He argues for greater oversight by the Land Use Review Board (LURB) to ensure transparency and consistency, and advocates for maintaining the comprehensive nature of Act 250, rather than delegating permitting authority to municipalities.
- **Peter Tucker (Vermont Association of Realtors):** Applauds the committee's decision to repeal the "road rule" and Tier 3 language from Act 181 following significant public pushback. He highlights the importance of collaboration with rural landowners and warns against the potential for over-conservation.
- **Matt Boulanger (Williston Planning Director):** Provides a municipal planning perspective, specifically addressing zoning preemption areas served by municipal water and wastewater. He expresses concerns about the clarity of

defining statutory buffers for growth areas and discusses the practical challenges of implementing Tier 1A status in local communities.