

Dear House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee

After reviewing today's testimony from the new owner of Ryegate's, I went back in the Senate Finance Committee records and found my testimony from March 9, 2021. Yes, it is indeed Groundhog Day. Here's the link to the video where I brought information about the then-new-owners to the committee, the promises they were making, the questionable ability to follow through on them. It's queued up to start at 2:07, my testimony is relatively short
<https://www.youtube.com/live/cQixfUbMrP4?feature=shared&t=7668>

I also submitted the links to the info I

presented. <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Senate%20Finance/Bills/S.1/Public%20Comment/S.1~Annette%20Smith~Public%20Comment%20-%20Vermonters%20for%20a%20Clean%20Environment~3-9-2021.pdf>

The company was seeking a new contract but the Senate Finance Committee was appropriately wary and agreed only to extend the existing contract, which I think they had done the year before, too, when the plant was owned by financially viable companies (one was Duke Energy, the other was a European energy company). The Senate Finance Committee also required a report that was supposed to address the jobs that would be lost, and how to plan for closure. Instead, the report that you have posted on your website for today's testimony dated 2022 was the result, more of a promotional piece rather than what the committee asked for.

This all happened during the pandemic and when it got to the House Energy & Technology Committee, there was very little testimony from anyone other than the proponents, the committee took a field trip to the plant (Rep. Sibilio is the only one currently on the committee who will remember what happened) and as a result, with the promise to increase efficiency, they finally got their new contract. The PUC opened a case which had a lot of comment from loggers who weren't being paid, and supposedly Ryegate made good on their promised contracts.

From my perspective watching this go on for years, hearing the claimed value of the jobs, and recognizing that ratepayers are subsidizing the plant while the REC market is declining, it is clear that this plant will never be economically viable. The state needs to plan for its shutdown and stop this charade of kicking the can down the road again and again.

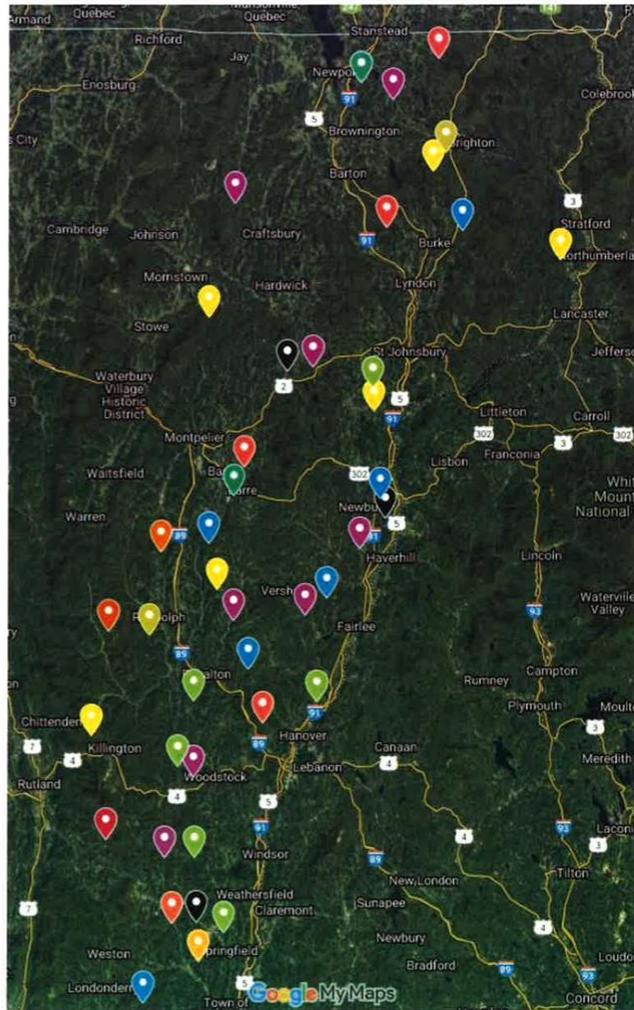
A friend in the NEK told me they had a log job done and the chips were going to Ryegate and the price paid to the landowner and the logger were so low he didn't know how they could make a living. Among the documents presented to the Senate Finance Committee in 2021 was this map showing the wood sourcing. I attend a lot of Climate Council meetings which are all about emissions reductions, so when I look at this map I see the extensive distances and fossil fuel consumption required to keep Ryegate fueled. As for the "need" for low-grade wood waste, looking at the data for McNeil biomass plant, they get a lot of their wood from New York, and if it really is necessary to find outlets for this Vermont wood, McNeil could use the wood currently going to Ryegate and let his plant close. At some point someone needs to recognize the reality of its inability to be economically viable.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Senate%20Finance/Bills/S.1/Witness%20Documents/S.1~Dylan%20Zwicky~Current%20Active%20Logging%20Jobs~2-4-2021.pdf>

Active Logging Jobs

Active Logging Jobs

- Donny Lafairve
- P&L Loggers
- Gabe Freitag
- Perry/Cloud
- Jason Lowell
- Wolstenholme
- Jake Stevenson
- Manning
- Bret Lewis
- Calvin Johnson
- Jeff Norris
- Cloud - Bonning
- Richard Riendeau
- CPE - Hooper
- Cloud - Metcalf
- Berry
- Rich Hollstrom
- Jeff Porier
- Tristan Vaughan
- McHarg-Powers
- Tony Dwyer
- Emerson
- Dennis Ducharme
- Chief
- Gerard Riendeau
- Limlaw
- Taft
- Cloud - Hiltbrand
- Kevin Blake
- Sam Lincoln
- Knapp
- Jeff Masure
- Calvin Willard
- Walt Bandy
- Buzz Emerson
- Cadwell
- CPE - Seawright
- Limlaw



- Webster
- Chris Clark
- Taft
- Temple

Annette Smith
 Executive Director
 Vermonters for a Clean Environment
 789 Baker Brook Road
 Danby, VT
 (802)446-2094
vce@vce.org
<https://www.vce.org/>