

NVDA Wind Study Committee meeting: 6:30pm, September 4, 2013 at the Barton Town Office. (Guest **Speaker: Kevin Jones**, VT Law School)

In attendance: Jim Greenwood, Chair; Mark Whitworth; Robert Croteau; Dave Snedeker – Committee members. Marty Feltus, Town of Lyndon; Peter Rodin, UTG Essex County; Jennifer Hersey Cleveland, Orleans County Record; Kevin Jones, Guest.

Introductions: D. Snedeker opened meeting with introductions and background on NVDA resolution and purpose of Wind Study Committee.

Background: Kevin Jones educational background includes a degree from UVM, graduate school in Texas, and a PhD from RPI. His work background includes jobs at CVPS, Director of Energy Policy for NYC under Mayor Giuliani, the Long Island Power Authority. He now works at the Institute for Energy and Environment at the Vermont Law School.

M. Whitworth notes:

Kevin is very critical of Vermont's SPEED program (Sustainable Priced Energy Development) and characterized it as a "voluntary renewable portfolio standard."

Many other states have Renewable Portfolio Standards, which require the state's utilities to buy a certain amount of electricity from renewable generation facilities (solar, hydro, wind, biomass, etc.). This is intended to encourage the development of renewable generation.

The electricity industry established an accounting system to keep track of the renewable electricity that is generated. When renewable plant generates electricity, it receives a Renewable Energy Credit for each kilowatt hour that it puts onto the grid. The plant operator can retire the REC and take credit for having generated renewable electricity, or it can sell the REC to another utility, business, or individual.

If a state has an RPS, its utilities can meet their requirements by building their own renewable facilities, or by buying RECs from other operators (who may be from other states).

Vermont's SPEED program is unique in that it purports to incent the development of renewables, but it enables operators to sell their RECs out of state. When the RECs are sold, the electricity generated in Vermont can no longer be considered renewable.

Theoretically, the operator of a coal plant in Massachusetts could buy RECs from Kingdom Community Wind, meet an RPS requirement in Massachusetts, and keep operating the coal plant. Kingdom Community Wind's energy output is no longer considered renewable; it is attributed with a carbon footprint equivalent to New England's overall mix.

The State of Connecticut recently passed legislation that prohibits its utilities from purchasing RECs from another state if the other state was counting the electricity toward a renewable energy goal. That is, Connecticut disallowed double-counting renewable energy. It remains to be seen the impact that this will have on Vermont.

According to Kevin the SPEED program is bad because:

1. It does not increase renewables.
2. It increases the prices that Vermont rate payers pay.
3. It increases Vermont's carbon footprint.

The SPEED program was developed and placed into law during the Douglas administration. Robert Dostis, now VP at GMP, was chair of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee at the time.

D. Snedeker notes:

K.Jones – "SPEED program is driving wind development in VT"

- SPEED program is essentially serving as VT's RPS (Renewable Portfolio Standard). State sets standards, utilities implement, in and out of state generation resources are included in the mix
- REC (Renewable Energy Credit): 1 MW generated = 1 credit (certificate). Certificates are required for customers to truly buy green energy. VT allows RECs to be sold out of state which strips away the "green energy".
- Green (renewable), Red (nuclear), & Black (fossil fuel) marble analogy: Selling RECs out of VT strips away the Green, leaving VT using a residual mix of Black and Red.
- Federal Trade Commission determines what can be called Green energy. VT has not been challenged on the issue of what it is calling Green energy?

- SPEED program has actually increased emissions on the Electric Generation side rather than decrease.
- Standard Offer Program is subset of SPEED Program. Guarantees a price for power generated. Standard Offer Program is currently being fixed (price of renewables too high).

- VT can purchase renewable green energy by buying RECs from a generator. SPEED is function as VT's RPS, but SPEED is not a renewable requirement (not renewable if RECs sold out of state). "VT cannot afford the level of renewables in our portfolio (SPEED program)."
- CT law has been changed so that RECs purchased from VT won't count for CT. MA is still allowed to buy VT RECs. "We are building generation in VT to meet other states' requirements".
- VT Legislature has determined that PSB must find SPEED resources consistent with PSB rules. "SPEED resources meet the Public Good"

- "SPEED: 1) Has not created a net increase in renewables in the region or New England; 2) VT has seen an increase in electric rates above market rates; 3) VT's carbon footprint has actually increased".

7:30 p.m., September 4, 2013.

Speaker: Steve Therrien, Sheffield - adjoining landowner.

In attendance: All persons listed above except for Kevin Jones who left the meeting, plus Farley Brown, Committee Member joined the group.

S. Therrien – came to speak of “Wind Turbine Syndrome”

- Mr. Therrien lives less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the closest turbine to his home. Five turbines are within 1 mile of his home. He has reviewed studies that indicate “less than 2 miles is too close in mountainous terrain”
- He indicated that he had no issues with the wind project as it was planned or during construction. His health problems began after facility began operating.
- He indicated that foliage provides some relief from turbine noise, but noise is continuous when foliage is gone. He also indicated that high humidity increases noise effects.
- He experiences nausea, high blood pressure, sleep deprivation, and panic attacks. His physician says that his health is negatively impacted by stress and high blood pressure.
- He indicated that his wife and children are exhibiting the same symptoms as he is, and his children are often agitated. His dog often cowers in the corner of his house or hides under the house.
- He has asked First Wind to purchase his property, but they have declined. The property has been on the market since May 13, 2013. He owns approximately 50 acres and is asking \$125,000. The local Listers have made no reductions in his property value.
- He has requested state agency officials to visit his property to experience the effects, but none have visited to date. First Wind officials (J. Bagnato and ?) did visit but they took no subsequent actions.
- State agency (PSD) attempted to monitor noise levels on one occasion, but the individual assigned to do the monitoring got his vehicle stuck and First Wind employees helped to get him out. This made First Wind aware of monitoring effort. The monitoring did take place and the results showed noise levels were within limits. Mr. Therrien believes it was likely that First Wind “dialed back” their generation to stay within the noise limits.

Meeting ended at approximately 8:15pm

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 9/25/13