

For Immediate Release
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CONTACT: Susan Allen
802-297-8494

Gov. Shumlin announces public forums to focus on State Comprehensive Energy Plan

Community energy committee leaders and all invited to attend

MONTPELIER -- Gov. Peter Shumlin announced a series of public forums to guide the state in making complex and strategic choices on how Vermont will meet its energy needs far into the future. The first hearing will be held on June 1 in Montpelier, with a series of other forums scheduled around the state (see full list below).

The input is part of the Department of Public Service's much-needed update to Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan, last officially adopted in 1998. The new plan is due for completion on Oct. 15.

"Without a current, comprehensive and coordinated approach to meeting our energy needs, Vermont will face significant challenges," Gov. Shumlin said. "Without the active participation of Vermonters in identifying and implementing solutions, the necessary planning and accompanying action will be even harder."

To hear from Vermonters on this important topic, the DPS recently held two initial public stakeholder meetings on the plan. Now, prior to a more aggressive public outreach, public hearings, and official public comment period in August, the DPS is hosting a series of gatherings in a handful of regions across Vermont to hear from energy-interested Vermonters.

In cooperation with regional planning commissions, the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network and the Vermont Natural Resources Council, the DPS is coordinating four focused forums to hear from Vermonters, including the network of 100 community energy committees, about the policies, programs and practices that would help Vermont meet its energy goals.

The DPS is also coordinating closely with other state agencies that have important roles to play in the conversation, including the agencies of natural resources, transportation, commerce and community development and agriculture, among others. The DPS hopes to get specific feedback on strategies for Vermont to address energy issues — and opportunities — associated with how we develop and use our land, how we move people, how we use and conserve energy and how we generate new supplies. The DPS wants to hear about plans already in place at the regional and town level and about practices that have started to make a difference for Vermont's energy future.

The forums are:

* June 1 — Montpelier — 6-9 p.m. National Life. Co-hosted by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission

* June 9 — Springfield - Riverside Middle School — 6-9 p.m. In cooperation with Windham Regional Commission, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission and the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission.

* June 16 — Rutland — Leahy Center at Rutland Regional Medical Center — 6-9 p.m. Co-hosted by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Addison County Regional Planning Commission and Bennington County Planning Commission

* June 28 — Colchester. 6 - 9 p.m at the Colchester High School Cafeteria. Co-hosted by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

For more information contact: Kelly Launder, Asst. Dir. Planning & Energy Resources Division, Vermont Dept. of Public Service, 802-828-4039, kelly.launder@state.vt.us or Johanna Miller, VNRC Energy Program Dir. & VECAN Coordinator at 802-223-2328 ext. 112 or jmiller@vnrc.org.