

STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

IN RE: COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN
HEARING

Public Hearing held before the Vermont
Department of Public Service, at the Rutland
Regional Medical Center, 160 Allen St.,
Rutland, Vermont, on October 29, 2015,
beginning at 7:14 p.m.

PRESENT:

DPS Staff: Asa Hopkins & Ben Civiletti

O'BRIEN REPORTING SERVICES, INC.
223 KILLINGTON AVENUE
RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701
TEL: (802) 747-0199

1 MR. ASA HOPKINS: We have first Tom
2 Donahue and then Bill Laberge, and just so you
3 know, the next person will be Roland Marx,
4 then we'll work our way through and each time
5 I'll just read off the next person. You want
6 to come up just to make sure that you're close
7 enough to the court reporter to hear you. We
8 don't have a mic for people.

9 THE COURT REPORTER: Could you
10 please all spell your names as well?

11 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Yes.

12 MR. TOM DONAHUE: My name is Tom
13 Donahue, D-O-N-A-H-U-E. I'm the CEO at the
14 Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, and I'm a
15 fourth generation Vermonter; my kids are fifth
16 generation; and my grandkids are sixth
17 generation. I wanted to thank you first for
18 having this hearing in Rutland. We appreciate
19 the convenience of it. I'm writing on behalf
20 of the -- well, reading/writing on behalf the
21 Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce. We
22 represent over 500 businesses and
23 organizations in the greater Rutland region.

24 We appreciate the opportunity to comment
25 on the draft of the state's 2016 Comprehensive

1 Energy Plan being considered by the Vermont
2 Public Service Department. We are very
3 concerned with the absence of language
4 supporting gas pipeline infrastructure
5 expansion. We request the department restore
6 the language supportive of the expanding
7 natural gas infrastructure.

8 Natural gas is proven cost effective,
9 reliable, and convenient to almost 50,000
10 Vermont customers over the five decades
11 they've enjoyed natural gas expansion in
12 Vermont. Such pipeline-based service should
13 not be limited to the two counties where it is
14 available now.

15 Further, we are very concerned with the
16 elimination of the important endorsement of
17 Rutland service that was included in the 2011
18 plan. We fully endorse the concept of
19 providing pipeline infrastructure and service
20 to 13,000 customers including thousands of
21 households and vital businesses and
22 institutions along the possible route
23 connecting Middlebury to Rutland. The draft
24 shifts emphasis on the importance of
25 compressed natural gas, which is a good option

1 for some large users, but it is more expensive
2 and cannot be provided to residents and
3 households.

4 Last, but not least, we support a draft
5 that recognizes the positive impact renewables
6 can have and are having in Vermont. Renewable
7 energy is having an increasingly important
8 role in creating jobs in Rutland County and
9 statewide. We are very supportive of that
10 ongoing effort. As a strong organization of
11 Vermont businesses; organizations; and
12 homeowners, we respectfully request and urge
13 you to reflect our needs and our opportunities
14 in the final CEP document. Our future
15 stability may depend on it. Thanks you.

16 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Bill Laberge and
17 then Roland Marx.

18 MR. BILL LABERGE: So, it's Bill
19 L-A-B-E-R-G-E, and I'm a solar installer in
20 Dorset, and I just wanted to -- you mentioned
21 net metering a couple of times, you know,
22 that's been looked at a couple times since
23 2011, and I think that if we're going to get
24 to 90 percent by 2050, the net metering
25 programs has to expand even more. I think --

1 I understand that the legislature is going to
2 be looking at it this year, and Green Mountain
3 Power is looking at it, but right now
4 utilities are bumping into the 15 percent cap.

5 Renewable energy projects in Hardwick
6 Electric have come to a screeching halt
7 because they hit their 15 percent cap. It
8 looks like Green Mountain Power is probably
9 going to hit their cap early 2016, January or
10 February from what I'm told, and they're
11 looking at ways that they can expand that.

12 So, I think we have a utility that is very
13 forward-thinking in how they want to do
14 renewable projects, and I think if the state
15 is going to be forward-thinking, then net
16 metering has to be one of the first things
17 that they tackle. And I give my time to the
18 next person.

19 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Roland Marx and
20 then Peter Yankowski.

21 MR. ROLAND MARX: I think there is
22 an awful lot of good stuff in the plan, but I
23 still have a suggestion. I'm a panel owner in
24 a solar farm in West Rutland that's VGVG,
25 Vermont grown and Vermont green, that's truly

1 green. And I would like to make a suggestion
2 that the Clean Energy Plan specify that all
3 Vermont solar be VGVG but also is green, I
4 mean, that's obvious, isn't it? But it's not.
5 Large scale commercial solar, that was right,
6 that's not green. They sell the renewable
7 energy credits. Those are the green benefits
8 that are associated with the energy produced
9 from solar. You get a pile of money when you
10 sell the rights, but the catch is, when you
11 sell them, you're no longer green. You've
12 given up the claim to do that. You've given
13 it away to the buyer of the rights and the
14 rights -- excuse me, and the buyer of the
15 rights uses that to cover his pollution.

16 The trouble is, that large scale
17 commercial solar, after it sells the rights;
18 after it sells its claim to be green, still
19 claims to be green, still has its energy
20 content count towards the renewable goals of
21 Vermont to get the 90 percent by 2050, that's
22 wrong. That's not right at all. And the
23 Clean Energy Plan has to contain a
24 specification that all Vermont solar be VGVG,
25 Vermont grown and Vermont green.

1 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Thank you.
2 Peter Yankowski and then Kathleen Guinness.
3 Everybody remember to spell your last name for
4 the court reporter.

5 MR. PETER YANKOWSKI: All right.
6 So, I'm Peter Yankowski. I live in Rutland
7 Town and there's certainly been a lot of
8 effort that's gone into this plan, 380 pages.
9 I'm going to speak to something that's missing
10 from the plan, and it is a sense of urgency to
11 deal with the siting of industrial wind and
12 solar and the sense -- the lack of sense of
13 urgency to deal with the voice of communities
14 and planting these things around the state.

15 Right now we have -- excuse me, right now
16 we have an approval process going through
17 Section 248 and Act 50 that effectively isn't
18 working. As of September, there were
19 fifty-nine 500-megawatt solar projects
20 approved -- zero approved. Many towns have
21 been negatively affected by this. When they
22 go back to the Public Service Board, they're
23 told by the chairman to go to the -- their
24 hands are tied, to go to the legislature for
25 help. When they go to the legislature, Tony

1 Klein says that there is either not a problem
2 or go back to the Public Service Board.

3 The system we have isn't working. The
4 regional planning individual, Ed Bove, he
5 talked about what the priorities were.
6 There's effectively nothing in the plan. In
7 Section 5 it mentions there are problems. It
8 mentions that they're difficult problems, but
9 it doesn't do anything to solve the problem.
10 It doesn't push. It mentions the governor's
11 siting commission that completed its work in
12 2013. It's going to be another two years
13 before you get anything out of that.

14 The siting task force is loaded with
15 industry people. Seven out of ten are either
16 from the industry or they work for the
17 governor. I think the plan has to refocus and
18 say something about how towns are affected by
19 this. At this point there is effectively
20 nothing in there. Thank you.

21 THE COURT REPORTER: Sir, would
22 you please spell your last name?

23 MR. PETER YANKOWSKI:
24 Y-A-N-K-O-W-S-K-I.

25 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

1 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Kathleen
2 Guinness and then Jane Pappas and Rhonda
3 Rivers is next. You said perhaps. Is that a,
4 yes, or a, no?

5 MS. RHONDA RIVERS: Yes, I will.

6 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. All
7 right.

8 MS. KATHLEEN GUINNESS: Hi, I'm
9 Kathleen Guinness. I'm from Poultney,
10 Vermont. I'm a mother and a parent and a
11 great lover of the flora/fauna of the world
12 and of Vermont in particular. In particular,
13 I'm a bird lover, and as a bird lover and a
14 people lover, I'm very concerned about the
15 rapidity of climate change in our state in
16 particular.

17 This plan is quite comprehensive but it
18 gives us until 2015 -- 2050 to make all of
19 these changes. I believe the world plan was
20 for 2030, and I think we need to speed up our
21 plan quite a bit, but I'm also concerned that
22 the carbon omissions rate is out of control
23 and that we need to do something right away to
24 stop it and probably the best and most
25 effective way to do that is to set up a carbon

1 omissions tax which will give back to us all
2 in one way or another.

3 I'm also familiar with permaculture, and I
4 think that permaculture is a great way to
5 protect our ecosystem. And I'd like to see
6 something in this plan that would address that
7 so that more of us can learn about
8 permaculture and how to set something up along
9 that line. Thank you.

10 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Thank you. Jane
11 Pappas and then Rhonda Rivers.

12 MS. JANE PAPPAS: So, J-A-N-E,
13 P-A-P-P-A-S, and I live in Ludlow. And I
14 guess I'll just make the brief comment that
15 one thing that I noticed in the plan is that a
16 lot of what is discussed are incentives and
17 ways to educate the public, and I think that
18 there should be more emphasis on the mandates
19 and carbon tax being one of those things. I
20 think that really nothing can really change if
21 there aren't mandates and, although, this
22 isn't legislation, it is supposed to inform
23 legislation. So, I think that that should be
24 part of the plan, and I think that's probably
25 the most important comment I can make.

1 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Thank you.
2 Rhonda Rivers and then. Annette Smith, you
3 were a perhaps. Are you a yes?

4 MS. ANNETTE SMITH: (Nodding.)

5 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay, so you'll
6 be next.

7 MS. RHONDA RIVERS: Rhonda Rivers,
8 R-H-O-N-D-A, R-I-V-E-R-S. I'm a resident of
9 Mount Holly, and I have a three-something
10 solar system on our property which we are
11 planning on disbanding it somewhat.

12 I think one of the things that Vermonters
13 don't think about -- the issues of siting
14 raise strong feelings of pro and against, and
15 I think something that a lot of Vermonters
16 don't think about is, what are the trade-offs?
17 There is no free energy. There is no totally
18 clean energy. They all have costs in one way
19 or another.

20 And I don't think the folks of West
21 Virginia are pretty happy about having the
22 tops of their mountains taken off so that the
23 coal can be gotten out and generate things and
24 much less the tailings and everything else
25 left behind with the water generation. I just

1 -- there's no good energy and I don't think
2 there is enough placed on that, and I think
3 there's going to have to be some emphasis
4 placed on that education so that people can
5 validly make the trade-offs and decide what it
6 is they want.

7 Everybody wants to have that light go on
8 when they go over to the switch, but there's a
9 cost generating it, and we have to balance the
10 cost. And I think I would like to see more
11 information in the plan that talks about that
12 so that people understand it and realize that
13 we all have to make those choices. Thank you.

14 MR. ASA HOPKINS: We have Annette
15 Smith and then Shaina Kasper.

16 MS. ANNETTE SMITH: I'm Annette
17 Smith from Danby. I'm Executive Director for
18 Vermonters For Clean Environment. I have made
19 a list of ten items.

20 Innovation and transparency. I don't
21 think the plan is innovative enough. I'll
22 give you an example. There is a solar project
23 in Bridgeport that's using 9 acres for 2
24 megawatts. Most of the solar projects are
25 using 15 acres for 2 megawatts. I think the

1 plan needs to create incentives for more
2 innovative technologies that -- I understand
3 the Bridgeport uses U.S. made panels. Well,
4 most of what we're getting is Chinese. Our
5 policies are leading us to the bottom of the
6 barrel, not the top. There is no reason why
7 we can't have every single solar array hooked
8 up to a computer outlet that you can see
9 exactly what's being generated. Same thing
10 with wind, we need much more transparency.
11 This is one of the big problems with this
12 industry is, that it's not transparent.

13 Number two, choosing technologies going
14 out to 2032, 2050. I have five. One minute
15 left. Five years ago we didn't hear much
16 about air sourcing pumps. I think that this
17 is an aspirational plan that we can probably
18 rewrite in five years a lot of different
19 things. The state's role in the region, I
20 think, needs to be much better outlined. You
21 made a reference to us being part of the grid.
22 Everyday we use about 800 megawatts. The
23 region uses about 1,800 megawatts. I would
24 like to see a discussion about our role and
25 going forward especially that far out. What

1 is the idea, are we going to disconnect from
2 the grid? Are we -- how are we going to
3 integrate with the big grid?

4 Right now in the current system renewables
5 equals natural gas. The more renewables we
6 build, the more natural gas we need. I think
7 there needs to be a more honest reflection of
8 that in the plan. We are currently
9 externalizing cost and, in particular, with
10 noise pollution from wind projects; with lack
11 of respect of solar developers, we need to be
12 more accountable, and we need to have justice
13 and fairness. And with new energy comes new
14 opportunities.

15 Transportation. Again, I don't think the
16 plan is innovative enough. We need a commuter
17 rail system on the western corridor. We need
18 to get out of our cars and be able to take the
19 train. On strategy 2 on Page 295 it calls for
20 health impact studies, that needs to be
21 implemented right now. We have a disconnect
22 between our policy makers, our regulators, our
23 industry, our developers, and our towns. We
24 need to come together.

25 We have a siting process based on lawyers

1 and experts and a lot of money, and we have an
2 opportunity for community-based stakeholder
3 processes which the Department of Energy is
4 promoting which we have done effectively. We
5 can all come together and do this, and this
6 plan needs to promote those kind of innovative
7 policies. Thank you.

8 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. And I'll
9 just kind of mention again, that in case you
10 have more to say than the time allows, you can
11 always send them separately or we'll get them
12 to the court reporter. So, Shaina Kasper and
13 then Chris Williams.

14 MS. SHAINA KASPER: My name is
15 Shaina Kasper. It's S-H-A-I-N-A, K-A-S-P-E-R.
16 I'm community organizer of Toxics Action
17 Center. I'm originally from Richmond, now I
18 live in Montpelier. I couldn't make the
19 hearings near there, so I'm here now.

20 Growing up in Richmond I worked at On the
21 Rise Bakery and Cafe which was really the
22 heart of our community, but when On the Rise
23 was built, they had to tear down a perfectly
24 good building in order to rebuild a new
25 structure 4-inches higher, thought it was

1 ridiculous but they had do it to be out of the
2 100-year floodplain.

3 I was back from college working at On the
4 Rise when Irene hit Vermont. The rivers rose
5 and kept rising. The water lapped in the door
6 of On the Rise but it didn't flood and because
7 of that it stayed open. The next morning I
8 was manning the counter when neighbor after
9 neighbor came in up to their hip in muck and,
10 you know, got a scone and a slice of pizza, a
11 beer. So, you know, I heard about everything
12 in their basement that was turned to muck.

13 Thankfully, On the Rise was rebuilt to be
14 just that, on the rise. They had to rebuild
15 because they had to get ready for the 100-year
16 flood, but here's the thing, a flood like this
17 every 100 years is natural. A flood like this
18 every generation or even less is not. But
19 tackling climate change is important to me
20 because I'm a Vermonter, because after my
21 shift was over, I pulled on my muck boots and
22 got a shovel and helped clean out basements
23 and tear down houses that were falling down.
24 I -- because I don't know what my hometown is
25 going to do if we have another 100-year flood.

1 And, meanwhile, international climate
2 caucuses, they've been negotiating not just
3 for five or ten years but since before I was
4 born. That's why I found my way back to
5 Vermont working with Toxic Actions Center,
6 working side by side with community groups to
7 clean up and prevent pollution.

8 We've worked to stop and nonrenewal frack
9 gas pipelines from going under Lake Champlain,
10 to promote renewable energy, and for carbon
11 pollutions tax. It's time that we address
12 climate change in a serious way to move
13 Vermont toward energy independence and pricing
14 carbon pollution is a necessary part to
15 addressing climate change and meeting our
16 state's energy goals.

17 A clear plan for putting a price on carbon
18 pollution must be part of the Comprehensive
19 Energy Plan. Thank you.

20 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Chris Williams
21 and then Fran Putnam.

22 MR. CHRIS WILLIAMS: I'm going to
23 submit my comments in writing, so you can move
24 on to the next person.

25 MR. ASA HOPKINS: All right, so,

1 Fran Putnam and then Jason Kaiser.

2 MS. FRAN PUTNAM: My name is Fran
3 Putnam, P-U-T-N-A-M. I'm from Weybridge. I'm
4 here as a private citizen. I'm here as chair
5 of the Weybridge Energy Committee, and as a
6 grandparent and that third category is why I'm
7 so concerned about climate change, that's the
8 main thing that gets me up in the morning,
9 that's what I work on in all of my spare time,
10 and that's what brings me here tonight.

11 The goal of reducing our greenhouse gas
12 omissions by 80 percent by 2050 is an
13 ambitious goal, but I don't think we've gotten
14 there. We're not getting there. We really
15 haven't budge the meter whatsoever. So, I
16 think we need to be a lot more aggressive. We
17 need to do both the carrot and the stick, that
18 may not be very comfortable for people, but if
19 you keep your eye on the goal of slowing down
20 climate change so that my grandchildren and
21 your children and grandchildren and future
22 generations have a future, we have to be more
23 aggressive.

24 So, I'm here also to support the carbon
25 pollution tax, because I think it offers

1 incentives and also offers some mandates. So,
2 this is a way that we can have both economic
3 stimulus, and, also, we can get people to
4 adopt whatever they can to reduce the energy
5 we use.

6 So, that's what I'm asking for, is the
7 serious consideration for carbon pollution tax
8 so that it isn't just goals we're talking
9 about. Goals are important, and these goals
10 are great, but we can just tear up a goal if
11 you're not going to do anything about it. So,
12 thank you very much.

13 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Jason Kaiser,
14 then Justin Lindholm.

15 MR. JASON KAISER: Hi, my name is
16 Jason Kaiser, K-A-I-S-E-R. I'm a metrologist
17 from Danby who wants to stay living and
18 working in Vermont. I love the challenging
19 and ambitious goals of meeting 90 percent of
20 the state's total energy needs for renewable
21 sources by midcentury. One aspect, essential
22 aspect of this goal, is to reduce greenhouse
23 gas omissions which would increase the
24 likelihood of avoidant climatic tipping points
25 and moderating the intensification of current

1 climate impacts.

2 On this note I bring attention to Page
3 370, paragraph four, the last sentence which
4 reads: "Capturing methane released by
5 decomposing waste or manure and adding it to
6 the pipeline system to be used in homes and
7 businesses has substantial climate benefits
8 because methane is a GHG, greenhouse gas, 20
9 times more powerful than carbon dioxide."

10 I observed two issues with the last part
11 of the sentence.

12 (A discussion was held off the
13 record.)

14 MR. JASON KAISER: Has substantial
15 climate benefits because methane is a GHG 20
16 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. I
17 observed two issues with the last part of the
18 sentence. First, unless I misunderstand the
19 intent of the sentence, it appears
20 contradictory. Any greenhouse gas that is
21 more powerful than carbon dioxide at trapping
22 heat is a substantial climate disadvantage,
23 and, therefore, does not provide substantial
24 climate benefits.

25 Second, is the impetus behind including in

1 the CEP the fact that methane is a GHG 20
2 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. As
3 the source of this factor is not cited, I
4 believe it came from Intergovernmental Panel
5 on Climate Change, IPCC, reports as the stated
6 global warming potential, GWP, cumulative
7 forcing over a period of 100 years.

8 The problem with a time horizon of 100
9 years as it relates to methane is, that 100
10 years is seven to ten times longer than the
11 actual atmospheric lifetime of methane which
12 the EPA and IPCC agree is around 10 to 14 --
13 20 -- 10 to 14 years. And I'm going to submit
14 the rest of my comments on-line because my
15 time is cut short.

16 MR. ASA HOPKINS: All right.
17 Justin Lindholm and then Paul Stone.

18 MR. JUSTIN LINDHOLM: Hi, I'm
19 Justin Lindholm from Mendon, Vermont. I think
20 you can hear me well. I speak loudly enough.
21 I'm going to hit on one thing, and I'm going
22 to do it very quickly. I've been involved in
23 renewable energy siting for several years now,
24 and one thing I am very disappointed in from
25 our Vermont Department of Public Service and

1 Public Service Board and a lot of Vermonters
2 is, they are cold and heartless about the poor
3 people who have to suffer from wind turbine
4 noise near these wind turbines.

5 We should be ashamed of ourselves. This
6 seems to be a standard human trait down
7 through history that we, to save something, to
8 save the world; to save the state; to save the
9 country always seem to pound on that poor
10 little guy for the majority. We built a
11 constitution that actually says you must be
12 compensated, and these people need to be
13 compensated or we're in big trouble, and we're
14 going to be known in history as a horrendously
15 cold and heartless state, this State of
16 Vermont.

17 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Paul Stone and
18 then Nancy Morlino.

19 MR. PAUL STONE: My name is Paul
20 Stone. I'm from Orwell. My wife and I own
21 1,029-acre solar collector that is a farm. We
22 grow turkeys. I'm addressing Chapter 5 on
23 land use and citing. This chapter does not
24 adequately address the use of agricultural
25 land for solar installations since about 90

1 percent of the Vermont -- of Vermont will be
2 off limits to solar due to forest, forestland,
3 or wetlands or already developed parks and
4 etcetera. The best agriculture land will be
5 the only sites available and the most
6 desirable sites for solar and this is wrong.

7 Good agricultural land are scarce and an
8 irreplaceable source. It doesn't take -- make
9 any sense to destroy our precious ag land
10 resources for solar generation, especially
11 when there are other ways to generate solar,
12 generate renewable power. Ag lands are
13 already solar collectors, growing food, and
14 recycling carbon dioxide and of great economic
15 importance to Vermont to provide jobs and
16 create beautiful landscapes for our enjoyment
17 and for the enjoyment -- and to attract
18 travelers. It is not -- it will not be
19 possible to farm in and around solar
20 collectors; they are far too fragile, and it
21 would be rather imprudent to graze cattle or
22 farm with machinery around these collectors.
23 My hope and recommendation is, that no
24 agriculture soils in the State of Vermont will
25 -- with statewide significance will be used

1 for solar sites. If there are areas on farms
2 that are a lesser agricultural significance,
3 then they can be used.

4 So, I'll stop at that point. Well, one,
5 one thing. On Page 215, in the middle of the
6 page, there is a very contradictory paragraph
7 about what can or cannot be used for solar
8 siting. Thank you.

9 MS. NANCY MORLINO: Nancy Morlino
10 will provide her comments on-line.

11 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. Don
12 Richards and Keith Dewey is a question mark.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He just
14 left with his phone.

15 MR. ASA HOPKINS: With his phone,
16 all right. We'll go to -- Bob Amelang would
17 be the next one.

18 MR. DON RICHARDSON: Don
19 Richardson. Privileged to be a private
20 citizen in the town of Mount Holly. Also
21 privileged to have done my first solar
22 installation in 1976. Today, quite honestly,
23 we're headed in a direction that we need to
24 know more about. We as a citizenry need to
25 understand better. I strongly, strongly urge

1 in whatever method is appropriate, Doctor, to
2 advocate for education about alternative
3 energy. Education, that is basic facts of
4 what is and what is not.

5 Towards that end, on Monday evening in the
6 town of Mount Holly we will commence a
7 community discussion group about alternative
8 energy towards that objective, and we'll see
9 where that goes, but I'm also privileged to be
10 a net metering customer of Green Mountain
11 Power.

12 So, I've kind of put my words out there in
13 the field. Thank you very much.

14 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Keith Dewey is
15 next. You missed, you missed your name. And
16 then Bob Amelang after Keith.

17 MR. KEITH DEWEY: I'll submit most
18 of my comments in writing. I just wanted to
19 make two major points. In 2010 and '11 Liz
20 Miller was developing the last Vermont energy
21 plan, which is a marked improvement over what
22 had existed before, and this, again, is to be
23 complimented for another step forward. One of
24 my concerns is the 90-percent-by-2050 target.
25 Where did that number come from? Is that a

1 realistic number in terms of what -- what
2 would Mother Nature say about that in the
3 context of where we are with climate issues
4 right now?

5 If we do set our goals in reverse and
6 actually look at that and set our goals in
7 accordance to what's actually happening in
8 terms of biodiversity loss and impacts on the
9 climate right now, I think we need to actually
10 multiply all of our factors and percentages
11 and goals by a factor of three. I understand
12 that's a tough goal for us all to try to meet,
13 but if we want to stay in context with the
14 reality of the problem that's actually
15 happening, that's what we have to do.

16 The other point I wanted to make was, one
17 of my sources of frustration in choices that
18 we make in terms of energy and our types of
19 selection of different types of energy is, we
20 don't -- we've gotten into a nasty habit of
21 not actually looking at the true societal cost
22 of the different types of energies that we
23 choose. The cost of a gallon of gasoline is
24 not \$3 at the pump. In terms of true societal
25 costs, it is about \$30 a gallon.

1 We need to start plugging in the reality
2 of those kinds of figures into our life cycle
3 analysis work that we do which completely
4 changes the decisions we're making.

5 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. Bob
6 Amelang and then Glen Horgan.

7 MR. BOB AMELANG: Bob Amelang and
8 my last name is A-M-E-L-A-N-G. I'm a resident
9 of Rutland. I admire and applaud the noble
10 goals we have here in Vermont, and I think we
11 as a world have to change the way we obtain
12 our energy, but I think that we need to look
13 at the problem in a global standpoint and look
14 at the fact that we are a very small state,
15 and what we do is not going to have a big
16 impact on climate change. And if the price of
17 gasoline is truly \$30 with a societal cost, it
18 doesn't make sense to impose that cost here in
19 Vermont if you can just go across the river to
20 New Hampshire and buy gasoline for \$2. We
21 have to be -- we have to make these goals in
22 the context of being in the United States and
23 the world as a whole.

24 I have some comments in particular about
25 net metering. I think that the issue about

1 net metering has not been fully explained to
2 the Vermont people. It is a cross subsidy
3 from the people that have net metering and
4 those that don't; in other words, the
5 non-participants pay for the other ones, and I
6 realize a certain amount of this should be
7 done, but we need to look at this in the
8 context of: How long can we sustain this?
9 How much of a subsidy are we going to provide
10 from one class to another? And we can't
11 continue to have net metering because somebody
12 has to pay for the infrastructure, and if we
13 all are net metered customers, nobody is going
14 to be paying for the infrastructure which we
15 still need to have to run electric. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Horgan and then
18 Jim Georg. Glen Horgan? Jim Georg or Jim
19 Georg, last name I'm not sure.

20 MR. JIM GEORG: Georg. I am Jim
21 Georg, Georg without an E on the end. I'm not
22 a real Vermonter; I moved here ten years ago,
23 and I'm always surprised to see how energetic
24 Vermont was on the renewable energy thing and
25 saving the planet.

1 I noticed that there was incentive --
2 incentivifies, is that how you say it? Through
3 a way of paying the people who are putting the
4 things in that did that, the wind and the
5 solar, and it seemed that they got more for
6 their electrical energy from the provider to
7 us and that in our tax bill -- not our tax
8 bill, our hidden tax bill went up or electric
9 bill went up.

10 In any event, in those ten years I've
11 watched a lot of things go on, and I found it
12 interesting that this thing has been a real
13 struggle. Siting is crazy. We've got people
14 who say we have to have it and are very
15 energetic and very, very interested and then
16 we've got people who, with as much zeal as the
17 ones who want it, don't want it. They don't
18 want it by their grass; they don't want it in
19 the woods, and I got 30 seconds. And I think
20 what you got to do is, really do something
21 about putting the energy where you need it and
22 putting it in parking lots, in the big parking
23 lots in the towns where they're going to use
24 more electricity than anyplace else and might
25 be able to do that by fixing -- 10 seconds --

1 by fixing, by fixing the grid.

2 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Spence Putnam
3 and then Bobby Carnwath.

4 MR. SPENCER PUTNAM: Spencer
5 Putnam, P-U-T-N-A-M. First of all, I applaud
6 the goals of this plan of reducing greenhouse
7 gas omissions by 75 percent and by getting 90
8 percent of our energy from renewables. These
9 are important goals for us. My concern is,
10 that so far our greenhouse gas omissions have
11 remained flat. There has not been -- we are
12 not making -- we're staying still. We are not
13 making progress, and we're only 16 percent in
14 renewables, so we've got a lot to do.

15 When I hear that we spend 2 billion
16 dollars on fossil fuels, I see a business
17 proposition and a business opportunity. When
18 I was the -- in operations, ran operations at
19 Vermont Teddy Bear Company, we worked hard to
20 reduce the amount of energy we used to run our
21 machines and to heat and cool the building and
22 it saved us money. And, personally, my wife
23 and I built a net-zero, solar-powered house,
24 and we cut our own utility bill by 90 percent.
25 We also drive an electric car that's now

1 powered by our roof, and we're saving costs on
2 driving our car.

3 We need subsidies to help people make this
4 kind of transition. We need to discourage
5 what we don't like and encourage what we do
6 want. In Vermont, the way to do that is to
7 put a price on carbon. The proceeds from a
8 carbon pollution tax can help fund
9 weatherization and encourage more efficiency
10 in transportation, that will save dollars for
11 individuals; for businesses; and institutions.
12 But, more importantly, the more of that 2
13 billion dollars that we can keep in state
14 instead of sending it out of state to buy
15 fossil fuels has money circulating in our
16 economy and weatherization jobs cannot be
17 outsourced to Asia. Please put a carbon
18 pollution tax into the plan.

19 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Bobbie Carnwath
20 and then Rod Munroe.

21 MS. BOBBIE CARNWATH: Bobbie
22 Carnwath, C-A-R-N-W-A-T-H. I want to point
23 out what I see as an inconsistency in the
24 plan's statement concerning broad overall
25 goals. The introduction notes that, quote,

1 "The 2011 CEP established a goal of meeting 90
2 percent of the state's energy needs through
3 renewable resources by 2050," then goes on to
4 say, it also proposed taking steps to
5 virtually eliminate, eliminate our dependence
6 on petroleum. And then the 2050 plan states
7 on Page 336, "Natural gas suffers from the
8 same environmental and economic concerns
9 applicable to other fuels," that being the
10 case and evidence is increasing indicating
11 that that is the case, why wouldn't the 2015
12 -- 2050 goal now be broadened to propose steps
13 to virtually eliminate our dependence on frack
14 gas?

15 Among other things, that would mean we
16 would be sending a lot less of our money out
17 of state, or in the case of Vermont Gaz Metro,
18 out of the country. If we are going to reach
19 a goal of 90 percent renewable by 2050, we
20 will have to be investing a lot of money in
21 our state. The carbon pollution tax could be
22 an effective way of keeping our money in and
23 using our money in Vermont.

24 In the beginning it will cost us more at
25 the pump and from our fuel dealer, but I agree

1 with Commissioner Recchia, as he pointed out
2 at his introduction this evening, I quote
3 Commissioner Recchia, "I don't think that we
4 can afford the cheapest possible price of
5 these things as we go forward."

6 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Rod Munroe and
7 then Beth Thompson is a maybe.

8 MS. BETH THOMPSON: I'll say, yes.

9 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. So, Rod
10 Munroe and Beth Thompson.

11 MR. ROD MUNROE: My name is Rod
12 Munroe, M-U-N-R-O-E, and, first of all, I want
13 to applaud the work and the goals of getting
14 to 90 percent renewables by the year 2050. I
15 want to be blunt, I believe that any thought
16 of a natural gas pipeline coming into the
17 state should be trashed. I don't believe that
18 it is a renewable fuel. It's not a transition
19 to the goals that we have as a state in our
20 renewable energy portfolio. So, I just want
21 to, you know, say that it's a fracked force of
22 energy from Canada, and we will be exporting
23 those dollars to another country.

24 My second goal, my second thought is with
25 the solar and, like you say, in fossil fuels,

1 it seems like that's the most carbon pollution
2 we have in the state is through gasoline. And
3 with all of the solar, the farmers that we
4 have in the area, I always thought that I have
5 partially like an electric vehicle. I like to
6 see us having solar charge stations for our
7 electrical vehicles in the Rutland area to
8 help reduce that amount of, you know, carbon
9 that we put in the air. Thank you.

10 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Beth Thompson
11 and then George Gross.

12 MS. BETH THOMPSON: Beth Thompson,
13 T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N, and I forgot my glasses, so
14 I'm -- I, too, would like to applaud all of
15 the work that has gone on here. It is
16 formable and it's complex; it's lofty but it's
17 extremely necessary and the time is running
18 out. What I really -- I didn't read the whole
19 -- 350 pages is what I had but I did read some
20 of it, and one of the things I really liked
21 was the statement that it was intended to
22 encourage each and every citizen to do what
23 they can to help all of Vermont achieve a
24 transformative energy future, and I love that
25 phrase and I hope we really do it.

1 I appreciate the emphasis on efficiency
2 and conservation, but I didn't see anything in
3 there -- and, again, I didn't read the whole
4 thing -- about educating people about reducing
5 their consumption, and I don't mean just by
6 buttoning up houses. I mean by, let's teach
7 ourselves to use less.

8 I also want to address the reducing
9 greenhouse gas omissions and say that I did
10 study up on the natural gas part of this, and
11 I think that there are many specious
12 suppositions in the natural gas section. We
13 need to be paying attention to whether the
14 omissions occur in places outside of Vermont,
15 because it still contributes to what's in the
16 atmosphere. And there is a lot of that
17 happening at the extraction sites and along
18 all of the transmission routes.

19 Other suppositions that seem wrong to me
20 is, that it's cleaner than other fossil fuels
21 when properly extracted and distributed. It's
22 not done properly and that it's not as
23 environmentally friendly but it is currently
24 less expensive. The volatility of this fuel
25 pricing structure has been proven, that's why

1 we see other states in New England paying more
2 for electricity, because they are relying on
3 natural gas. So, those are some of the
4 things.

5 I think ultimately trying to wean
6 ourselves, reach independence on fossil fuels
7 is what we're after and that that would
8 require a commitment to no new fossil fuel
9 infrastructure in Vermont especially when
10 compressed natural gas can supply needs and,
11 therefore, can function as a more temporary
12 transition and use of that fossil fuel. It's
13 a fossil fuel and this is in direct contrast
14 to Mr. Donahue. I think we can supply Rutland
15 with CMG.

16 I'm very concerned about permitting and
17 our state's giving of Certificates of Public
18 Good which allow a corporation to seize
19 Vermont citizens' land by eminent domain.
20 This is wrong. It's just plain wrong for
21 Vermont. We cannot let this happen anymore.

22 I'm also concerned about public and
23 communities being involved in siting
24 decisions, because I think there is a wrong
25 way to do the right thing. There just needs

1 to be respectful dialogue, and this might
2 necessitate skilled outside moderators for
3 that purpose.

4 The other thing is, that we definitely
5 need to incentivize our reduction and
6 consumption, and I'm very interested in the
7 potential of a carbon tax, and I'd also like
8 to expand it to being kind of a global warming
9 potential tax. Thanks.

10 MR. ASA HOPKINS: George Gross and
11 then Barb Wilson.

12 MR. GEORGE GROSS: So, there is
13 probably quite a few comments I could make
14 but, unfortunately, it won't fit in the span
15 of two minutes, so I will try to condense into
16 the essentials. So, in the laws of physics;
17 laws of climate science, they don't care what
18 we say. They don't care about economics, they
19 are going to keep on cruising. Every day we
20 march towards this time where, if you read the
21 science, there is this very real risk, what I
22 call risk management issue, and we tip the
23 scales in a way that is not easily predicted.
24 Once it starts, it begins a feedback route.
25 It's the nightmare scenario where, once it

1 starts, you cannot back it out. You,
2 basically, have lost control of the climate.
3 And there are a number of ways in which that
4 can occur, and I won't get into the leads
5 about the particulars of it.

6 It's a very real peril, and it's very real
7 incentive for all of us to consider, that that
8 transcends almost all of the other
9 considerations that we might actually have.
10 It is not brought up politically very often
11 because, frankly, it's scary and, nonetheless,
12 this is one of the main reasons why I look at
13 the climate issues. It's an existential
14 issue. It is one, if we do not do it well,
15 our children will never forgive us.

16 And I will say that, you know, there are
17 going to be, obviously, political barriers to
18 doing the right thing. I happen to have a
19 solar array in my backyard. I'm fully
20 supportive of solar, but I'm also sensitive to
21 the people that have property values and feel
22 that they have to have a voice in how things
23 are sited.

24 With respect to solar, if you actually
25 look at the amount of solar that's being

1 petitioned for Vermont, I noticed the plan
2 doesn't currently show the batch that are
3 being generated by the regional planning
4 commissions, but they should be a part of that
5 document. And this should be amended to the
6 document after those reports show up.
7 Altogether, barely half of 1 percent of the
8 land in Vermont would need to be used to power
9 this state. That's a really small amount.
10 And if we're careful about how we site it we
11 can achieve that far sooner than 2050.

12 So, I urge everyone who is involved in the
13 solar siting dialogue to work for the planning
14 commissions and get in front of this process
15 so that you can actually control the outcome
16 to your satisfaction, thank you.

17 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Thank you. Barb
18 Wilson and then Marlene Allen.

19 MS. BARB WILSON: Hi, I'm Barb
20 Wilson, that's W-I-L-S-O-N. I'm just going to
21 be brief here tonight. I applaud what others
22 have said before me. One of the things I
23 think that the plan needs to do is -- when you
24 talk about reducing our carbon footprint, but
25 we look at us as just Vermont, we don't look

1 at what our choices are doing like using a
2 product like natural gas in other parts of the
3 world. So, we are no longer an island. We
4 have to worry about the climate and the whole
5 world. It's too late, right? What Vermont
6 does, sure, we can just count reducing our
7 carbon tax and it's like, oh, the methane from
8 the natural frack gas that we're using is
9 somewhere else, it's still going to affect us.
10 So, we have to -- even when we look at carbon
11 tax right now it doesn't consider anything
12 outside our borders.

13 So, the carbon tax, as far as I'm
14 concerned, needs to address that as well
15 because that's equally important. It's not
16 going to matter, you know, climate change
17 isn't going to matter. And I applaud the plan
18 saying we need a healthy, prosperous forest
19 and farms but I'm seeing a decline. I do
20 farming and they're declining. So, how are we
21 going to achieve that? You know, we got to
22 get real. And that's reducing carbon not only
23 in Vermont but across the world. And we have
24 to participate and be responsible for our
25 choices.

1 MS. MARLENE ALLEN: I'm next and I
2 will submit on-line.

3 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Okay. In which
4 case the final name I have here is Francis
5 Wyatt.

6 MR. FRANCIS WYATT: I'm Francis
7 W-Y-A-T-T, and I've been doing energy economic
8 analysis in Vermont and elsewhere since '92,
9 and I think it's, you know, becoming
10 increasingly clear that there is a cost to the
11 carbon pollution we put in the atmosphere, and
12 we have to account for that in some way.

13 The Public Service Board has recognized
14 it, and in their guidelines they set forth
15 for doing economic analysis they put a price
16 on carbon, but, unfortunately, when the
17 consumers in Vermont are making their energy
18 choices they are not paying for that cost of
19 the carbon that goes into society and the cost
20 that is, you know, given to not just Vermont
21 but on the whole globe.

22 So, I think there should be more mention
23 of a carbon tax as a way to bring about the
24 goals that are being set forth in the plan.

25 MR. ASA HOPKINS: Thank you. As

1 we've gone around the state, you know, we've
2 heard -- you know, probably at least 75 or so
3 folks have shared their comments and they are,
4 you know, they are the most thoughtful;
5 passionate; caring set of comments, and will
6 be immensely useful to us. Everything from,
7 you know, look-at-this-sentence-on-this-page
8 comment to the big high-level comments are
9 just immensely useful, and we thank you very,
10 very much for sharing them with us.

11 We look forward to the rest of your
12 comments submitted on-line at
13 energyplan.vt.gov by the 9th of November, and
14 we hope that you will engage in the process
15 around the release of the plan and about
16 making the recommendations in it become a
17 reality over the course of the coming years.
18 So, thank you again very much and we'll see
19 you around.

20 (HEARING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:04
21 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E .

I, Lisa M. Hindes-Moody, Court
Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify
that the foregoing pages, numbered 1 through
43, inclusive, are a true and accurate
transcription of my stenographic notes of the
Public Hearing taken before me on
October 29, 2015.

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