

Time to Move to Renewables
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Regarding Anders Holm's letter (June 1), this is the perfect time to discuss Vermont's energy future, with the current debate about the fate of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant in Vernon adding some urgency to our thinking on this front.

There is work under way across the state — and the nation — to first reduce our energy demand overall through efficiency, and to shift the power we do need off traditional fossil fuels and onto sustainable, locally produced sources wherever possible.

No single source of renewable energy will serve as a quick fix; Vermont needs to continue to build its portfolio of wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, biomass and biofuels to ensure we have the truly sustainable energy available to meet our needs.

Wind power is a vital piece of this equation, offering the potential down the road to provide up to 30 percent of our state's electricity. Vermont's rigorous permitting process is designed to ensure these projects fit into our landscape in a way that is environmentally suitable. Mr. Holm believes the older Searsburg wind project isn't producing enough power. While that project has, in fact, performed as expected, the technology in wind continues to improve to ensure that current and future projects, such as the work proposed for Lowell, will produce the kind of power output that enables Vermont to move off foreign fossil fuels in the future.

Vermonters have said in polls and public hearings that they want affordable, sustainable, locally produced power, in part out of concern for our energy security.

We cannot allow ourselves to be sidetracked from the imperative to increase a mix of sustainable sources that includes wind, along with solar and other renewables.

News clips of the destruction from the oil crisis in the Gulf reinforces for me that our goal — to reduce energy consumption and replace our power needs with sustainable, locally produced energy — is vital. I also believe it is achievable.

SUSAN ALLEN

Executive director,
Renewable Energy Vermont