

VREEM is a monthly electronic newsletter published by Renewable Energy Vermont.

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News

1. Sanders: Wind Energy in Vermont Needs Better PR

Burlington - Most Vermonters support the development of sustainable and renewable energy, including wind power, and proponents must do a better job of selling the idea, according to Representative Bernard Sanders.

Sanders met with about a dozen wind energy proponents behind closed doors in Burlington on February 23 to discuss the state of wind energy in the Green Mountain State and why proponents seem to be losing the public relations battle to opponents at this early stage.

"There is frustration because polling shows that the overwhelming number of Vermonters support renewable energy," Sanders said in an interview after the meeting. "The proponents have not done as good a job as they might explaining the environmental benefits and the economic benefits, particularly job creation," he said.

Sanders said those attending the meeting Monday expressed frustration with what they called "misinformation" about wind development that was being spread by opponents. "They talked about the most effective ways to counteract that," he said.

"These are very bright people with a lot of energy. They must improve their contacts with the [state] legislature, with ordinary people throughout the state," the congressman said.

(This article was excerpted from the February 24, 2004, issue of the Rutland Herald as reported by Susan Smallheer.)

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2. Wind Energy on State Lands Discussed at ANR Forums

Montpelier - Central Vermont residents struggled to find common ground on using state land for siting wind power generators on March 16 in one of eight public forums held around the state.

Michael Fraysier, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) land director, said the "public comments will be used by the agency in drafting a policy" on the use of state land for wind power development. No such policy currently exists.

"We want to hear from you whether or not wind energy is an appropriate use of state lands," Fraysier told approximately 100 participants in College Hall on the Vermont College campus.

The approaching expiration of state contracts with Vermont Yankee and Hydro Quebec make energy-related discussions especially timely. The two utilities provide Vermont with about two-thirds of its electricity, and both contracts will run out by 2015.

Wind power has emerged as a potential partial replacement for those energy sources. Using state land to site wind power generators, however, has drawn mixed reviews.

ANR owns or has easements on 8.5% of Vermont land. Only a splinter of that, about 35,000 acres, is viable for wind power development. Pieces of it, though, lie in the Mount Mansfield, Camel's Hump, Groton and Roxbury state forests.

Participants split into small groups to discuss the merits of wind power development. Fraysier said the wide spectrum of perspectives will help the agency to draft an effective policy and that he hopes to have a draft policy written by mid-April and a final policy submitted by July.

(This article was excerpted from the March 17, 2004, issue of the Times Argus as reported by Peter Hirschfeld.)

For more information:
www.Vermontwindpolicy.org
www.anr.state.vt.us

3. CVPS Announces Farm Methane Proposal

Rutland - Central Vermont Public Service has asked the Vermont Public Service Board to approve the state's first voluntary renewable energy offering for the company's 148,000 customers. Dubbed Cow Power, the proposed offering is designed to provide a renewable energy choice for customers while simultaneously helping Vermont farms and the environment.

"Together with our customers, we believe we can provide substantial benefits to the environment and many of our farm customers," CVPS President Bob Young said. "CVPS Cow Power is designed to expand renewable energy choices, help alleviate significant air and water quality concerns, and allow customers to play a role in that effort."

Under the proposal, customers who choose CVPS Cow Power would pay a premium of \$.04 per kWh that would be paid to Vermont farmers who produce renewable electricity by burning methane from cow manure. CVPS would also purchase the electricity from the farmers at competitive spot market prices.

Governor James Douglas praised the proposal, saying it would benefit farms, the environment and renewable energy production. "This program helps farmers and gives consumers a green, homegrown energy choice," Douglas said.

The company has worked with dairy farms, state officials and other groups to create CVPS Cow Power. Several farms are considering participating by

building generators, which would blend in with other farm equipment and facilities. The company hopes to gain PSB approval in time to offer the service in July.

For more information:
www.cvps.com

4. Douglas Announces \$1.25 Million in Renewable Energy Incentives

Bridport - Vermont renewable energy projects will benefit from \$1,258,000 in incentives from the state's two largest utilities under an agreement announced March 22 by Governor James Douglas.

If approved by the Public Service Board (PSB), the agreement would provide incentives for farms to generate energy for the proposed Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) Cow Power service offering, small-scale wind projects and other renewable energy systems. Signatories include Renewable Energy Vermont, VT Dept. of Public Service, CVPS, Green Mountain Power (GMP), Biomass Energy Resource Center, and Conservation Law Foundation.

The funds are from insurance rebates provided to the utilities after the sale of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station. The PSB ordered the companies to propose ways to use the rebates to promote renewable energy development. The agreement announced today outlines how that would be done.

CVPS will provide \$784,000 in renewable energy incentives, 70% through the CVPS Renewable Development Fund, which will provide funds to help Vermont farms generate electricity through anaerobic digestion of cow manure. The remainder will provide incentives through the Vermont Small Wind and Solar Fund.

GMP is offering 30% of its \$474,000 in renewable incentives to the Vermont Small Wind and Solar Fund. The rest will be used to upgrade and expand generation at one of the company's hydroelectric plants.

"This agreement provides substantial incentives for wind and solar energy systems, through the existing renewable energy rebate program. It is a win win agreement for the utilities and VT ratepayers interested in expanding the use of renewable." said Andrew Perchlik, Director of Renewable Energy Vermont.

For more information on the rebate program:
www.nerc-vt.org

5. Middlebury College Wins Award for Energy Efficient Construction

Middlebury - Middlebury College received the Excellence in Energy Efficiency Award on February 11 from Efficiency Vermont, a statewide energy efficiency utility. According to Blair Hamilton, managing director of the utility, the award was developed to recognize an organization that has effectively partnered with Efficiency Vermont to fully integrate energy efficiency into its organizational practices. Middlebury has consulted with Efficiency Vermont on a number of construction projects, including a new library that is currently being built, a new dining and residence hall, and a chilled water plant.

"This is the most prestigious award that Efficiency Vermont gives out each year. Middlebury College won because it is an outstanding partner in energy

efficiency and a leader in the field. Middlebury incorporates environmental responsiveness and sustainability into the evaluation of every project," said Hamilton.

During the award presentation, the College was also cited for its efforts to prevent pollution, conserve water and reduce waste.

"Once our new library is completed, Middlebury College will save \$35,000 in energy costs annually due to energy efficiency measures regarding building construction and lighting. Thanks to Efficiency Vermont's suggestions, we will not only save money annually, but we will also reduce our yearly production of carbon dioxide by 500,000 pounds," said Middlebury College Executive Vice President of Facilities Planning David Ginevan.

Accepting the award on behalf of the College were Ginevan, Project Manager Thomas McGinn, and Central Heating Plant Manager Michael Moser.

For more information: www.middlebury.edu.

6. Efficiency Vermont Receives Recognition for "Change a Light"

Burlington - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy selected Efficiency Vermont to receive a 2004 Energy Star Product Campaign Award on March 3. The honor recognizes Efficiency Vermont for its unique approach to the national Change a Light/Change the World campaign to reduce energy use and protect the environment. The award was presented in a Washington, D.C. ceremony on March 2, 2004.

In the fall of 2003, Efficiency Vermont transformed the national Change a Light campaign into the Change a Light Challenge in the Village of Poultney. In other states, campaign efforts primarily focused on encouraging consumers to buy more energy-efficient light bulbs. Efficiency Vermont took a different approach, challenging the residents of the Village of Poultney to replace at least one incandescent light bulb in their homes with an energy-efficient one.

One free bulb was provided to each household, through Poultney's Williams True Value Hardware store and Westinghouse. Students from nearby Green Mountain College played a key role, posting signs and talking about the effort with residents on front porches throughout the village. In all, villagers replaced more than 4,500 incandescent light bulbs.

"We are delighted to be recognized by the EPA and DOE and thank the Village of Poultney, Williams Hardware in Poultney and Green Mountain College for their hard work in making the Change a Light Challenge a success," said Blair Hamilton, managing director of Efficiency Vermont. "Together, we are able to help Vermonters save energy, money and the environment."

For more information:
www.encyvermont.com

7. Smugglers' Notch and NativeEnergy Team Up to Fight Global Warming

Smugglers' Notch - Smugglers' Notch Resort and NativeEnergy, a Vermont-based company, have partnered to develop a new program called SkiCool, which allows Smugglers' skiers and riders to purchase a Green Pass, Green Badge or Green Lift Ticket for climate-neutral skiing and riding at the resort.

Smugglers and NativeEnergy have calculated the amount of carbon dioxide

(CO2) produced by the energy consumed in a typical ski season to run the lifts, make snow, groom the slopes and commute to the mountain. To encourage participation and enhance the program's overall impact, Smugglers' has pledged to contribute a 25% match to each customer purchase. CO2 is the primary contributor to global warming.

Pricing is \$.50 for a green lift ticket, \$2 for a green badge, and \$10 for a green pass in addition to normal ticket prices. These purchases will offset 83 lbs., 400 lbs., or 2,000 lbs. of CO2 production, respectively, when Smugglers' match is included.

The funds collected from participating skiers and riders and the matching funds from Smugglers' Notch Resort go to NativeEnergy, which uses the funds to purchase renewable energy credits, also called green tags, on behalf of SkiCool participants. Green tags represent the reductions in emissions created when renewable electricity displaces electricity from fossil fuels.

For more information:
www.smuggs.com
www.nativeenergy.com/smuggs

8. NRG Systems Introduces New Assessment Device for Small Wind Systems

Hinesburg - NRG Systems Inc., a Vermont manufacturer of wind energy assessment systems for the global wind industry, has introduced a performance monitor designed specifically for small wind turbine applications.

The monitor, known as WindWatcher, determines average wind speed, wind direction and power density, providing a complete assessment of a site and the turbine's performance. All statistics are continuously updated and instantly accessible from the LCD panel on the performance monitor. The unit stores one year's worth of data, allowing for historical comparisons.

NRG Systems president and CEO, David Blittersdorf, said, "Unlike weather stations and inexpensive totalizers that provide only a fraction of the data required for assessing wind, WindWatcher measures everything the small turbine owner needs to evaluate wind conditions and make accurate comparisons."

NRG wind energy assessment systems can be found in more than 100 countries, serving electric utilities, wind farm developers, research institutions, government agencies, universities and homeowners.

For more information:
www.nrgsystems.com

Events

*Tuesday - April 13 Burlington
Energy Speaker Series - Vermont's Energy Future
6:30pm, John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill, University of Vermont
"Vermont's Energy Future: the Consumer's Perspective"
David O'Brien, Commissioner, Department of Public Service

*Friday - April 16th, Berlin
USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT'S FREE "WORKING PARTNERS CONFERENCE" ON THE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT PROGRAM FY2004

10:00 a.m. - Noon

Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce at 963 Paine Turnpike Rd., Berlin, VT
RSVP: Registrations Requested, Call 802-828-6069 by 4/14/04

USDA Rural Development is expected to announce the availability of \$23MM in nationally competitive grant funds for fiscal year 2004, with solicitations opening early April. These funds are designed to assist eligible agricultural producers and rural small businesses purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. The grant request is limited to a maximum 25 percent of total eligible project costs up to the maximum amounts allowed for the program. Project feasibility, energy audit, and technical requirements are components of the grant application.

Background information about the 2002 Farm Bill Initiative that created the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program can be found online at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html.

Key partnerships link resources and tools that work to strengthen rural communities. Please register to attend this training conference today! Directions to the conference location are available online at www.central-vt.com. Attendees needing special accommodation should call 802-828-6069 by April 9, 2004.

*Friday - Sunday, April 16-18, Warren

Yestermorrow Biofuels Workshop. This workshop will provide students with the necessary experience and information to begin replacing fossil fuel with renewable fuel in a variety of applications. The heart of this intensive two-day course is the adaptation of a conventional diesel vehicle/engine to operate on used vegetable oil. Students will perform all major modifications including electrical wiring, fuel tank installation, and coolant plumbing. Evening lecture and discussion will explore topics such as home heating, electrical generation and transportation, biodiesel use and production, ethanol, methane, and locating/growing fuel sources. Case studies will be included for each topic. There will be the opportunity for up to two students to adapt their own engine during the workshop. Information: www.yestermorrow.org.

*Tuesday - April 20, Burlington

Energy Speaker Series - Vermont's Energy Future
6:30pm, John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill, University of Vermont
"Vermont's Energy Future" Michael Dworkin, Chairman, Public Service Board

*Friday - July 9, Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center
FREE Wind Energy Teachers Workshops

From the grain grinders of ancient Holland to the controversial off-shore projects near Cape Cod, wind power has captured the public imagination with its simplicity and elegance. Dig deeper into the wind and introduce your students to the science behind the fastest growing energy resource in the world.

These full day workshops will appeal to middle/high school science teachers who are interested in renewable energy, physics, engineering and design. No knowledge of wind energy is required to attend the workshop and they are offered free of charge.

Participants will learn the basic principles behind wind energy and how to

introduce students to wind energy concepts using standards-based activities in an engaging, hands on manner. Teachers will also learn about programs and funding which can help them install wind turbines at their own schools. Classroom materials and a comprehensive curriculum package are included free of charge in the workshop. Lunch will be provided for all attendees.

Workshops are sponsored by the US Department of Energy and the Wright Center for Science Education. For more details about the workshops and our project call 617-627-5395 or visit <http://www.kidwind.org> and fill out an online application.

*Thursday, October 14th, Burlington
Renewable Energy Vermont's 3rd Annual Conference.
Details: <http://www.revermont.org/conference.htm>

Editors' Notes

1. Due to technical difficulties, we were unable to deliver the March issue of VREEM. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

About VREEM

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The editors can also be reached via the REV office at (802) 229-0099.

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