

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. I will be brief. For the record, My name is Don Chioffi and I am the Clerk of the Rutland Town Select Board, the originator of the RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOLUTION.

I am not going to try and dazzle you with numbers regarding kilowatts, or Renewable Energy Credit dollars, or employment figures or any other of the myriad of facts and figures that usually come across your table here.

I am here to speak today about only one number---and that number is increasing exponentially week by week. At this moment that number is 90 and it represents the number of towns in our state that are at your table today demanding that you give them back the state that they love.

We were here last year and we were told that you, as a committee, would write a committee bill that would address the issue of siting standards for Renewable Energy. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, you told me right in that hallway, following our visit here, I believe these were your exact words----"Don, thank you for coming, I can assure you that I intend to address your concerns about siting, and we will do that in a committee bill." Though skeptical, I took you at your word.

The siting committee that you appointed to meet our needs is a mirror image of exactly what we have been protesting from the beginning-----top loaded solar and wind proponents, industry advocates for industrial solar, and sadly and sorely-----not one member community that has actually developed and incorporated a comprehensive solar and wind siting document into their Town Plan. Here we are 90 towns with positive ideas of how we want to help Vermont achieve its Renewable goals---- here we are asking to be partners so that we can achieve those goals OUR WAY so that we will still be allowed to do what we have for decades-----make our own land use decisions within our communities.

Make no mistake about it, we are politically saavy, and we have all been elected, as you have, to represent our constituents, who are, by the way, the same constituents for all of us. And without mincing any words here, we are all very aware that when all is said and done, there is only one thing that we all cherish the most----and that is the VOTE of those who put us in these positions of responsibility. Without that vote---there are none of us here that will have a seat at the table. The towns that I represent here by way of the signed resolution represent over half of the Representative districts in this body, over one third of the land mass of the entire state, and tens of thousands of citizens and citizen servants on select boards, planning commissions, listers, clerks, treasurers, and many more grassroots civic leaders. And every one of these towns have had just about enough of being told that their views and their towns do not count for anything anymore. We are tired of lipservice. We want action and we want it now. We want our land use decisions back in OUR hands, not given to three non elected gubernatorial appointees who have lost sight of the first letter in their acronym. WE are that public.

There are many complicated solutions to this SITING dilemma, but why would you want complicated?

I will give you a very simple and very easy solution and close this testimony out. Everyone in the room knows that act 248 was never intended to control rooftop, backyard, and relatively small energy

proposals. So why let it continue? These are not Nuclear Plants, nor massive transformers, nor turbines and Hydro Dams, nor hundred mile transmission lines, nor vehicles and service centers or the like.

The PSB is ill equipped to handle all of these smaller projects in the first place and that is precisely why these look like a car wash operation---in one end---and whoosh---out the other, with a whisk and a spray, and a wash.

This entire RENEWABLE ENERGY approval process should be a BIFURCATED HEARING. All land use matters should fall under the scrutiny of ACT 250, and the criteria for determining whether the project is major or minor should follow the same procedure that all other applicants presently follow. The energy components of a proposal should only be considered when a project meets a threshold which should be established high enough to consider it industrial, and then the energy elements would fall under ACT 248 criteria. Simple---done---and you have met your obligation to provide a level playing field that gives due consideration to land use criteria and energy needs and puts local communities back in the hearing process in the standing that they rightfully should have.

This ever growing majority of your own constituents is entitled to no less from your committee and this body. Be the leaders that we know you are and correct this problem.

I will thank you, in advance, for your leadership.