

From: Minter, Sue
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2011 12:48 PM
To: MacLean, Alex
Subject: FW: Solar project letter from Fed.
Attachments: VYCC solar array proposal FHWA ltr.pdf

Hi Alex:

Wanted you to be in the loop on my correspondence with Andrew Savage on the VYCC issue. I've explained to Andrew that we have not been approached on this and I believe someone needs to initiate some sort of request for our Agency to consider. However, I have also attached the decision of the Federal Highway Administration denying a previous request for this project. It is possible that the alternatives under consideration now differ from what was proposed in the fall/December, but I do not know for sure.

Will keep you posted.

Sincerely,
Sue

Sue Minter
Deputy Secretary
Agency of Transportation
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001
(802) 828-2657
(802) 828-3522 (fax)

From: Minter, Sue
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2011 12:44 PM
To: 'Andrew Savage'
Subject: Solar project letter from Fed.

Andrew:

The decision of the federal government re this proposal is detailed in the attached.

Thanks,
Sue

Sue Minter
Deputy Secretary
Agency of Transportation
1 National Life Drive
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From: Andrew Savage [mailto:asavagevt@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2011 12:40 PM
To: Minter, Sue
Subject: Re: News Alert - Agency of Transportation Hires CCTA General Manager Chris Cole

Will do. Thanks Sue!

On Tue, Feb 15, 2011 at 10:04 PM, Minter, Sue <Sue.Minter@state.vt.us> wrote:

Thanks for your reply. I think the next step is for someone to write Brian Searles & me or to meet with us to discuss a specific proposal. My understanding is that Vtrans received a negative from the Federal Highway on a proposal to change the conservation easement upon which a significant sum of fed. investment was predicated. I have heard informally that there might be an agreement on a "swap" of sorts on this conservation easement. However the authority for oversight is Fed highway. We will need a specific proposal and will need initiate a review by FHWA. this is not a simple matter & will need someone to initiate. Thanks & have fun with making a home in Vermont! Hope you get out to ski! S.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 14, 2011, at 3:35 PM, Andrew Savage <asavagevt@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Sue! Glad things are going well and you're enjoying it. Seems like such a perfect gig for you. I'll get some details on the VYCC project, but my understanding was that VTrans was a potential obstacle in the past. Here is a summary of what I've gotten from them:

VTrans has a scenic easement on 40 acres of property, which is in view of I-89. VYCC wants to install 210,000kw of (solar) trackers on 1.5 acres as part of their education/land mission and has negotiated a swap of land with Vermont Land Trust and Richmond Land Trust to do this. The swap would allow the trackers to be on conserved land, but much better hidden from the road. The alternative is to put trackers on non-conserved land, however, that land and the trackers would be very visible and block the scenic value.

That's the sum of it. But if they haven't come to you, they no doubt will.

Morgan and I are living in Burlington. We just bought a house and boy oh boy is it a handful. Lots and lots of painting and projects, but fun to see the place slowly made our own. And by slowly, one room is done and that's it.

Be well and hope to see you soon,
Andrew

On Fri, Feb 11, 2011 at 6:38 AM, Minter, Sue <Sue.Minter@state.vt.us> wrote:

Hey Andrew! I didn't know u were back. That's great!! Where r u living now? I am loving my new job. Very dynamic & life is a blur. Not sure what the status of the Vycc solar project is at this point. No one has asked for our involvement. Glad

to hear u r doing more good deeds. Enjoy the snow. Sue

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 10, 2011, at 11:57 AM, Andrew Savage <asavagevt@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Sue!

Hope you are doing well in the new gig. I was so happy to see you there-- knowing you'd be the smart, savvy, creative thinker that could transform transportation from just being roads, bridges, pot holes and salt. (No big challenge, right?) How are things going?

Not sure if you heard, but I'm not back from DC and working at AllEarth Renewables. Loving it. And happy to be home. I believe you've been briefed on the issue of the VYCC in Richmond wanting to install a solar orchard, but running up against transportation land easement barriers. Seems like there is a common sense and pragmatic solution. I'm not sure where the status is on progress, but I'll recheck on that.

Holler anytime if there is anything I can do -- energy related or not.

Andrew

On Wed, Feb 9, 2011 at 3:14 PM, Minter, Sue
<Sue.Minter@state.vt.us> wrote:

For Immediate Release

Date: February 9, 2011

Contact: Sue Minter 828- 2657

The Vermont Agency of Transportation today announced the hiring of a new Director of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development.

Chris Cole of South Burlington, the General Manager for the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA), will direct a newly-formed division within the Agency that addresses all modes

of transportation -- integrating the needs of automobiles, trucks, passenger and freight railroads, and public transit. Cole, who has lead CCTA since 2001, and the Green Mountain Transit Agency since 2003, has been instrumental in growing Vermont's largest public transit agency into a dynamic organization that serves a five county region in Northwestern and central Vermont. Under his leadership, CCTA has been hailed for increasing ridership by 63% since 2001, creating Vermont's first inter-regional commuter buses connecting Burlington with Middlebury, Montpelier and St. Albans, and reducing the number of small transit agencies throughout the region into a single unified agency.

Cole has previous public service experience as a fiscal and policy analyst for both the Vermont and New York State Legislatures.

Cole will play an important role in the Shumlin Administration mission to place new emphasis on further developing multiple modes of transportation and increasing mobility choices, while continuing to focus on improving the safety of Vermont's aging roads and bridges.

“Chris is exactly the talent we need to make government more effective and responsive to the needs of Vermonters and business. He has proven experience connecting people and jobs and understands that diverse transportation options are critical to building a future that meets the changing needs of people, commerce and the environment,” said Secretary of Transportation Brian Searles.

Cole will begin his new post in mid March.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Vermont Division

December 3, 2010

87 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
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Vermont.fhwa@fhwa.dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:

Mr. David Dill, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Transportation
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001

Attention: Mr. Kevin Russell

Subject: Barn Restoration and Scenic Easement Enhancement Project
FAP No. STP EH96(18)
Richmond, Vermont
Proposed Development in Scenic Easement

Dear Mr. Dill:

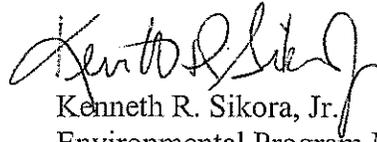
The purpose of this letter is to follow-up on initial comments made in our November 17, 2010 email by Larry Dwyer. The VYCC is proposing to install solar collection infrastructure on their property in Richmond Flats and have been working with the Richmond Land Trust to locate the solar panels in a way that would minimize visual impacts from I-89 and US Route 2. The latest proposal would include placement of solar panels on property conserved as part of a 1996 VTrans Transportation Enhancement (TE) Project. Similar to VTrans' own analysis, Mr. Dwyer noted that the solar array would be inconsistent with the purpose and need of the 1996 project to provide a scenic easement as part of the Monitor Barn preservation and appears to consist of development that would specifically be prohibited by the restrictions placed on the land.

In addition to the above issue with the scenic easement, in our review of the categorical exclusion and supporting documentation for the TE project, we noted that the purchase of the scenic easement was also made a stipulation of the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement for the Barn Restoration portion of the project, in order to mitigate the potential Adverse Effect of the barn relocation. As a result of this commitment under the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800) and National Environmental Policy Act (23 CFR 771), development of a solar farm on the property conserved under this FHWA TE project would not be permissible even under a scenario that included replacement conservation land and/or payback of Federal-aid funds.



If you have any questions please contact this office.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth R. Sikora, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth R. Sikora, Jr.
Environmental Program Manager