

For Immediate Release

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

Vermont Public Service Department Announces Release of Final Report of Governor's Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission

Montpelier, VT – Vermont Public Service Department (PSD) Commissioner Christopher Recchia announced that the Governor's Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission (Commission) has issued a final report to the Governor and Legislature today. The Commission's recommendations, developed with broad public and stakeholder input, focus on bolstering the local and regional energy planning processes and ensuring that local and regional plans receive greater consideration before the Public Service Board (PSB).

The Commission was created by an Executive Order issued by the Governor on October 2, 2012, and conducted site visits and public hearings across Vermont between October 2012 and April 2013. With the aim of providing greater community and regional participation in energy planning, the five core recommendations of the Commission are to:

- Increase emphasis on energy planning at state, regional, and municipal levels, and provide funding and tools for such planning
- Simplify the existing tiered approach to siting, improve predictability and timing in the permitting process, and provide incentives for community-led projects
- Expand opportunities for public engagement
- Implement procedural changes to increase transparency, efficiency, and coordination
- Update environmental, health, and other protection guidelines

The recommendations lay out a path for regional plans to receive "substantial consideration" before the PSB. When a regional plan has been approved by the PSD as being consistent with state statutory energy targets and the goals of the Comprehensive Energy Plan, the regional plan's elements would be viewed as dispositive by the PSB. Municipal plans would also receive substantial consideration before the PSB if they are consistent with regional plans that include advanced energy planning.

"I thank the Commission for its great service to Vermonters and for the many hours committed over the past six months," said Governor Shumlin. "I appreciate the Commissioners' work, and look forward to examining the recommendations and working with the Legislature and other partners to achieve our energy goals."

Jan Eastman, who chaired the Commission, added, “I am proud of the Commission’s work and grateful to my fellow Commissioners for the time they invested in understanding the challenges of energy siting. After listening carefully to public comments and stakeholder input, we have a set of recommendations that can increase public participation, encourage community dialogue, and improve how we site energy projects in Vermont.”

Commissioner Recchia, who along with Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Deb Markowitz acted as an ex-officio member of the Commission, said, “The Siting Commission’s recommendations will help towns and regions to better engage in our energy planning and to increase their roles before any proposed projects are considered by the Public Service Board. I believe the collaborative, bottom-up approach the Commission outlined will guide us toward better outcomes for energy development.”

A copy of the full Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission report is available at:
<http://sitingcommission.vermont.gov/publications>

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The Public Service Department is an agency within the executive branch of Vermont state government. Its charge is to represent the public interest in matters regarding energy, telecommunications, water and wastewater.

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