

**From:** Copans, Jon [Jon.Copans@vermont.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 16, 2015 10:49 PM  
**To:** Springer, Darren  
**CC:** Recchia, Chris  
**Subject:** Fwd: op ed  
**Attachments:** A Model For Getting Energy Right - OpEd.docx; ATT00001.htm

Hey Darren,

This looks great. As you will see we made a few minor edits. The changes to the VY bit reflect concern about how it would be received in Windham County where the economic impact of shutdown is being felt more directly.

Jon C

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jon Copans <[jcopans@gmail.com](mailto:jcopans@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** September 16, 2015 at 10:38:03 PM EDT  
**To:** <[jon.copans@vermont.gov](mailto:jon.copans@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** op ed

## A Model For Getting Energy Right

By Gov. Peter Shumlin

It is all too easy for those of us who care about protecting our environment, combating climate change, and preserving a sustainable planet for our kids and grandkids to lose hope that we can win the fight. At the national level, powerful fossil fuel interests and their climate-denier allies in Congress prevent meaningful action and work to preserve the status quo. Here in Vermont, however, we are showing that progress can be made and that there is a model for energy that is good for our economy and our environment.

This week I joined with energy efficiency and clean energy businesses to release a new report on the state of clean energy in Vermont. The good news: We have over 16,200 clean energy jobs in Vermont, up about 1,000 jobs from last year, and employers expect to add another 1,000 jobs in the next six months. Vermont is winning the race with other states for clean energy jobs. Rhode Island ~~for example,~~ despite have 40 percent more people than Vermont, has only 60 percent of the clean energy jobs we do. This fast-growing sector of our economy is one reason that Vermont has the third lowest unemployment rate in America.

Our steady focus on energy efficiency also continues to pay dividends. Investments over the last 15 years to ~~button up~~retrofit our homes and businesses have reduced the amount of electricity we were projected to use by 13 percent. That has led to a reduction in our annual electric costs of more than \$100-50 million, ~~even before taking~~ And this doesn't take into account the tens of millions of dollars we have saved by deferring costly transmission projects and reducing our share of regional transmission costs.

We have made extraordinary progress on solar, cutting the price of solar power by more than 60 percent since 2010. As the solar industry has matured, we have prudently trimmed incentives and grant programs. Even still, we have increased the amount of solar energy in Vermont by more than ten times since I became Governor.

Vermont has also been able to avoid the electric rate shocks that are happening in many of our neighboring states ~~in New England,~~ thanks in large part to our dedication to long-term, stably priced contracts for renewable energy. When we purchase local hydro, or power from Hydro-Quebec, or lock in a good deal for solar or wind energy we do not just reduce ~~our~~ carbon emissions. We also reduce our exposure to volatile energy markets and help protect ratepayers.

Electric ratepayers in our neighboring states have routinely seen double-digit rate increases in the past several years, and this year the price for wholesale electricity in New England is the most expensive in the nation. ~~But~~ Vermont bucks that trend. Our largest utility, Green Mountain Power, has reduced electric rates three of the past four years. Year-over-Year data comparing 2015 to 2014 shows

Vermont's electric rates for residential, commercial, and industrial customers have all come down, while every other state in our region experienced rate increases. Our electric rates are now second lowest overall in our six state region. Those who say we are not competitive with our neighbors should keep these facts in mind.

It is not just that our utilities are helping keep rates stable for customers. They are also partners in helping develop a new model for energy. Legislation I signed in June creates new opportunities for utilities to provide on-bill financing for customers to invest in energy saving upgrades for our homes and businesses. The new model for energy is this: instead of paying for more power generated out there somewhere, we are going to help Vermonters weatherize their homes, install solar on the roof, and cold-climate heat pumps to reduce their oil and propane use. From Montpelier to Rutland, I have visited homes where this is being done. Oil bills are down 60 to 80 percent, homes are more comfortable, and overall energy bills-costs are more affordable. Bill McKibben recently wrote an article in the New Yorker stating that our program shows "innovative, energy-saving and energy-producing technology is now cheap enough for everyday use."

With all of our progress, I remember back to when many of us were fighting to close Vermont Yankee and invest instead in a renewable energy future. Back then the gloom and doom crowd was saying closing the plant would raise our electric rates and, thereby hurting our economy. Turns out they were wrong. Our largest utility has lowered electric rates in three of the past four years even though they stopped purchasing power from Yankee in 2012. Our and our state's economy is strong, our unemployment rate is low, and our largest utility has lowered electric rates in three of the past four years even though they stopped purchasing power from Yankee in 2012. In Vermont we have a new model for energy that is working for our economy and our environment. We know we have more to do, but as we look at a Congress that is paralyzed, and at dinosaur utilities in some parts of the country that can't innovate, we should be proud of the work we have accomplished together in Vermont.

