

# Engaging Citizens in Vermont's Energy Future

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**Public Service Board Hearing on a proposed transmission line, Charlotte, October 1, 2003.**  
(Photo by Peter Coleman)

## **Prepared by**

**Snelling Center for Government  
130 South Willard St.  
Burlington, Vermont 05401  
(802) 859-3090  
[www.snellingcenter.org](http://www.snellingcenter.org)**

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines a set of assumptions, questions and goals necessary to constructively engage Vermont citizens in planning Vermont's energy future. This paper is prepared by The Snelling Center for Government, which has a 13-year commitment to developing processes that engage citizens in public policy decisions. The paper is based on a normative rationale for citizen participation – that engaging citizens in the issues that impact them is the right thing to do. In addition, the Center believes the primary outcome of citizen participation must be building an educated citizenry with the skills to fully participate in democratic activities. Outside of this outcome, the Snelling Center has no pre-conceived interest in the results of the citizen engagement activities, just an overriding commitment to fair and legitimate processes. The Snelling Center believes that engaging citizens in policy-making also leads to better decisions that can be implemented more efficiently.

The citizens of Vermont have some major decisions to make about our energy future and the social, environmental and economic impacts of our energy use. The cost and availability of energy for heating our homes, fueling our vehicles and powering our lights and the environmental consequences of our energy choices, from climate change to acid rain are critical issues facing the state. In addition, we face major decisions about the sources of our electricity as more than two-thirds of present sources could end in the next decade.

This paper is focused on engaging citizens in decisions about the state's overall energy future. However, the approaches and goals outlined here should be applied to other policy-making activities. The following goals are at the core of our approach to the participatory activities and discussion outlined in this paper.

- Citizens should be engaged in the major policy issues that affect them.
- Engagement processes must incorporate public values into decision-making.
- Participation should be deliberative, allowing constructive and reasoned debate.
- A successful process will value the opinions of both citizens and experts and be fair and open to all who want to participate.

The introductory section outlines some of the decisions facing state policy-makers and citizens about Vermont's energy future and summarizes current energy planning initiatives. In the second section we discuss current approaches and practices regarding citizen participation. In the last section we present our recommendations for enhancing the citizen engagement process.

Glenn McRae, Ph.D.  
Director, Public Policy Programs  
glenn@snellingcenter.org

Richard Watts, Ph.D.  
Public Policy Fellow  
richard.watts@snellingcenter.org

## THE DECISIONS

Environmental, social, and economic questions around the use, generation, distribution and extraction of energy are top global, U.S. and state policy issues. The availability of energy resources, the prices of those resources, and their environmental impacts -- particularly climate change -- are all top concerns. Globally the demand for energy could grow by as much as 200 percent in the next 20 years.<sup>1</sup>

In Vermont, overall energy use continues to steadily increase, but impacts and available policy choices differ by sector. Overall, close to half of the total energy used in Vermont is the gasoline and diesel we use in the transportation sector to fuel our cars and trucks. Heating our buildings with natural gas, wood and heating oil consumes about 28 percent of total energy use. Finally, about 25 percent of energy use is as electricity for lighting, electric motors and refrigeration.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1.** Vermont Delivered Energy by End Use, 1994 (TBTU)

Energy Use	Percent total
Transportation	43 %
Space Heating	28 %
Electricity	25 %

Source: Department of Public Service, Comprehensive Energy Plan, 1998

The source of Vermont's energy depends on the sector. For example, almost all the energy used in the transportation sector is based on oil, and in the northeast most of that oil is imported from the Middle East. For space heating and cooking we use a combination of oil, kerosene, propane, LPG, natural gas and wood. About one-third of our electricity comes from hydro-electric power provided through a long-term contract with Hydro-Quebec. Another one-third is generated by the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. The remainder comes from natural gas plants outside of Vermont and a mix of Vermont sources such as hydro-electric facilities, wind and wood-chips.

Looking at energy use by source of fuel, oil is more than 50 percent of total energy used with natural gas, LPG, wood, hydro and nuclear combining at less than 50 percent.<sup>3</sup>

One way to examine these different energy sources and end uses and understand their impacts is to apply social, economic and environmental frameworks. For example, the environmental impacts of energy use include emissions from the combustion of gasoline in Vermont in our cars and trucks. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the transportation sector account for about 55 % of the state's global warming causing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.<sup>4</sup>

An economic framework might look at the dollars expended outside of Vermont on the fuel or jobs the energy source and end use provide in Vermont. For example, Vermonters spend more than \$650 million a year to purchase electricity, of which more than \$200 million is spent out of state.<sup>5</sup>

Opportunities to influence these end uses and sources of energy in Vermont also vary depending on the resource. Electricity, for example, is regulated in Vermont by the Public Service Board (Title 30, V.S.A.). Vermont policy makers have the authority to approve or reject new power plants or contracts with new power sources. As regulated monopolies, electric utilities must also seek approval for rate increases, and the state has required utilities to invest in electric energy conservation and efficiency.

The ability to regulate the energy used in the transportation sector is less clear. Individual Vermonters drive more than 17,000 miles per year, well above national averages, in part because of our rural settlement patterns and the limited availability of public transportation.<sup>6</sup> The number of miles Vermonters drive and the time we spend in our automobiles continues to increase every year.<sup>7</sup> While state agencies attempt to reduce the environmental impacts of vehicle use and encourage public transportation and car-pooling, major changes like increasing miles per gallon requirements are generally in the province of the federal government.

### State Energy Planning

Several state energy planning initiatives are underway as policy-makers attempt to wrestle with the economic, social and environmental implications of Vermont’s energy use. For example, Governor James Douglas announced in December 2005 the creation of a “Vermont Commission on Climate Change” to produce a Climate Change Action Plan to reduce Vermont’s greenhouse gas emissions by September 2007.<sup>8</sup> DPS has started work on a Comprehensive Energy Plan with an expected due date of January 2007, and the Vermont Agency of Transportation has also launched a long-range planning effort.

**Table 2.** State Energy Planning Initiatives

<b>Planning Initiative</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Citizen Participation Planned</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>	<b>Last Plan Completed</b>
Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan	DPS	Yes	Summer 2007	July, 1998
Vermont Long Range Transportation Plan	VTrans	Yes	May 2008	Jan., 2002
Chittenden County Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2030)	CCMPO	Yes	Summer 2007	Jan., 2005
Mediated Modeling	DPS	No	Sept. 2006	
Climate Change Action Plan	ANR	Yes	Sept. 2007	

Specific decisions that need to be made about Vermont’s energy future include decisions about our electric energy supply. For example, Vermonters need to decide whether to extend the license to operate the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plan that expires in 2012, how to replace the one-third of the state’s electricity that flows from Hydro-Quebec

as those contracts start to expire in 2015, and the level of investment in energy efficiency and conservation measures. In addition, a number of wind farm proposals may come before the Vermont Public Service Board in the next few years.

In transportation, Vermonters need to decide the level of investment the state should make in repairing and maintaining the existing infrastructure, in funding public transportation or in building new highway capacity like the proposed second leg of the Bennington Bypass and Chittenden County's Circumferential Highway. In addition, state transportation policy needs to address the state's aging population, increasing prices for gasoline, oil supply issues and the environmental impacts of the present system on climate change and air quality, including attainment with the Clean Air Act.

Similar issues need to be reviewed in the home heating sector. Vermonters and policy-makers need to review investments in conservation and efficiency and the impacts on the state budget of the Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP), increasing costs for some fuels and the availability of those fuels into the future.

The trade-offs among energy policy decisions and their different impacts are huge issues facing Vermonters. Rather than looking at each one in isolation, we believe that policy-makers need to consult with Vermonters on these issues and consider them in combination and in the social, environmental and economic context.

### **For More Information:**

#### Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2005): [http://www.ccmmpo.org/MTP/MTP\\_final\\_apr2005.pdf](http://www.ccmmpo.org/MTP/MTP_final_apr2005.pdf)
- New Metropolitan Plan process for 2030: [http://www.ccmmpo.org/MTP/MTP\\_2030.html](http://www.ccmmpo.org/MTP/MTP_2030.html)

#### Vermont Department of Public Service

- Mediated Modeling: [www.publicservice.vermont.gov/planning/mediatedmodeling.html](http://www.publicservice.vermont.gov/planning/mediatedmodeling.html)
- Comprehensive Energy Plan (1998): [www.publicservice.vermont.gov/pub/state-plans-compenergy.html](http://www.publicservice.vermont.gov/pub/state-plans-compenergy.html)
- Vermont Electric Plan (2005): [www.publicservice.vermont.gov/pub/state-plans-electric.html](http://www.publicservice.vermont.gov/pub/state-plans-electric.html)

#### Vermont Agency of Transportation

- Long-Range Transportation Plan (2002) [www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/Documents/LRTPfinal.pdf](http://www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/Documents/LRTPfinal.pdf)

#### Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

- Climate Change Action Plan [www.anr.state.vt.us/air/planning/docs/NEG%20ECP%20Action%20Plan.pdf](http://www.anr.state.vt.us/air/planning/docs/NEG%20ECP%20Action%20Plan.pdf)

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In this section we outline some of the current approaches to and challenges of citizen participation.

There are three primary rationales for why citizens should be engaged in policy planning: instrumental, normative and substantive.<sup>9</sup> The instrumental rationale argues that participation improves the efficiency of decision-making. By involving the public, projects have more community support, are more representative of community values and have a better chance of being implemented. The normative rationale looks at participation as essential to a healthy democracy. Involving citizens in decisions that affect them is the right thing to do. The substantive rationale argues that the “best” decisions come through public participation. The public brings information and knowledge to the process that will produce superior decisions.

This plan is based on a normative rationale – citizens should be engaged in public policy decision-making because it is the right thing to do. Furthermore, one outcome of citizen engagement processes should be to foster an informed and educated citizenry who are then active participants in future democratic decision-making.

The history of citizen participation in decision-making about energy policy can be understood within the tension between the expert-dominated managerial approach and democratic demands for broadening participation in decision-making.<sup>10</sup> Along with the growth in the size of agencies and corporations in the earlier part of the Twentieth Century, issues became more complicated and technical and decision-making became increasingly expert-driven, hierarchical and removed from the public. In response to the challenge to reconcile expert decision-making with the need for participation and accountability, regulations requiring more openness and accountability were established. Participation was first formally incorporated into government planning with the Administrative Procedures Act of 1944, which officially mandated norms for government conduct.<sup>11</sup> In place of the managerial system, a greater emphasis on pluralistic decision-making emerged that saw government agencies as the referees between different interest groups. In the 1960s, there was a “participation explosion” accelerated by laws meant to address the alienation of the public from government and to improve government performance.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis remained on a pluralistic approach, allowing interested groups access to information and to participation in regulatory processes. Participation was more difficult for individual citizens or citizen groups lacking the resources to participate. Participation was also legally relegated more to the end of the process to hear views on full proposals, rather than at the beginning of the process to understand values and engage the public on the assessment of alternatives.

Some argue that the concerns and values of individual citizens are represented through interest group representation.<sup>13</sup> For example, in Vermont, interest groups such as the Conservation Law Foundation, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, AARP, Associated Industries of Vermont and the Ski Areas Association often participate in contested PSB permit proceedings. In addition, municipal governments represent various

local citizen concerns through their participation.<sup>14</sup> Observers of these processes have pointed out that interest groups represent narrowly defined interests.<sup>15</sup> The Snelling Center has long pointed out the value of opening up these processes to a broader public. For example, in 2000, the Snelling Center for Government and the Windham Foundation convened a Grafton Conference on citizen participation in Vermont. The report called for opening up government decision-making to local citizen engagement: “In order for government to be responsive and for communities to be vital, public decisions should take place at the most local level possible.”<sup>16</sup>

In response to the requirements for greater citizen participation in public policy, state agencies and private companies turned to various techniques for engaging citizens in their policy deliberations. Yet, most of these efforts have been instrumental to the goals of the company or agency, implemented to increase the likelihood that the company or agency will achieve its chosen outcome.<sup>17</sup> For example, participation has long been used as a tool or strategy by agencies seeking to develop constituencies for their budgets and programs. Instrumental participation adds to decision efficiency by developing better channels of communication, improving program implementation (because the public participated in the decisions), delivering services more efficiently (because the public is involved in the service delivery), protecting the agency from critics and providing additional clout in the budget process for administrators (because they have lined up community allies).<sup>18</sup>

Despite Vermont’s reputation as a highly participatory state, much of what is labeled “public engagement” is one-time and one-way. For example, one of the most frequent methods of citizen participation used by state agencies is the public hearing. Citizens are invited to provide input into an announced plan or project. Officials are then to take that input into account. There is considerable evidence public hearings have little impact on the outcome of the plan or project.<sup>19</sup> For example, in the PSB decision-making process public comments at public hearings are not admissible as evidence and therefore cannot become part of the case record. The public is becoming jaundiced at these participation activities and there is some evidence that the emphasis on instrumental participation is having a negative impact on participation rates.<sup>20</sup> Citizens are cognizant of the instrumental nature of the participatory activity and unwilling to participate. Why give up an evening to give government officials your thoughts on an already announced plan, when the decision about what to include in the final version remains totally in the hands of those writing the plan?<sup>21</sup>

One area of citizen participation that has been much scrutinized is the role and relationship of citizens and experts. This tension has been called the central challenge of citizen participation today.<sup>22</sup> Historically, energy planning has been coordinated by experts conducting rational planning in a “value-free” and “objective” environment.<sup>23</sup> The public is then to invited to comment on those plans. Until 2006, this was how energy planning in Vermont was conducted. Utilities and state agencies conducted their own internal comprehensive planning process, shared draft plans with various publics and stakeholders and then revised the plans internally. The connection between what the public had to say and the final plan was undefined.<sup>24</sup> State and utility plans usually rely



on complicated computer models that look at the expected price and availability of fuels and then attempt to develop the best alternative based on price and other factors. A twist on this approach is scenario planning. This process develops different views of the future against which that planners evaluate their plans.<sup>25</sup> However, scenario planning also depends on the assumptions developed by the experts in these rational planning processes.

The internal expert planning approach followed by public consultation has been much criticized in recent years, although it remains the dominant approach to energy planning.<sup>26</sup> For example, critics argue that it is impossible to predict the future, or to take every possible alternative into account, no matter how good the internal expert planning. Secondly, the planners and modelers developing these plans are relying on their own values and approaches. How they formulate the problem suggests the types of solutions that will emerge. Research indicates computer modeling tends to discount the future and inflate the past because the models and plans are based on what is known and what has happened in the past.<sup>27</sup> Although scenario planning is an attempt to move away from exact predictions, it is still based on a series of assumptions about the future based on what is known about the past and present. A third area of criticism about expert planning is that this approach produces plans that do not include the affected interests or acknowledge local issues and participants and therefore produces solutions that are "incompetent, irrelevant or simply unworkable."<sup>28</sup>

One of the most extensive studies of citizen participation processes is a 2002 meta-analysis of 239 separate participation case studies by two social scientists at the Resources for Our Future policy center.<sup>29</sup> The two scientists recommended that agencies move away from "managerial" expert style decision-making methods to broader public engagement techniques. A similar statement was made by a group of energy policy-makers during the Windham Foundation's summer 2005 Grafton Conference.

*"The need for more public participation in energy planning was a recurring message during the conference. With the current system, citizens typically don't get involved until a new plant or power contract has been proposed. At that stage in the process, members of the public can do little more than register their support or opposition to a particular project. It's too late for them to have provided more fundamental guidance and input that would have lead to a different array of choices."*<sup>30</sup>

While much research into citizen participation processes has concentrated on the outcomes of the participation from the sponsoring agency's point of view some have attempted to look at the attributes of the process itself.<sup>31</sup> For example, participants in a natural resource planning process in Vermont identified seven characteristics that they believed a good process should contain, including:

- equal access to the process
- the power to influence process and outcomes
- equal access to information
- process design that incorporates structural characteristics to promote constructive interactions

- facilitation of constructive personal behaviors
- adequate analysis
- enabling of social conditions necessary for future processes.

Importantly, and in accordance with the goals of the Snelling Center, the authors of the study found that a good process must attend to the quality of the relationships among participants and should create social conditions which allow future processes to flourish.<sup>32</sup>

Who actually participates in citizen participation processes has been much studied.<sup>33</sup> While participants in civic processes tend to be better educated and have higher incomes than the general public, some argue that participation has been defined too narrowly and therefore only the more visible manifestations of participation (i.e. attending public meetings) are measured. Instead, citizen engagement more broadly defined may be more frequent than is generally recognized. Citizens debate policy decisions in many different ways, including, for example, conversations outside their local post office.<sup>34</sup> Although some have raised concerns that the most likely attendees in a public discussion about Vermont's future energy policy would be activists,<sup>35</sup> that has not been the experience of the Snelling Center for Government as evidenced in other public conversations. For example, a broad cross-section of 800 Vermonters attended six days of meetings on health care in a process coordinated by the Center in the fall of 2005. On energy policy, hundreds of Vermont citizens attended public hearings and meetings about a proposed new transmission line during the 2003 and 2004. Most of those citizens were not personally impacted by the line and the plurality of comments were about broader social and policy issues, not about local impacts.<sup>36</sup>

**For more information:**

Resources for the Future: [www.rff.org](http://www.rff.org)

Fischer, Frank. Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge. London: Duke University Press, 2000.

Smil, Vaclav. Energy at the Crossroads: Global Perspectives and Uncertainties. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

Webler, Thomas and Seth Tuler and Rob Krueger. "What is a Good Public Participation Process? Five Perspectives from the Public." Environmental Management Vol. 27.3 (2001): 435-450.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step in designing any public participation process must be to outline the goals of the process.<sup>37</sup> Is the process meant to be instrumental to the goals of the agency, i.e. improve decision efficiency, increase support for chosen outcomes, or reduce conflict? Such goals may be legitimate, but they should be understood as the goals of the implementing agency and not necessarily the goals of citizens regarding the process. Or should the process be convened for normative reasons, emphasizing the quality of the participation process over any particular outcome? The types of mechanisms used, the intensity of the process, who should participate and how much influence to give to citizens all should depend on the goals for the process.

We believe that Vermont will be best served through a normative approach to citizen participation. Full engagement of citizens in the decisions about Vermont's energy future is the right thing to do. The second primary goal that follows from this approach is to broaden public knowledge about energy issues to build citizen capacity to engage in this and future energy policy discussions. Our aim is to reach deeper into the roots of communities, prompting conversations that are not dependent upon one leader, one facilitator or one organization. We want to look ahead to a time when citizens are deeply engaged on many of the policy issues that face Vermont. For those reasons, building the capacity for future policy discussions must be a critical outcome of this effort.

A normative process of "no-regret decision-making" requires that public values be incorporated at the beginning of the planning process, before decisions are made.<sup>38</sup> We don't know today with certainty what will be the best environmental and economic source of Vermont's energy in the future. A normative approach would base future decisions on public values, on Vermonters' shared vision of their future.

### **Deliberative Decision-Making**

This approach assumes that decisions that so strongly affect Vermont citizens should be arrived at through a deliberative process. Instead of outcomes, the focus is on developing a process that is fair and legitimate. Because the future is uncertain, despite the best rational planning models available, it is better to base decisions about our future on public values, constructed deliberatively, in combination with expert planning. A deliberative debate about the future would include the energy planners *and the public* in decision-making. The planners would be at the table with the public, arguing for their vision, but they would be one of the voices -- not the dominant voice.

Deliberative processes are two-way conversations. A deliberative process is interactive and argumentative. A deliberative process provides a place for people to share values and develop common ground through discussion, to "make sense together."<sup>39</sup> Deliberative processes require "face to face" conversation, a dialogue where people learn from each other. Because the energy choices facing Vermont require trade-offs, debate and argument is required. Citizen opinions can be shaped by listening to other citizens and to experts, provided they meet on equal ground. As two researchers looking at measures to control the moose population in northern New York found:

*“The design of a deliberative process recognizes that citizens’ values with regard to policy are shaped by their interactions with other citizens, and, therefore, it encourages these inter-actions to occur before soliciting citizens’ opinions.”<sup>40</sup>*

A deliberative process should facilitate the interchange of ideas among citizens, open these ideas to reasoned criticism, identify areas of disagreement, attempt to resolve the disagreements and develop a policy that is mutually acceptable to interested and affected citizens.

### **Experts AND Citizens**

Developing a process that does not unfairly weight expert opinions over citizen opinions has been called one of the central policy challenges of planning today.<sup>41</sup> The concept here is not that experts are not needed, it’s that their role and expertise should be only one of the voices at the table. Experts are critical in managing and designing energy systems, but where the energy comes from, how it is delivered and even how it is used should be decisions developed deliberatively. After those decisions are made, the experts can be constructively re-engaged to implement them. Science needs the local knowledge of citizens and citizens need the specialized language of scientists.<sup>42</sup> Yet when experts sit at the table with citizens, citizens can feel intimidated and their ideas discredited. Designing a process that allows experts to provide their views at the beginning of the process and allowing the assumptions in those views to be challenged is critical. A deliberative process requires uncovering and debating the assumptions contained in the expert planning models and worldview. Research indicates that citizens are more likely to participate and accept the decisions that follow from a process when the process is seen as “fair.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Core Values for Public Participation**

The International Association for citizen participation (IAP2) has developed a set of core values for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes.

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

In all of these participation processes, policy-makers need to design the process enough in advance of the decisions that citizen input can make a difference in the final decision. As the report from the 2005 Grafton Conference on electric energy planning states:

*“The need for more public participation in energy planning was recurring message during the conference. With the current system, citizens typically don’t get involved until a new plant or power contract has been proposed. At that stage in the process, members of the public can do little more than register their support or opposition to a particular project. It’s too late for them to have provided more fundamental guidance and input that would have lead to a different array of choices. Vermont needs to find an effective process for influencing its electric energy future and to ensure that the mechanism provide comprehensive information to the public and decision-makers so that the inevitable trade-off decisions are well-founded.”* <sup>44</sup>

Policy-makers also need to be aware that one outcome of the participation process should be a more educated citizenry capable of debating the next policy decision. For example, in 2005, the Vermont Legislature requested that the Snelling Center plan and conduct a public process for deliberating about Vermont’s health care future. The Legislature requested that the process advance an authentic dialogue with the public so that legislators could listen to and engage with Vermonters who are ordinarily not present in Montpelier during legislative sessions and whose voices are not heard in any organized manner. The Snelling Center designed a process that allowed a multifaceted set of opportunities for conversation, dialogue and education and for Vermonters to be able to express their ideas, hopes and values. More than 800 Vermonters participated over six separate days. The process was not designed to, nor did it result in specific solutions or proposals. Instead, it connected members of the Legislature immersed in health care issues directly with the thoughts, hopes and fears of Vermonters. And, importantly, it helped to embed the conversation more deeply in Vermont citizens, allowing them to participate more fully in this and future debates.

**For more information:**

International Association of Public Participation  
<http://www.iap2.org/index.cfm>

Vermont’s Electric Energy Future. Report of the Thirtieth Grafton Conference.  
<http://www.windham-foundation.org/foundation/index.html>

## CONCLUSION

The citizens of Vermont have some major decisions to make about our energy future in the context of the social, environmental and economic impacts of our energy use. The cost and availability of energy in home heating and transportation, the reliance on imported oil and the environmental consequences of our energy choices, from climate change to acid rain are critical issues facing the state. In addition, we face major decisions about the sources of our electricity as more than two-thirds of present sources could end in the next decade. At the heart of these questions are the value choices wrapped around the economic, social and environmental impacts of energy and our own views of what Vermont should look like in the future.<sup>45</sup>

The first step should be a broad, spirited and open public conversation. Public values should be incorporated into the beginning of the process, not at the required, largely ineffective and predictable “public hearing” at the end of the process, after the decisions are already determined. The longer we wait to engage in this discussion, the fewer choices we will have. Issues such as replacing two-thirds of our electricity with new sources, expediting investments in efficiency and conservation, the rapidly rising costs of transportation fuels and the associated environmental and climate change impacts of our energy choices require action now. Action should be based on a shared vision of the future, not only on the best judgment of expert planners.

With at least five major state and regional agency energy related planning efforts underway, we strongly encourage policy-makers to engage the public early in those processes and incorporate public values into the results. There is an opportunity to coordinate the public conversations about all of these processes if it is started soon. Ultimately, structural and legal changes will need to be made to ensure that public engagement comes at the beginning of the process and not as an after thought. Resources and funding for citizen participation need to be taken more seriously. Conducting more comprehensive approaches to engaging the public is not an inexpensive undertaking, particularly in statewide debates. If participation is valued in a way that it parallels the work of the expert planners, however, the costs will not seem out of line. And, for normative reasons, allowing citizens to influence the decisions that affect them is the right thing to do.

## END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Dworkin, Michael presentation, Vermont Senate Natural Resources Committee, Feb 16, 2006
- <sup>2</sup> Vermont Department of Public Service. Fueling Vermont's Future: Comprehensive Energy Plan and Greenhouse Gas Action Plan – Volume 1. Montpelier, Vermont: DPS, July, 1998.
- <sup>3</sup> Poor, Walter email to Richard Watts March 16, 2006. Updated information from the 1998 Comprehensive Energy Plan. Other charts from that plan have not been updated according to Poor. The charts in the 1998 plan are based in data up to 1994 and the last three years are based on projections, according to the report.
- <sup>4</sup> Driving Global Warming, Commuting in Vermont and its Contribution to Global Warming, Vermont Public Interest Research and Education Fund. Summer 2005.
- <sup>5</sup> Vermont Department of Public Service 2004 utility rate revenue data. The \$200 million estimate is based on the value of the Hydro-Quebec contract plus power purchased from the whole sale New England market.
- <sup>6</sup> Air Pollution Division.
- <sup>7</sup> VTrans report. Web accessed March 15, 2006 at:  
<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/techservices/documents/highresearch/publications/avmthist.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Douglas, James. Press release web-accessed March 16, 2006.  
<http://www.vermont.gov/tools/whatsnew2/index.php?topic=GovPressReleases&id=1642&v=Article>
- <sup>9</sup> Fiorino, Joseph. Making Environmental Policy. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- <sup>10</sup> Beierle, Thomas C. and Jerry Cayford. Democracy in Practice: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions. Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 2002.
- <sup>11</sup> Renn, Ortwin, Thomas P. Webler and P. Wiedemann, eds. Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995:19.
- <sup>12</sup> Kweit, Mary Grisez and Robert W. Kweit. Implementing Citizen Participation in a Bureaucratic Society: A Contingency Approach. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview, DPS Commissioner David O'Brien, November 4, 2005.
- <sup>14</sup> For example, the present Mediated Model planning effort funded through the Department of Public Service was limited to an invited list of stakeholders although the process and deliberations are meant to be transparent to the general public ([www.publicservice.vermont.gov/planning/mediatedmodeling.html](http://www.publicservice.vermont.gov/planning/mediatedmodeling.html)). The results of the process may be used in a broader citizen engagement effort, according to DPS Director of Planning Riley Allen. Similarly, the Docket 7081 examination into transmission planning in Vermont participants is attended primarily by utility stakeholders and a few interest groups, including the Conservation Law Foundation ([www.state.vt.us/psb/document/majorongoing/7081.htm](http://www.state.vt.us/psb/document/majorongoing/7081.htm)).
- <sup>15</sup> Gottlieb, Robert. Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993.
- <sup>16</sup> Windham Foundation. Vermont Citizens and Civic Participation in a Changing World, Report of the 25<sup>th</sup> Grafton Conference: 11.
- <sup>17</sup> Bickerstaff, K., and G. Walker. "Participatory Local Governance and Transport Planning." Environment and Planning A 33 (2001): 431-451. See also; Ali, Saleem H. "Shades of Green: Mining, NGOs and the Pursuit of Negotiating Power." Terms for Endearment: Business, NGOs and Sustainable Development. Ed. Jem Bendell. Sheffield UK: Greenleaf/Macmillan, 2000. 79-95.
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas, John Clayton. Public Participation in Public Decisions: New Skills and Strategies for Public Managers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995; 36.
- <sup>19</sup> Checkoway, Barry. "The Politics of Public Hearings." The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science 17.4 (1981): 566-581. And also, Adams, Brian. "Public Meetings and the Democratic Process." Public Administration Review. 64.1 (2004): 43-54.
- <sup>20</sup> Burby, Raymond. 2003. "Making Plans that Matter: Citizen Involvement and Government Action." Journal of the American Planning Association 69.1 (2003): 33-49.
- <sup>21</sup> In an email exchange between VPIRG and Agency of Natural Resources State Lands Director Mike Fraysier, Fraysier explained the Agency's public process around drafting a plan for siting wind farms did not attempt to quantify public comments in a methodological way. Essentially public meetings were held and the Agency drafted a plan but the link between public comments and the final plan was undefined.
- <sup>22</sup> Fischer, Frank. Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge. London: Duke University Press, 2000.

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- <sup>24</sup> Watts, Richard dissertation: "Planning for Power: Citizen Participation in the siting of a high-voltage transmission line." January, 2006. On-line at [uvm.edu/~rwatts](http://uvm.edu/~rwatts).
- <sup>25</sup> Two recent examples of internal expert planning are the Department of Public Services' 2004 Electric Plan and Green Mountain Power's Integrated Resource Plan. Vermont Electric Plan 2004: Public Comment Draft. Montpelier, Vermont: DPS, August 6, 2004. Green Mountain Power. 2003 Integrated Resource Plan: Supplemental Analysis. Colchester, Vermont: GMP, April 16, 2004.
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- <sup>27</sup> Smil, Vaclav. Energy at the Crossroads: Global Perspectives and Uncertainties. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.
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- <sup>31</sup> Op Cit. Renn, Webler and Wiedemann (1995)
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Lucien, Laurien. "Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making: Findings from Communities Facing Toxic Waste Cleanup." Journal of the American Planning Association 70.1 (2004): 53-65.
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- <sup>35</sup> Public Dialogue on Energy Planning, Preliminary Recommendations by the Department of Public Service, January 24, 2006: 7.
- <sup>36</sup> Watts, Richard dissertation: "Planning for Power: Citizen Participation in the siting of a high-voltage transmission line." On-line at [uvm.edu/~rwatts](http://uvm.edu/~rwatts).
- <sup>37</sup> IAP2 describes the importance of telling the public upfront the relationship between what they say and the outcomes of the process. See their web page for other useful information: <http://www.iap2.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=3>
- <sup>38</sup> Op Cit. Smil, 2004.
- <sup>39</sup> Forester, John. Planning in the Face of Power. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. And, Healy, Patsy. "Planning through Debate: The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory." Readings in Planning Theory. Eds. S. Campbell and S.S. Fainstein. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1996. 234-257.
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- <sup>42</sup> Fischer, Frank. "Hazardous Waste Policy, Community Movements and the Politics of NIMBY: Participatory Risk Assessment in the USA and Canada." Greening Environmental Policy: The Politics of a Sustainable Future. Ed. Michael Black. New York : St Martin's Press, 1995. 164-182.
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