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Representative Amy Sheldon, Co-Chair, Senator Chris Bray, Co-Chair
Vermont Renewable Energy Standard Reform Working Group
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear Representative Sheldon, Senator Bray, and Members of the Working Group:

The Zero Energy Now Program (ZEN) is a Vermont-wide non-profit, dedicated to eliminating fossil fuels and carbon emissions in homes and small buildings. ZEN has demonstrated a unique capacity to achieve significant results. In 27 recently completed projects it achieved the following:

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|---|------------|--------------|
| <i>Average Fossil Fuel and Grid-Sourced Electricity Reductions:</i> | 91% | (5 at 100%) |
| <i>Average Percentage Renewable Energy:</i> | 85% | (5 at 100%) |
| <i>Average Carbon Savings:</i> | 94% | (5 at 100%) |
| <i>Average Energy Cost Savings:</i> | 68% | Highest: 99% |
| <i>Average Envelope Improvement:</i> | 28% | Highest: 78% |

With regard to the work of the Renewable Energy Standard Reform Working Group, we at ZEN wish to address the importance of net-metering, and to ask that provisions for it be protected in a reformed Renewable Energy Standard.

There has been a lot of concern, especially among utilities, but also within the Department of Public Service and within the Scott Administration about net-metering and its economic viability within the current electricity marketplace. We respect that concern. We also respect the concerns about equity and cost-shifting among rate-payers. There are certainly longer-term viability issues with respect to net metering – especially if it were to scaled up significantly in its current form. At this time, however, net-metering – including community net-metering – is still a quite-small component of our overall electricity portfolio, having little substantial effect on ratepayer costs.

It is important to recognize that net-metering has multi-dimensional implications with respect to our efforts to eliminate fossil fuels that go far beyond simply making the grid itself more renewable.

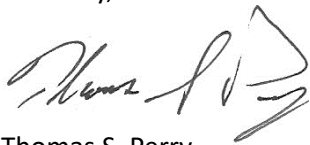
Net-metering, including community net-metering, can be exceptionally important and effective in making the transition of individual homes and small buildings away from fossil fuels *economically viable*. This is a critical benefit, which this group must not overlook. Indeed, net metering options may need to be expanded to accelerate this necessary transition. Furthermore, ZEN has shown that net-metering benefits *can be extended, affordably*, to low and moderate income homeowners.

If net-metering is no longer viable in the marketplace, we must look for alternative ways – including alternative funding strategies – to support net-metering so that it can stay in place as an option for homeowners – at least within a significant, near-term extended time frame.

We call on this group to keep open all options for net-metering – *including, especially, community net metering* – and to make them accessible to homeowners and renters unless and until we can develop effective alternative strategies that both increase our renewable electricity supply and provide economical means for homes and small buildings to be transitioned away from fossil fuels.

We also propose that a separate working group be established to address issues related to net-metering, and to craft appropriate solutions to maintain its viability in ways that will benefit our mutual goals of eliminating carbon emissions.

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Perry

Technical Director

Zero Energy Now Program

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