

To: Legislative Working Group on Renewable Energy Standard
From: Stephen Crowley, Director, Vermont Community Solar Association
Re: Follow-up on Public Comment
Date: December 13, 2023

Again, thanks for the work of this working group. I'd like to follow my verbal comment from today's meeting with this written version that will cover what I was not able to include. A minute goes by very fast.

1. Savings as well as Costs. To repeat what I talked about today, the modeling of costs that you have seen, for all six scenarios, does not include the savings that we expect will come from electrification. As the legislature has learned thoroughly over the last couple of years, switching from fossil fueled vehicles or thermal energy to EVs and heat pumps saves money. So even though the modeling here predicts a modest increase (5 or 6% total over a dozen years), savings from electrification should balance or exceed that increase.
2. The biggest loser in all this is consumer choice. The history of the electric industry has led to monopoly control by a single utility over electricity use in its region. It has made sense for society to grant this special status to our utilities, considering the historic reality of power generation as well as the delivery infrastructure. That still applies to the delivery infrastructure; we don't need multiple sets of wires running everywhere. But the arrival on the scene of photovoltaic electricity changes this. Meanwhile, electrification means that we move away from our choices of competing fuel oil providers, or gas stations pushing each other to have lower prices or better service. Consumers will now have one supplier for all of their energy needs, with thermal energy and transportation energy rolled in with traditional home electricity demands. It is ironic that by applying these 'market based' policies we end up eliminating market choices for consumers. The only other choice out there will be investing in your own rooftop solar or community solar. With fewer than half, maybe only a quarter of Vermonters with the possibility of a solar rooftop, community solar remains the only alternative source for most of us. Given that net metering of these off site systems has been the preferred method for this, it seems premature to end or disincentivise offsite net metering at least until a suitable alternative is in place.

Thanks again.