

Joint Statement in Support of Wind Power Development in Vermont

Press Release <http://blogs.burlingtonfreepress.com/joel/files/2010/10/Joint-wind-support-statement.pdf>

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The Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), Vermont League of Conservation Voters (VT LCV), Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) and Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) support the development of wind energy in Vermont. This collective statement of support for wind, and other renewable energy technologies, is based on our deep concern that society has not moved fast or aggressively enough to address the most urgent environmental crisis in human history: climate change.

We are also mindful that the extraction and generation of other energy sources used by Vermonters often has significant impacts on both local and global environments. These include, on the local level, the Gulf oil spill, mountain top removal for coal extraction in West Virginia, and groundwater contamination from hydro-fracking for natural gas extraction in Pennsylvania and Rocky Mountain States. On a global scale, our energy decisions are driving climate change and the acidification of the oceans.

These trends demand that Vermont make a concerted effort to, first, reduce energy demand through much greater efficiency and conservation and, second, assume greater responsibility for generating the energy that we use through the sustainable development of renewable resources. The state has formally committed to greater reliance on in-state renewable energy through the SPEED program and the 25 x 25 initiative.

Our support for wind energy, however, is dependent on careful siting, scale, and design of wind facilities. We believe there is a way to do wind right. We are here today because we are disappointed that the debate over the development of wind energy is too often a black and white issue of wind being either good or bad, without adequate consideration of local circumstances or concerns, the regional context, or the very real global challenges that we face.

We want to move the debate away from whether wind energy has a legitimate role to play in Vermont's energy mix. We believe that wind power in Vermont, from backyard turbines to commercial scale, should combine to meet a meaningful portion of our state's electricity supply. Our challenge is developing wind energy in Vermont in a manner that balances our moral obligation to combat climate change with protecting our natural resources, including wildlife populations, safeguarding water quality and forest health and promoting the best interests of Vermonters. We believe we can and must strike that balance.

Our organizations are working together to identify the best approaches and strategies to accomplish those goals. We believe wind is an important part of Vermont — and the world's — solutions to the energy and climate crisis we face. We are committed to working collaboratively together, and with others, to achieve these objectives.