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Judith C. Whitney
Clerk of the Commission
112 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2701
(802) 828-2358

Dear Commissioners Roisman, Cheney, and Hofmann,

As a key employer in rural Vermont, I would like to provide input on the elimination of the Energy Efficiency charge and the future of the efficiency program.

The Ames Companies specializes in providing wooden blanks for sporting equipment, gardening tools, furniture and specialty products. Our operation is located in Wallingford, Vermont. We are part of the Ames Companies Inc., which has many locations across the country. We employ twenty two people at our Vermont plant. We are committed to the environment and our community and support the volunteer Fire, and Rescue Departments. We are also a member of the Vermont Forest Products Association.

Over the last several years, Ames True Temper has made investments in energy efficiency, such as lighting projects, roof insulation, capacitors, energy efficient starters and motors. For example, all of our bark and scrap wood is turned into wood chips which we burn to heat the building as well as to operate the kilns in which we dry the wood used in our manufacturing process. Like many other Vermont businesses, we have worked through the opportunities for energy efficiency. The current rebates offered for additional projects are inadequate for us to undertake new projects and do not have an acceptable business justification for the additional capital we would need to invest. If we were able to apply our total efficiency charge to our projects, versus the rebate offered, more projects would be viable. For example, we were offered a rebate of \$8,308. to upgrade some of our equipment, yet our annual charge is \$15,000.

I would also like to point out that there has been average support and advice from Efficiency Vermont which usually comes about, just prior to when the survey comes out to rate their performance, They do not understand or have knowledge in our type of manufacturing. We are

not just a big warehouse that requires a lighting upgrade and the cost associated with paying an employee to chase rebates for lighting, unless you are doing a big warehouse is not cost effective.

It is time for the Energy Efficiency charge to be eliminated. This significant charge, which has increased dramatically over the years, increases manufacturing cost and makes it very difficult to be competitive. The annual charge of \$15,000, which is over 7% of our electric bill, would be better invested in controlling our cost and making improvement on our current electrical system from a reliability standpoint. Our Company has been making substantial investments in upgrading equipment the last few years which has supported more jobs in Vermont. We are an important employer in Wallingford, and we are part of the manufacturing sector which is a critical part of the overall Vermont economy. We provide good jobs not only at the plant, but to Timber Producers and truckers throughout the state which has a positive impact on communities across our state.

Circumstances have changed since the efficiency charge was put in place – our electricity supply is greener and our Vermont electrical demand is not growing. It is time for the efficiency charge to change as well and eliminate the tax on businesses like ours.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and your leadership in driving needed change in the Efficiency charge.



Robert Williams
Plant Manager

Cc:

Department of Public Service
June E. Tierney, Commissioner
112 State Street
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