

06/29/23

Vermont Public Utilities Commission

Regarding Case # 23-1870-PET

I am writing to you with concerns regarding the Burlington Electric Departments' request for hundreds of thousands of dollars to continue planning their District Energy project, which would expand the McNeil biomass plant. This District Energy project is neither energy efficient nor cost effective and should not be supported or implemented.

The McNeil expansion would cost \$42 million, which is a vast sum that could be used to invest in greener energy sources. This high investment cost does not outweigh the small improvements in efficiency that would be made to the McNeil energy plant. I believe it is irrational to continue to invest in an energy source that is causing harmful pollution, which is negatively impacting our community, and high greenhouse gas emission rates. Furthermore, this expansion would increase Vermont's reliance on these energy systems. Although Vermont labels biomass as a renewable energy source, biomass relies on logging cutting down trees, increasing the amount of young forests in our landscape, which sequester significantly less carbon than mature forest growth.

I believe that the \$500,000 that the Burlington Electric Department is requesting from the thermal efficiency program is better spent in other places. The Public Utilities Commission should take this opportunity to demand a higher standard of thermal efficiency than what BED proposes to offer through this project.

As a Vermont resident and citizen who is equally concerned about the ecological, environmental, and financial responsibilities of our state, I respectfully request that you **deny BED's request for funds, and do not waive the 60-day advance notice requirement.**

Sincerely,

Nora Thomas