VERMONT FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
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September 23, 2024

Vermont Public Utility Commission
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620

Dear PUC Commissioners,

We are writing a letter of support for the Vermont Renewable Gas farm methane project at the Saint Johnsbury – Lyndon Industrial Park in Caledonia, County. We ask that the Public Utilities Commission issue Vermont Renewable Gas a Certificate of Public Good at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Vermont Forest Products Association (VFPA) is a member organization serving the interests of a full range of participants in forestry and wood products, from landowners, loggers and truckers, to sawmills and other processing facilities. We support the working landscape with farms and managed forestland providing raw materials for value added businesses, and family wage jobs dispersed throughout the region. Active silviculture provides a wide range of benefits to society, and to the ecosystem, besides the wonderful wood products that enrich our lives every day.

Vermont's forest producers generate over one billion dollars in annual product shipments. Our members produce veneer grade hardwoods and specialty softwoods, along with "ordinary" dimension softwoods, and utility hardwood lumber. The lower grade fiber that is processed as part of producing these higher quality products is often sent to nearby states to be made into paper, cardboards, and other processed products as well as firewood and pellets. Our members also chip the waste material to produce local, homegrown feedstock for renewable energy production.

The home - grown renewable electricity and biochar byproduct that the Vermont Renewable Gas facility will produce benefit the entire region through displacing fossil fuels on Vermont's power grid and returning the carbon and nutrients back to agricultural soils. The proposed facility has already been issued a non-major air emissions permit from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. This permit was issued in a stringent manner consistent with both Vermont and federal environmental laws. The facility is also highly energy efficient, at greater than 62% efficiency.

This project will create a new and innovative market for residues from operations like those of our members. We are seeing shrinking opportunities to market these lower value residues as traditional

purchasers close or reduce their operations. If we are to sustain a vibrant, working lands-based economy, we need new markets like the one proposed by VRG - Lyndon in Vermont.

Rural Vermont is at a crossroads and our working lands economy is at a tipping point. With increased operations costs in comparison to the value of our harvests coupled with the stressors of a changing climate, we need to think innovatively. Our state regulators need to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in Vermont's clean energy future and in the economic vitality of our rural regions including the Northeast Kingdom. For all of the reasons above, we strongly ask for your support for a Certificate of Public Good for the Vermont Renewable Gas project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve Hardy, President