

Jennifer and Daniel Goulet  
185 Upper Loveland Road  
Norwich, VT 05055  
[jjgoulet08@gmail.com](mailto:jjgoulet08@gmail.com)

Vermont Public Utilities Commission  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620

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To the Public Utilities Commission,

We are writing to comment on the draft net-metering rule update 5.100. We support most of the changes made to the rule. In particular, we believe that parts of forest blocks should not be considered preferred sites for constructing public utilities. It is clearly foolish to clearcut acres of mature forest capable of sequestering several metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents annually.

However, one important element of a just rule is still lacking. When a preferred site letter is being considered, all adjoining landowners with properties contiguous to the project area should be notified by the Town Planning Commission at the beginning of the planning process. These landowners are important stakeholders in the development of our public utilities. Ensuring that adjoining are informed and educated early on will save developers time and money in the long run. Yet, at present, adjoining are not brought into the process until after the project is planned and is being submitted to the PUC. Sometimes, in our zeal to develop alternative energy sources, landowners are not notified until six months into the hearing process. In addition, a clear definition of adjoiner should be developed by the PUC for use throughout the public utility development process. Town Planning Commissions should be required to use this definition. They should not be allowed to invent their own definition or to use substitute terms with different meanings, as is currently the case in some towns.

Notification of adjoining by Town Planning Commissions and a clear, constant definition of adjoiner to be used at the Town and State levels would help make public utility construction more transparent.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer and Daniel Goulet