

RE 23-2220-RULE

Public comment – networked geothermal by utilities

November 1, 2024

If within the scope of the Clean Heat Standard, I urge the PUC, as part of the rule-making process, to take steps that prompt both gas and electric utilities to prioritize the development of thermal energy exchange networks. Gas utilities in several states are engaged in pilot programs involving networked geothermal using ground source heat pumps (“GSHP”). The use of GSHP is far less taxing on the grid than air source heat pumps for heating and cooling, making it appropriate for the PUC to encourage not just gas, but also electric utilities in Vermont to develop pilot projects. Utilities also have the organizational and financial capacity to undertake such projects, certainly more so than retail heating oil and propane suppliers. Additionally, regulated utilities are able to finance and recover the up-front costs of networked geothermal. Finally, although Vermont is a rural state, towns served by municipal water or sewer infrastructure likely have the density needed to support a networked system.

Thank you for considering my comment.

Christopher Katucki

Norwich, VT