

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUBCOMMITTEE INPUT TO DOCKET 7081 EVALUATION

- The need continues to increase public participation in the VSPC/Docket 7081 process. There are two elements of this need:
  - Ensuring that the seats on the VSPC are filled and there is consistent participation by public members in VSPC meetings.
  - Increasing public outreach and information regarding planning for transmission and non-transmission alternatives.
- The subcommittee recognizes that there will be a more clear opportunity for focused outreach when there are projects undergoing the full VPSC process, but also sees the need for providing information about VSPC activities to keep the public informed generally about transmission issues.
- The barriers to public participation include:
  - The commitment of time needed to participate fully.
  - The technical nature of the subject matter.
  - The lack of a sense of immediacy to the issues.
- Some possible solutions:
  - Identify people who are likely to be interested in the process from lists of people who attended public outreach meetings and people who have become active in transmission issues through recent VELCO projects.
  - Create a means for participation that does not necessarily involve – or does not initially involve -- having to attend full VPSC meetings. For example, potential participants could be invited to Public Participation Subcommittee meetings.
  - Increase visibility of the process through increased public information.
- The subcommittee is interested in taking a more active role in public outreach, consistent with the purposes stated in the MOU. The group discussed the development of OpEd/My Turn columns on relevant, interesting subjects facing the VSPC and seeking publication of these in newspapers and other appropriate forums. An initial column could be written from a public member's perspective describing the experience of participating. Some key issues to be addressed:
  - CEII
  - The coordination of DSM and load forecasting
  - Increased communication and coordination brought about by the VSPC
- The Subcommittee expressed the need for a means for the public to understand the full spectrum of issues related to transmission, including projects being considered to bring renewable power to Vermont and the New England market ("economic transmission"). The VSPC may be an appropriate forum for this discussion, but it was recognized that there is concern by some VSPC members about expanding the mission of the VSPC beyond the reliability focus of the MOU. There may be a need for the Public Service Board to resolve this tension.
- The subcommittee's review of the existing subcommittee charter concluded that only one small change is needed. The final paragraph should be revised as follows:

*~~Providing oversight of~~ Facilitating communications (website, media, etc.) regarding the work of the VSPC to ensure clarity, comprehensiveness and transparency of the VSPC process to two distinct target audiences: committee and subcommittee members (internal communications); and the public (external communications).*