

**From:** "Lyman, Pat" <PLYMA90@entergy.com>  
**To:** "\_Power Uprate" <\_PowerUprate@prod.entergy.com>, "Al Chesley" <al.chesley@netzero.net>, "Al Parker" <Al.Parker@vynpc.com>, "Alan Haumann" <Alan.Haumann@vynpc.com>, "Alan Robertshaw" <arober6@prod.entergy.com>, "Art Wiese" <awiese@entergy.com>, "Audra Williams" <Audra.Williams@vynpc.com>, "B. Cosgrove" <brendan@vermont.org>, "Barbara Williams" <Barbara.Williams@vynpc.com>, "Bernard Buteau" <Bernard.Buteau@vynpc.com>, "Bernie Jwaszewski" <Bernie.Jwaszewski@vynpc.com>, "Beth Siemel" <bsien90@prod.entergy.com>, "Bill Lynch" <Bill.Lynch@vynpc.com>, "Boguslawski" <john.boguslawski@adelphiabusiness.net>, "Bonnie Notte" <bnotte@prod.entergy.com>, "Bonnie O'Rourke" <borourk@cvps.com>, "Brian Cosgrove" <Brian.Cosgrove@vynpc.com>, "Brian Finn" <Brian.Finn@vynpc.com>, "Bryan Croke" <bcroke@prod.entergy.com>, "Candy Sak" <Candy.Sak@vynpc.com>, "Carl Crawford" <ccrawfo@entergy.com>, "Charles Edwards" <Charles.Edwards@vynpc.com>, "Chris Hansen" <Chris.Hansen@vynpc.com>, "Chris Wamser" <Chris.Wamser@vynpc.com>, "Christina Canty" <Christine.Canty@vynpc.com>, "CONNIE WELLS" <CWELLS@entergy.com>, "Craig Nichols" <Craig.Nichols@vynpc.com>, "David Andrews" <David.Andrews@vynpc.com>, "David M. Rocchio" <david.rocchio@theamnogroup.com>, "David Mannai" <David.Mannai@vynpc.com>, "David McElwee" <David.McElwee@vynpc.com>, "David Pelton" <dpelt90@prod.entergy.com>, "DEBORAH WAGLEY" <DWAGLEY@entergy.com>, "Diane McCue" <Diane.McCue@vynpc.com>, "Dolord DeForge" <Dj.DeForge@vynpc.com>, "Don Rendall" <rendall@greenmountainpower.biz>, "Donald Johnson" <djohn91@prod.entergy.com>, "Dorothy Schnure 2" <schnure@greenmountainpower.biz>, "Dutton Christopher" <dutton@gmpvt.com>, "Ed Matson" <Ed.Matson@vynpc.com>, "Ellen Cota" <ecota@prod.entergy.com>, "Eve Finkenstadt" <Eve.Finkenstadt@vynpc.com>, "Frank Lipinski" <Frank.Lipinski@vynpc.com>, "G Franklin" <gfranklin@ecvtlaw.com>, "GARY TAYLOR" <GJTAYLOR@entergy.com>, "George Thomas" <gthomas@prod.entergy.com>, "George Wierzbowski" <George.Wierzbowski@vynpc.com>, "Gerry Morris" <gmmorris@vtlobbyists.com>, "Goldsmith, Steve" <epzsteve01@yahoo.com>, "Greg Brede" <Greg.Brede@vynpc.com>, "Harry Sutton" <Harry.Sutton@vynpc.com>, "Howard C Shaffer" <howardmariann@juno.com>, "Kent Brown" <kbrown@cvps.com>, "Jack Balla" <JBalla@entergy.com>, "James Callaghan" <James.Callaghan@vynpc.com>, "James Kritzer" <jkritz@prod.entergy.com>, "James Rogers" <James.Rogers@vynpc.com>, "Jan Bennett" <Jan.Bennett@vynpc.com>, "Jay Thayer" <jithayer@entergy.com>, "Jeff Meyer" <Jeff.Meyer@vynpc.com>, "Jim Devinentis" <Jim.Devinentis@vynpc.com>, "John Apostoles" <japosto@prod.entergy.com>, "John Herron" <JHerron@entergy.com>, "John Hoffman" <John.Hoffman@vynpc.com>, "John Lampron" <lamp44@aol.com>, "John McCann" <jmccan1@entergy.com>, "John Moriarty" <jmoriar@prod.entergy.com>, "John OConnor" <John.OConnor@vynpc.com>, "John Patrick" <JPATRIC@prod.entergy.com>, "Julie Hayward" <jhaywar@prod.entergy.com>, "Karen Mego" <Karen.Mego@vynpc.com>, "Kevin Bronson" <Kevin.Bronson@vynpc.com>, "Kilburn" <bobbi.kilburn@adelphiabusiness.net>, "KIM RIVERO" <KRIVERO@entergy.com>, "Larry Smith" <Larry.Smith@vynpc.com>, "Leonard Gucwa" <LGUCW90@prod.entergy.com>, "Liliane Schor" <Liliane.Schor@vynpc.com>, "Lori Tkaczyk" <Lori.Tkaczyk@vynpc.com>, "Lynn DeWald" <ldewald@prod.entergy.com>, "Marshall, John" <jmarshall@drm.com>, "MEMA Region 3" <tjstarr@hotmail.com>, "Mike Desilets" <Mike.Desilets@vynpc.com>, "Mike Empey" <Mike.Empey@vynpc.com>, "Mike McKenney" <Mike.McKenney@vynpc.com>, "Mike Metell" <Mike.Metell@vynpc.com>, "Milton Eaton" <maeshe@sover.net>, "MYRA NORVILLE" <MNORVIL@entergy.com>, "Nancy Blake" <Nancy.Blake@vynpc.com>, "Nancy Malmquist" <nmalmquist@drm.com>, "NANCY MOROVICH" <NMOROVI@entergy.com>, "NEI" <sck@nei.org>, "Pat Corbett" <Pat.Corbett@vynpc.com>, "Pat McKenney" <Pat.McKenney@vynpc.com>, "PAUL LAROSA" <PLAROSA@entergy.com>, "Paul Rainey" <Paul.Rainey@vynpc.com>, "Pedro Perez" <Pedro.Perez@vynpc.com>, "R. Barkhurst" <silverkingjr@earthlink.com>, "Richard Bargeron" <Richard.Bargeron@vynpc.com>, "Richard January" <Richard.January@vynpc.com>.  
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2. Energy windmills proposed for Battery Street - Burlington Free Press(Vermont, page B1, on fold)
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4. New Davis-Besse Report Rips NRC - onnews.com (Online)

VY Daily News

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

If you have news items to contribute contact Pat Lyman - plyma90@entergy.com

Burlington Free Press, Tuesday, May 18, 2004(Letter, page 11A)

Resolve nuclear issues

Kudos to State Auditor Elizabeth Ready for bringing to light the danger that tens of thousands of Vermonters have been exposed to -- and continue to be exposed to -- by the unsafe storage of nuclear waste at Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. How is it that a site found (by a research firm hired by the state) to be unsafe for low-level nuclear waste, is now being used as a storage location for high level nuclear waste? To make matters even more alarming, we are now told that two spent fuel rods are "missing."

What is the state waiting for? Until a way is found to safely store their nuclear waste, the Vernon reactor should not be allowed to generate more waste. If Gov. Jim Douglas is truly concerned about the well-being of Vermonters, he should impose a moratorium on the continued operation of the plant until these issues are resolved.

DAVID ELLENBOGEN  
Colchester

Burlington Free Press, Tuesday, May 18, 2004(Vermont, Page B1, on fold)

Energy windmills proposed for Battery Street

By John Briggs  
Free Press Staff Writer

Harry Atkinson, who owns a three-story wooden building at 216 Battery St., just south of Maple Street, wants to put two energy windmills on its roof.

The city's Development Review Board has scheduled a public hearing on that and other proposals for 5 p.m. today in Contois Auditorium at City Hall.

The generation of power with wind turbines, though on a much larger scale than the two windmills Atkinson has in mind, has pitted proponents of wind-powered energy in Vermont against others who worry that turbine farms topping mountain ridges could diminish the state's natural beauty.

Atkinson's proposed turbines are much smaller -- physically and in terms of generating capacity -- than the huge commercial windmills that have sparked much debate across Vermont.

His would have a 20-foot lamp-post-style mast and blades 12 feet in diameter. The small windmills would be bolted atop the building's lower roof edge at the northern and southern corners.

Nearby buildings, formerly used as warehouses, are higher than the windmills would be.

According to Mary Sullivan, spokeswoman for the Burlington Electric Department, Atkinson's windmills would be metered into the city's power grid if the project goes through, lowering the cost to Atkinson of electricity used in the building.

Sullivan said Atkinson has applied for grant money for solar panels on the building under the state's solar and small wind incentive program.

David Hill, senior project manager for the Vermont Energy Investment Corp., which administers the grant program, said 140 grant applications have been approved since the program's inception last fall.

The grants, he said, are intended to encourage the growth of the renewable energy industry in the state, but individuals who intend to install the systems themselves also are eligible to apply.

Contact John Briggs at 660-1863 or [jbriggs@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:jbriggs@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com)

Board hearings

-- WHEN: 5 p.m. today

-- WHERE: Contois Auditorium, City Hall

-- PROJECTS INCLUDE: Windmills intended to provide electric power on a building at 216 Battery St.; proposed building at 114 and 126 College and 95 St. Paul streets to include 49 residential units, two commercial units, a drive-up ATM and a parking garage.

Burlington Free Press, Tuesday, May 18, 2004(Vermont, page B1, below fold)

More schools using wood chips for heating

By Tim McCahill  
The Associated Press

EAST MONTPELIER -- All is quiet in the underbelly of U-32 High School.

With the temperature outside in the 70s, only a faint hum comes from the boiler room, and the cavernous container taking up most of the space is empty of the fuel that keeps this roughly 875-student school warm in the colder months -- wood chips.

U-32 is one of 24 schools in the state that use wood chips for heat. Experts say the leftover scraps of wood save money and burn cleaner than conventional fuel oil.

"The utilization of wood-chip heating systems in Vermont schools is good public policy," said Jonathan Sturges, director of the Vermont Superintendents Association School Energy Management Program. "It utilizes a renewable energy resource, keeps dollars in the local economy, and saves real dollars for real taxpayers."

Sturges, who spoke along with Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and others at a Monday news conference, said the 24 schools save \$366,000 and 720,000 gallons of fuel oil per year by burning wood chips for heat.

Like the other schools that use the technology, U-32 buys its wood chips from local or regional sawmills. The scraps are stored in a container and moved onto a conveyor belt, which sends the wood chips into a furnace. The system is controlled by a computer that monitors the temperature of the furnace and when the container needs to be refilled.

The furnace requires little maintenance and needs to be cleaned only once a week, said Albert Patrella, acting maintenance manager at U-32. Burning the wood chips produces some carbon, ash and steam because of the moisture content in the scraps.

Sturges said the heating systems cost between \$350,000 and \$500,000 more than conventional fuel-burning furnaces. That initial investment presents a challenge to smaller schools that might not be able to afford converting to wood chips, he said.

Most of the funding for wood chip heating and other renewable energy projects comes from the state, said Cathy Hilgendorf, who runs the school construction aid program for the Department of Education. Some money also is available through the Department of Public Service, Sturges said.

The first school to use wood chips for heat was Calais Elementary School in 1986, and four more schools -- including two in New Hampshire -- are slated to install the heating systems during the next two years, according to the superintendents association.

U-32 began burning wood chips in 2001.

Onnews.com, Tuesday, May 18, 2004(Online)

New Davis-Besse Report Rips NRC

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission miscalculated the risk to the public of letting the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant continue to run with suspected reactor leaks, according to a report obtained by The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer.

The General Accounting Office report that was to be released Tuesday also says the commission's refusal to fix the oversight flaws that caused the NRC to miss a rust hole in the plant's nuclear reactor means there may be major incidents at other plants.

Davis-Besse, located along Lake Erie about 30 miles east of Toledo, started producing electricity again in March after it was shut down for more than two years.

It was closed for routine maintenance in February 2002, and inspectors a month later found corrosion on the reactor vessel, where leaking boric acid had eaten almost through a 6-inch-thick steel cap.

The damage led to a review of 68 similar plants nationwide.

The GAO report says that the handling of Davis-Besse indicates problems with the way the NRC polices the nation's 103 nuclear plants.

"We do not yet have adequate assurances from NRC that many of the factors that contributed to the incident at Davis-Besse will be fully addressed," the investigators said.

Three engineering consultants to the GAO found that the decision to let Davis-Besse run "lacked credibility" but was so poorly documented that they couldn't judge if it was reasonable. The commission already has rejected the report's recommendations that the agency should start inspecting whether nuclear plant workers and managers have an appropriate "safety culture" and that it should spell out what evidence and criteria must be used to shut down a reactor for safety concerns.

"It is fair to say we have major differences of opinion on some of the findings," said NRC spokesman Scott Burnell.

Congressional investigators failed to take into account how much the commission depends on reactor

operators to tell the truth about plant conditions, executive director William Travers wrote in the commission's response to the General Accounting Office.

The NRC contends owner FirstEnergy Corp. gave the agency inaccurate and incomplete information about the reactor lid's status.

A federal grand jury is probing whether the utility did so intentionally. The NRC, which reviewed the GAO study for a month before its public release, said it already has begun many reforms as a result of its own assessment of the Davis-Besse affair.

Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio sought the review of the Davis-Besse situation, along with U.S. Sen. George Voinovich and Rep. Steven LaTourette, both R-Ohio. Kucinich tried to persuade the NRC to pull Davis-Besse's operating license last year and opposed restarting the plant in March.

He said the latest report must make the commission, the nuclear industry and Congress realize that changes are necessary. A message seeking additional comment was left at NRC regional offices in Chicago.

CC: "Dower, Mary" <mdower@prod.energy.com>, "Sandstrum, Sally" <ssandst@prod.energy.com>, "Dreyfuss, John" <jdreyfu@prod.energy.com>