



**State of Vermont
Public Utility Commission**

PRESS RELEASE

**Vermont Public Utility Commission
Protects Views from Mount Philo State Park**

Montpelier, VT, July 21, 2017 – Today the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“PUC”) denied permission to build a 144 kW solar project in Charlotte, Vermont, that would have been located in the iconic western viewshed of Mount Philo State Park. In its order, the PUC agreed with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Vermont Department of Public Service, and the Town of Charlotte in ruling that the proposed solar project, if built, “would materially interfere with the public’s use and enjoyment of the Park,” given that “sightseeing the western viewshed from the summit is a principal reason why people visit the Park.”

In making its ruling, the PUC stated that “we are keenly aware of the unique nature and special status of Mount Philo. ... It is the oldest park in the state park system; it is one of the four most visited state parks in Vermont; it is widely renowned for its views west from the summit of the pastoral landscape and of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountain; it is the only state park with a summit easily accessible to all Vermonters, regardless of age or physical abilities.” The PUC also highlighted the importance to its ruling of the testimony and arguments against the project offered by the Agency of Natural Resources, which is the governmental entity charged with preserving Vermont’s parks and protecting the public investment in them.

The proposed solar project would have bordered the Ethan Allen Highway approximately eight-tenths of a mile from the base of Mount Philo and would have been situated in the middle of the foreground of the view from Mount Philo State Park looking west to Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains. The project would have consisted of 650 ground-mounted solar panels, standing approximately nine feet tall at the highest point, occupying approximately one acre of land. Given the elevation of the Park, the planting of trees on the boundary of the project would not have provided sufficient screening.

The text of the Public Utility Commission’s decision and more information about Case No. NM-6691 is available via the Commission’s electronic filing and case management system, ePUC, at the following website: epuc.vermont.gov.

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