

First, let me congratulate OEP Director Meredith Hatfield for the informative presentation and for the tactful and non---confrontational manner in which she fielded questions and comments from members of the audience.

As Chair of the Town of Hebron (pop. 605) Select Board, and as someone who has followed the energy situation from my years of working in the Electrical Engineering Department of Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation in the 1960s (anyone remember the November 9th, 1965 Northeast Blackout?), I have a strong interest in doing what I can, at both a personal level and a municipal level, to conserve energy, reduce carbon emissions, and use renewable forms of energy where economically viable.

Last year the Town of Hebron explored the possibility of installing a solar array on a hillside behind our Public Safety building. We worked with a solar power expert who advised that the location would be excellent. Because the solar array would generate more power than the Public Safety building would use, we explored Group Net Metering (GNM) that had been passed by the NH Legislature. I see that the NH PUC now has nine pages of “interim rules” on its web site:

<http://www.puc.nh.gov/Sustainable%20Energy/Net%20Metering/Puc%200909%20interim%20rule%20adopted.pdf>

My first suggestion and request is that the OEP recommend that the PUC encourage municipalities to use GNM and that they simplify and streamline the process to make this happen.

Because municipalities are not eligible for tax credits and incentives, the only way a small municipality could come up with the up---front purchase and installation costs of solar arrays, other than seeking a bond at Town Meeting (requires a 2/3 vote), is to find a private company who would get the tax credits and who would purchase and install the solar array.

My second suggestion and request is that OEP recommend that the Legislature and the PCU develop a program to encourage municipalities to deploy solar technologies through low---interest loans and/or subsidies.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

Eleanor Downey Lonske  
Chair, Hebron Select Board