



VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD
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Clerk of the Board
Vermont Public Service Board
112 State Street, Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2701

March 19, 2013

To: Public Service Board

Re: Addison Natural Gas Project

The Board of Directors of Rutland Economic Development Corporation strongly supports Vermont Gas Company's application to the PSB for approval to provide natural gas service to communities south of Chittenden County.

We view this project as a major step toward achieving our goal of securing natural gas service in Rutland County. The primary reasons for supporting this application are, first, the health of our existing industry. Businesses in our region currently operate at a disadvantage to their competition located in regions of Vermont or other states that currently have natural gas available. For industry to continue to grow in Rutland County, access to this efficient fuel source is critical from a cost basis, and additionally has the impact of replacing significantly less efficient fuels, providing a benefit for our environment. Secondly, the lack of natural gas as an option negatively impacts our ability to recruit new business to the region. In the fall of 2011, REDC hosted a visit by several national site consultants in an effort to market the region's strengths. One of the consultants, Donny Poslowski, was focused on the specialty food industry. As he explained, their job was to eliminate sites from consideration, to limit the options as part of a site search. Our lack of natural gas service meant we would be eliminated in the first round of consideration.

As part of my job at REDC, I spend a lot of my time meeting and talking with business owners and managers. The high cost of energy is increasingly becoming a burden on their ability to operate in Vermont. We have a large number of industries located in the county that would derive major benefit from access to low-cost natural gas, and they have expressed their support of the extension. We urge the Public Service Board to approve this project without costly conditions that will delay future expansion to Rutland.

Regards,
James B Stewart
James B Stewart, EDP
Executive Director