



TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

May 5, 2014

Waitsfield Selectboard
Waitsfield Town Office
9 Bridge Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673

Re: Greening Up Waitsfield with a Town Solar Array

Dear Selectboard:

The Waitsfield Energy Committee strongly supports and is excited to be working with the Waitsfield Selectboard and School Board in developing Waitsfield's first municipal solar array. This effort is the culmination of several years of work by the town to find an affordable opportunity for building a solar array at the Town Garage site. The CEDF grant will play a critical role in making the 102 kW solar array cost-effective for the town, as the Town's tax-exempt status does not allow it to qualify for the tax credits available to corporations and individual homeowners. Once installed, the system will provide enough locally-sourced renewable energy to support the Waitsfield Elementary School and what is believed to be soon, Vermont's first "Net-Zero" Town Office building. Additional generation from the solar array will also help offset electric expenses of the Wait House, Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Station, Town Garage and the Joslin Memorial Library. The historic General Wait House being home to the Mad River Valley (MRV) Chamber of Commerce and MRV Welcome Center will raise the "green" visibility of Waitsfield's solar array to businesses and individuals interested in moving to or doing business in the Valley.

The Town will be partnering with the Waitsfield Elementary School as a "group net-metered" solar array, building on the energy efficiency improvements made over the last couple of years and providing a secure, sustainable path for the school's electricity budget. The solar array offers both an educational tool for the school's curriculum – an example capturing elements of science, engineering and math.

The Town of Waitsfield and the Energy Committee have been aggressive in supporting both renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in the town. Recently, as part of previous CEDF and federal ARRA grants, the Town made efficiency improvements to all of its municipal buildings -- including insulation, air sealing, and heating system upgrades -- and became one of the state's first communities to develop a PACE district for financing residential energy improvements. The Waitsfield Elementary School in turn has made significant energy reductions through a combination of lighting retrofits in partnership with Efficiency Vermont, as well as operational improvements to its heating systems.

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In 2013, Vermont led the nation in solar jobs per capita and Waitsfield has been one of the leaders in the state for installed solar capacity installed per capita, so this project will continue to advance this welcome recognition of individual and now municipal efforts around our renewable future.

Sincerely,



Chris Badger
Waitsfield Energy Coordinator
Chair, Waitsfield Energy Committee



Sal Spinoso
Co-Chair, Waitsfield Energy Committee