

**STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

Petition of Vermont Transco LLC, and Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (collectively, “VELCO”), for a Certificate of Public Good pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248 authorizing upgrades to VELCO’s existing Middlebury Substation, located in Middlebury, Vermont

**PREFILED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL BUSCHER  
ON BEHALF OF VERMONT ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY, INC.**

*This document and associated exhibits have been filed ePUC*

January 17, 2023

Michael Buscher’s testimony provides an assessment of the Project’s potential impacts on aesthetics (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)) and addresses compliance with Public Utility Commission Rule 5.800.

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## **EXHIBITS**

**Exhibit Petitioner MJB-1    Résumé of Michael Buscher**

**Exhibit Petitioner MJB-2    VELCO Middlebury Substation Aesthetic Analysis Report**

PREFILED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL BUSCHER  
ON BEHALF OF VERMONT ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY, INC.

1     **1. Introduction**

2     Q1.    Please state your name, occupation and business address.

3     A1.    My name is Michael J. Buscher. I am a Vermont licensed landscape architect and owner  
4           of T.J. Boyle Associates, LLC, Landscape Architecture and Planning, 301 College Street,  
5           Burlington, Vermont 05401.

6

7     Q2.    Please describe your educational background and work experience.

8     A2.    I am a Vermont licensed Landscape Architect. A copy of my resume is attached as  
9           Exhibit Petitioner MJB-1.

10

11    Q3.    Have you previously testified before the Public Utilities Commission or in other judicial  
12           or administrative proceedings?

13    A3.    Yes. Within Vermont, I have testified before local development review boards and  
14           planning commissions, Act 250 district environmental commissions, the Vermont  
15           Environmental Court, and the Public Utility Commission. I have also provided testimony  
16           before the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee, and the New York State  
17           Department of Public Service and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

18

19    **2. Testimony Overview**

20    Q4.    What is the purpose of your testimony?

1 A4. My testimony supports the Petition by VELCO for a Certificate of Public Good (“CPG”)  
2 pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248 with respect to upgrading VELCO’s existing substation  
3 located at 522 Quarry Road, Middlebury, Vermont (the “Project”). Specifically, my  
4 testimony addresses aesthetics (30 V.S.A § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)) and  
5 addresses compliance with Public Utility Commission Rule 5.800.  
6

7 **3. Aesthetics (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5), 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8))**

8 Q5. Please describe the work you have performed with respect to the Project.

9 A5. I performed a visual analysis to evaluate potential aesthetic impacts due to the proposed  
10 Project. The work is described in the Aesthetics Analysis Report that my firm prepared,  
11 which is attached here as Exhibit Petitioner MJB-2.

12  
13 Q6. Will this Project have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics or the scenic or natural  
14 beauty?

15 A6. No. The Middlebury Substation is located along Quarry Road, which is accessed from VT  
16 Route 116 to the east and Seminary Street Extension to the west. There is a significant  
17 presence of existing electrical transmission infrastructure already at and surrounding the  
18 Project site, including the existing Middlebury Substation, a 345 kV transmission line,  
19 and 115 kV transmission line. Visible Project upgrades are limited to a modest expansion  
20 of the overall fenced substation yard, a modest change to the configuration of access  
21 drive, and replacement of the existing control building with a new and slightly larger  
22 control building. Project upgrades are compatible with the shapes, color, and materials of  
23 the existing substation and other nearby development. Visibility of Project upgrades

1 would be extremely limited, restricted to a few isolated locations along Quarry Road,  
2 near to the substation. Project upgrades represent a minor incremental change to  
3 transmission infrastructure at the Project site and would not result in a material change to  
4 the visual character of the surrounding area. The Project will not result in adverse impacts  
5 on the aesthetics and scenic or natural beauty of the area and therefore could not be  
6 considered unduly adverse.

7  
8 However, the Project will result in some limited removal of nearby vegetation, some of  
9 which was installed as mitigation plantings for past VELCO projects. To retain and  
10 improve upon the existing vegetation that would be removed, a new row of 18 arborvitae  
11 is proposed along either side of the reconfigured access drive. These plantings will help fill  
12 the gap within the existing row of arborvitae, replace any mitigation plantings removed to  
13 accommodate the Project, and further screen and soften views of transmission  
14 infrastructure from Quarry Road. The proposed landscape plan is Appendix C to Exhibit  
15 Petitioner MJB-2.

16

17 **4. Conclusion**

18 Q7. Does this conclude your testimony?

19 A7. Yes.