

**STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD**

Docket No. 6860

Petitions of Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (“VELCO”) and Green Mountain Power Corporation (“GMP”) for a Certificate of Public Good authorizing VELCO to construct the so-called Northwest Vermont Reliability Project, said project to include: (1) upgrades at 12 existing VELCO and GMP substations located in Charlotte, Essex, Hartford, New Haven, North Ferrisburgh, Poultney, Shelburne, South Burlington, Vergennes, West Rutland, Williamstown, and Williston, Vermont; (2) the construction of a new 345 kV transmission line from West Rutland to New Haven; (3) the construction of a 115 kV transmission line to replace a 34.5 kV and 46 kV transmission line from New Haven to South Burlington; and (4) the reconductoring of a 115 kV transmission line from Williamstown, to Barre, Vermont

**SUPPLEMENTAL PREFILED TESTIMONY OF  
ARTHUR V. GILMAN AND ERROL C. BRIGGS OF  
WILLIAM D. COUNTRYMAN**

**ON BEHALF OF  
VERMONT ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY, INC.**

The purpose of the testimony of Mr. Gilman and Mr. Briggs is to address the impact of the proposed Project improvements on air and water quality, water resources, the natural environment, wildlife habitat and agricultural soils.

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ARTHUR V. GILMAN AND ERROL C. BRIGGS OF  
WILLIAM D. COUNTRYMAN**

**ON BEHALF OF  
VERMONT ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY, INC.**

1 Q1. Please state your name, profession, and qualifications.

2 A1. Arthur V. Gilman:

3 My name is Arthur Gilman. I am an environmental consultant with the firm of William  
4 D. Countryman, Environmental Assessment & Planning, specializing in wetlands, rare  
5 species, wildlife, and other resource issues and permitting for projects such as the one  
6 currently proposed by VELCO.

7 Errol C. Briggs:

8 My name is Errol Briggs and I am an environmental consultant with the firm of William  
9 D. Countryman, Environmental Assessment & Planning. In this capacity I am involved  
10 with assessment of wetlands, wildlife habitats, rare species, and a number of other  
11 resource issues.

12

13 Q2. Have you previously filed testimony in this docket?

14 Q2. Yes.

1 Q3. Please state the purpose of your testimony.

2 A3. The purpose of our testimony is to address the impact of the proposed Project  
3 improvements on air and water quality, water resources, the natural environment, wildlife  
4 habitat and agricultural soils.

5

6 Q4. Have you familiarized yourselves with the areas where VELCO has proposed changes to  
7 its original filing?

8 A4. Yes

9

10 Q5. What investigation have you made concerning the proposed changes in regard to the  
11 Section 248 environmental criteria?

12 A5. We have reviewed VELCO's proposed changes and are familiar with their locations. We  
13 have seen the reroutes as shown in Tom Dunn's supplemental testimony and VELCO  
14 Exhibits TD-Supp(1)-1 through TD-Supp(1)-3. We have also reviewed the proposed  
15 new substation layouts as provided by David Boers in his supplemental testimony  
16 (VELCO Exhibit DB-Supp(1)-31 through DJB-Supp(1)-46).

17 We have investigated all of these areas using available resource maps. However,  
18 we have field investigated only a portion of the reroutes and substation sites. Other  
19 changes have been planned too recently for us to perform site investigations. In  
20 particular, snow cover has been too great to satisfactorily perform wetland delineations,  
21 or to search for rare, threatened or endangered species. Also, we have not yet obtained  
22 permission to enter all properties along the proposed changes.

23 We have field investigated the following portions: 1) the proposed relocated  
24 corridor located immediately north of Little Chicago Road in Ferrisburgh; 2) the  
25 proposed relocation site of the Charlotte substation; 3) the proposed Shelburne substation  
26 re-design; and 4) the site of the proposed Queen City substation re-design. These are  
27 discussed more fully in the memorandum of Gilman and Briggs dated 3 February 2004,  
28 addressed to Sandy Rowe of VELCO (VELCO Exhibit G&B-Supp(1)-1).

1 For the other locations, including proposed reroutes in New Haven, Vergennes,  
2 Ferrisburgh, Charlotte, and Shelburne, and the new substation location in Vergennes, we  
3 propose site investigations during the coming field season, i.e., mid- to late spring.

4 These sites are addressed, to the extent that we have examined resource maps and  
5 photos of the areas in question, in VELCO Exhibit G&B Supp(1)-1.  
6

7 Q6. What are your conclusions about these areas and the any impacts to them?

8 A6. We will discuss reroutes first. The only area in which we completed a field investigation  
9 is the reroute area north of Little Chicago Road in Ferrisburgh.

10 We originally investigated this route in 2002, because VELCO's plan at that time  
11 was to follow this corridor and only later did VELCO's plan change to follow the  
12 railroad. Now, VELCO again proposes to use this corridor.

13 This route crosses south slang, which is rated as significant for several of the  
14 recognized wetlands functions and values, including floodflow, fisheries, wildlife habitat,  
15 recreation, threatened species (which I discuss further, below) and aesthetics. Most of  
16 these functions and values are tied to the aquatic habitat itself, which will not be intruded  
17 upon by the project. Although not using this corridor would have allowed for natural  
18 restoration of the area, using the existing corridor at least minimizes any new impacts.  
19 The south slang itself is spanned in one long span, with no need to construct islands for  
20 pole placement. With the existing line in place, for example, we observed abundant  
21 wildlife activity, prime fish habitat, etc. We can conclude that upgrading this line within  
22 the same corridor - no cutting of forested edge would be necessary because it is more or  
23 less open at present - there would not be an undue adverse impact.

24 In addition to wetlands, we also observed an osprey nest on a GMP structure on  
25 the west side of south slang. Osprey is currently listed as an endangered species in  
26 Vermont, so construction of a new line through this segment may require an endangered  
27 species permit from the Agency of Natural Resources, depending on the impact of the  
28 construction on the osprey nest. We would note, however, that the Agency of Natural

1 Resources has proposed to delist osprey and there have been public hearings on this  
2 proposal. If osprey is delisted, it will no longer be considered endangered in Vermont.  
3 In any event, however, the construction could be timed so that it would not disrupt  
4 nesting or rearing, and could be mitigated by construction and placement of a new nest  
5 platform nearby.  
6

7 Q7. Can you comment in regard to reroute segments that you have not field investigated?

8 A7. Only to the extent that we have indicated in VELCO Exhibit G&B-Supp(1)-1. We  
9 looked at available resource maps for the areas in question, including Vermont  
10 Significant Habitat Maps, Vermont Significant Wetlands Maps, USGS topographic maps,  
11 and SCS Soil Surveys. Our conclusions are given in the attached report.  
12

13 Q8. In regard to substation sites, what are your findings?

14 A8. First, we delineated wetlands within the proposed 2-acre area of the new Charlotte  
15 substation in August 2003. However, the actual footprint of the substation may not  
16 intrude upon them. These include both Class Two and Class Three wetlands under the  
17 Vermont Wetlands Rules. Their primary function is water quality maintenance. The  
18 soils are agricultural soils of statewide significance, although limited by wetness. We did  
19 not find any other significant resources in this area, but note that we originally mapped  
20 some individuals of Torrey's rush, a listed threatened species in Vermont, in the ditch  
21 along the railroad, where access to the new substation may be located. During a site visit  
22 in August 2003, we observed these to be fewer in number than in 2002, probably due to  
23 increased competition from other plants. Nevertheless, the road to the substation might  
24 have to cross this area and might result in the need to apply for an endangered species  
25 permit from the Agency of Natural Resources for a "taking." It should be a simple  
26 matter, however, to create additional Torrey's rush habitat on this site, by further  
27 excavation of this ditch.  
28

1 Q9. Do you have any particular conclusions about this site?

2 A9. Yes. First, as noted in our original testimony, the expansion of the Charlotte substation at  
3 its existing site would be somewhat problematic, due to the value of the adjoining  
4 wetland, which would have to be partially filled for an expansion there. In our  
5 estimation, and as was discussed in our earlier testimony, that wetland has a high  
6 significance for water quality maintenance due to prior impacts, and also, in our  
7 estimation, due to the existing opportunity for input of sediments, nutrients and toxicants  
8 from upslope. Development there would also require intrusion into a seasonal stream  
9 buffer and possibly even relocation of the seasonal stream.

10 The newly proposed site avoids these difficulties. The wetlands here are of an  
11 “old-field” type and do not have any observed ongoing input of sediments, nutrients, or  
12 toxicants. Furthermore, by abandoning the old site, the opportunity arises to restore and  
13 enhance that site, which is closer to the village and could provide more wetland functions  
14 and values overall, if restored.

15

16 Q10. What are your conclusions in regard to the proposed Shelburne substation redesign?

17 A10. The proposed redesign is all within the area that we originally investigated. In our  
18 estimation, there are no new substantive resource issues in the area of the proposed  
19 redesign. As noted before, there are some wetlands on the westerly side of the substation.  
20 The site is also near McCabe Brook. It is, however, above the flood elevation as we  
21 understand it.

22

23 Q11. What are your conclusions in regard to the proposed Queen City substation redesign?

24 A11. In regard to the proposed Queen City substation re-design, we originally mapped all the  
25 resources on the property, so we can comment on the proposed redesign, which is all  
26 within the property limits. There would be some wetland impact, a change from the prior  
27 design where there would have been no wetland impact; however the wetland is a Class  
28 Three wetland and has little functional significance within the landscape.

1           Also, we would note that we observed several clumps of the rare plant species,  
2           glaucous bluegrass (*Poa glauca*) within the substation parcel; these were noted in June  
3           2003 when we searched the site of the previously proposed expansion area to the south.  
4           These were mostly at the southern and eastern edge of the forest patch that is now to be  
5           avoided. Therefore, these plants will be avoided, and there will be no impact.

6  
7           Q12. Does this complete your testimony?

8           A12. Yes, for now. We anticipate filing supplemental testimony in the spring, once we have  
9           been able to complete field investigations of wetland and other resources along the routes  
10          that we have not yet observed.

11