

NEWS RELEASE

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Southern Loop Community Working Group meets Thursday

STRATTON – The Southern Loop Community Working Group will meet Thursday, April 27, to continue to refine recommendations on how to best solve Bennington and Windham county electrical constraints.

The Community Working Group includes about two dozen members of the public who are helping Central Vermont Public Service and Vermont Electric Power Company refine recommendations made during a two-day summit in January. Thursday's meeting will be from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Wentworth Room at the Inn at Stratton Mountain.

The recommendations were based on a problem statement created by a Leadership Team, including legislators, environmentalists, business leaders and government and utility officials, last fall. It read: "Southern Vermont electrical transmission facilities have limited ability to support increased electrical demand and are unable to withstand failures of, or to have preventive maintenance conducted on, key components at present demand levels. The reliability of the regional bulk transmission system that connects southern Vermont, southwestern New Hampshire and northwest Massachusetts is at risk at existing demand levels, with increasing reliability risk as regional electrical demand levels increase."

Recommendations included increased energy efficiency programs, local generation, installation of new voltage-support equipment and a new backup transformer in Vernon, further study of two transmission options, and broad energy planning policy discussions. Suggestions also included increased energy education and efforts to reform the ISO-New England cost allocation process to include energy efficiency, demand-side management, and generation, in addition to transmission projects.

Thursday's meeting is one in a series the Community Working Group will hold throughout the two counties. There will also be open houses to keep the public apprised of the Community Working Group's efforts and gain more feedback from the public.

CVPS and VELCO began the public outreach effort that includes the Community Working Group to ensure the public had meaningful opportunities to provide insights and input on how to best solve southern Vermont's electrical constraints.

"Rather than propose solutions to regulators and then let the public weigh in, we are working with the public to develop a package of solutions, which we hope to propose to regulators late this year," CVPS spokesman Steve Costello said.