

**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 Florence Substation, located in Pittsford, Vermont

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

This document and associated exhibits have been filed ePUC

September 3, 2021

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 Florence 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 Architects and Planning Consultants, 301
5 College Street, 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 8040 Whipple Hollow Road, Pittsford, Vermont (the “Project”). Specifically,
4 my 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 Florence Substation is located along Whipple Hollow Road, which is accessed
16 from West Creek Road to the east. The area near the substation includes a variety of
17 industrial and utility uses, including the existing VELCO Florence Substation and
18 transmission lines, sub-transmission, and distribution infrastructure, and the OMYA
19 Florence processing facilities. Existing vegetation and landform significantly limit
20 visibility to nearby roads and properties, and partially screen the Project from locations
21 that would have visibility. Project upgrades replace an existing substation and would not
22 result in a significant increase in transmission infrastructure at locations where visibility
23 would be possible. As described in the attached Aesthetic Analysis Report (Exhibit

1 Petitioner MJB-2), since Project upgrades would have limited visibility, would be setback
2 from locations with visibility, and would result in a limited increase of visible
3 transmission infrastructure, the Project was found to NOT result in adverse impacts to the
4 aesthetics and scenic and natural beauty of the area.

5
6 I also reviewed the Project under the second part of the Quechee Analysis in the event the
7 Project was determined to result in an adverse impact. Based on a review of the Rutland
8 Regional Plan and Pittsford Town Plan, the Project does not violate a clear written
9 community standard. For similar reasons why the adverse impact would not be adverse,
10 the Project would not be shocking or offensive to the average person. VELCO has also
11 incorporated reasonable mitigation, including siting the Project within the context of
12 existing transmission infrastructure and utilizing landform and existing vegetation to
13 significantly limit Project visibility. A review of the Project under the second part of the
14 Quechee Test did not find the Project to violate any of the three factors to be considered
15 undue.

16 **4. Conclusion**

17 Q7. Does this conclude your testimony?

18 A7. Yes.