Vermonters Choose Clean Water
Two Communities Defeat Plans to Add Ammonia

Clean and safe drinking water is vital for life itself. It is taken for granted by most people, especially those who live in municipal systems.

With the EPA's continuing push to make water system operators add ammonia to chlorinated drinking water supplies, Vermonters are becoming involved in learning about water treatment, and working to have a say in the chemicals used to disinfect their water.

Three areas of Vermont have now engaged the issue of chloramination, which combines ammonia with already-chlorinated water to create a chemical reaction that effectively reduces the regulated disinfection byproducts of chlorine.

The first and so far only area to use chloramine is the largest water system in the state, the Champlain Water District (CWD). When the CWD began using chloramine in 2006, consumers started experiencing skin rashes, asthma-like respiratory symptoms, and gastrointestinal problems. CWD users showed cause and effect by going off the CWD water. In every case, the symptoms went away and returned when they started using CWD water again.

Seven years later, public health officials, state and federal regulators, the CWD system operators, and elected officials are still ignoring chloramine's serious health effects and continue to defend the use of chloramine. What should be a civil discussion in our communities, placing value on the needs of consumers, instead has become a "fight" over how to meet EPA regulations.

With VCE’s support, two communities are winning that fight, entirely because of citizen engagement.

In Grand Isle, the Water Board decided to use chloramine and chose to hold a vote that would pay for it, without disclosing the word chloramine anywhere in the bond language or at the informational meeting. Last July, citizens became informed and circulated a petition that was presented to the Water Board indicating a large percentage of the users did not want chloramine. To the surprise of the citizens, the majority of the Water Board then resigned. Since then, community members have run for and been elected to the Board, and the community is choosing to use Granular Activated Carbon (GAC), with its superior contaminant removal abilities. Not only will the Grand Isle water system meet EPA regulations, but consumers will be protected from emerging contaminants such as pharmaceuticals, caffeine and pesticides.

In Rutland City, last November residents lost a vote to use GAC. The Board of Aldermen inflated the cost for GAC on the ballot for the bond vote, so it was not a surprise that it failed. But the vote was much closer than anyone expected.

Not giving up, members of the group Rutland Citizens for Clean and Safe Water decided to put the use of chloramine to an up or down vote. They gathered the 700+ signatures necessary, and at the March election, voters overwhelming said “NO” to chloramine. 2,406 voted against the article, while 1,150 supported it.

We congratulate the amazing work of the Rutland citizens who, undeterred by the initial defeat, became the first community in the nation to vote “No Chloramine”.

VCE is now interested in revisiting the use of chloramine by the CWD. If you live in any of the nine towns served by the CWD and want to participate in a fresh effort to persuade the CWD to use an alternative to chloramine, email Annette at vce@vce.org.
Mont communities, what we do by bringing people together to learn about and address an issue that affects our communities. Often, as a result of individuals working together, we can be glad that we live in Vermont and you Elizabeth and Matt! This year, we are pleased to welcome Elizabeth Cooper and Sen. Ginny Lyons participated in a roundtable discussion to talk to us about our concerns to one where the voices of Vermonters who are neighbors of Iberdrola’s Hoosac Wind project outside of North Adams, Mass. whose health is being seriously damaged by 1.5MW GE turbines. And we are attempting to assist the neighbors of a medium size Northern Power Systems 100 turbine that was installed in Vergennes on state land at a federal jobs program site and is affecting the neighbor’s health.

As the world changes, it becomes increasingly obvious that we are all in this together. No issue has succeeded in uniting communities and creating a statewide network of people with common interests becoming involved in a specific development proposal, people run for Select Board seats, or volunteer to be on Planning Commissions.

Community engagement over bad proposals can be turned into a positive. We are excited to see that happening in Poulnoney, which is engaging in a 2020 effort to build community entrepreneurship and build creative local economies. Manchester is also engaging in a 2020 planning process.

Vermont is unique in having retained much of its small town rural character, but many forces have worked to erode the vibrant community that did exist, and can exist again in it becomes increasingly obvious that we are all in this together. No issue has succeeded in uniting communities and creating a statewide network of people with common interests.
1. 270 MW Natural Gas Power Plant
Power plant proposed next to high population area

2. 1080MW Natural Gas Power Plant
Big power plant proposed in area with air quality problems

3. Barre Landfill
Proposed solid waste landfill above residential area, schools

4. Berlin Pond Access
Court ruling leads to access issues

5. Goddard Biomass Heating Plant
Project proposed near residential neighborhood

6. C&D Landfill
Concrete company proposed construction and demolition landfill in depleted gravel pit in headwaters of Lake Parish

7. Cancer Cluster
Childhood leukemia led to identification of historical contamination and nearby health risks

8. Carrara Gravel Pit
Grandfathered gravel pit proposed for expansion, permitting issues addressed through stakeholder process

9. Carrara Quarry
Quarry expansion next to mobile home park with MTBE-contaminated aquifer

10. Cell Tower
Cell tower proposed next to homes with children

11. Champlain Water District
Addition of ammonia to drinking water creating health issues and increasing pollution to Lake Champlain

12. Chaves Quarry
Gravel pit blasts without permits

13. Communications Antenna in Montpeler
Removal of telecommunications tower in residential area

14. Crescent Orchards
Excessive pesticide spraying, expansion of packing facility to large trucking operation

15. Deerfield Wind
Prevented development of open-pit mine in scenic, environmentally sensitive area

16. Derby Line Wind
Two large wind turbines proposed near hundreds of homes, including in Canada

17. Elizabeth Mine
Omaya waste proposed for use at copper mine site

18. Fenn Gravel Pit
Gravel pit proposed next to mobile home park in residential area with high traffic accident rate

19. Formaldehyde Use at Large Farms
Formaldehyde use and disposal by large dairy farms

20. Georgia Mountain Wind
Four large wind turbines next to residences and farm, in area with high recreational activity

21. Grand Isle Consolidated Water District
Plan for change in water disinfectant led to new water board members choosing Granular Activated Carbon

22. Grandpa's Knob Wind
Proposal for big wind turbines on ridgeline with hundreds of people living nearby and high environmental values

23. Hillsdale Large Farm
Confined Animal Feedlot Operation proposed for beautiful valley with residential areas nearby

24. Ira Wind - Vermont Community Wind Farm
Huge wind project proposed for undeveloped 5000 acre tract surrounded by hundreds of homes

25. South Woodstock Slaughterhouse
Lamb feedlot and slaughterhouse proposed in residential area, purchased by community group to become successful Vermont Farmstead Cheese

26. Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
Attempts to address noise and air pollution from snowmobiles running close to homes

27. Lowell Wind
Huge wind turbines on ecologically sensitive mountain, constructed and creating noise and other problems

28. Mettawee School Spraying
Herbicide spraying on farmland next to school children

29. Northfield Ridge Wind
Wind project proposed for ridgeline with huge aquifer and thousands of neighbors

30. NPS 100/Vergennes Wind Turbine
Wind turbine creating noise, shadow flicker, glare and health issues for neighbors

31. Omya Danby Mine
Prevented development of open-pit mine in scenic, environmentally sensitive area

32. Omya Mineral Processing Plant
Air, water and noise pollution from poorly regulated mineral processing plant

33. Omya Rail Spur
Three mile railroad proposed through wetlands in residential and agricultural area

34. Outdoor Wood Boiler
Polluting outdoor wood boiler harming neighbors’ health

35. Pittsford Post Office
Developer planning to move post office out of village center

36. Pristine Mountain Springs
Seeking enforcement of permit conditions for state’s largest exporter of bulk drinking water

37. Propane Distribution Facility
Propane distribution next to day care center proposed

38. Rice Woods
Protecting extraordinary bobcat habitat and ecologically sensitive area from housing development

39. Rutland City Water
Citizens lead effort to say no to the use of chloramine in their drinking water

40. Rutland Railyard Relocation
Railyard proposed for same area as huge power plant

41. Seneca Mountain Wind
Huge wind project proposed for wild and environmentally sensitive area

42. Sheffield Wind
Huge wind project harming health of neighbors

43. Susie Peak Wind
Another ridgeline proposed as part of Ira Wind project, near Tinmouth Channel and residences

44. TAM Transfer Station
Expansion of transfer station, with air and water pollution

45. UniFirst Site Contamination
TCE contamination from dry cleaning operation

46. Vermont Egg Farm
Two expansion proposals defeated by collaborative efforts with neighbors and other groups

47. Vermont Pure Water Extraction and Bottling
Water bottling plant expanded operations without permit amendments, impacts to stream flows, trucking

48. Wells Mountain VELCO Tower
Telecommunications tower next to home/artistic retreat

49. Windham and Gratton Wind
Iberdrola proposing huge wind project near hundreds of residences on large undeveloped tract of land

50. Winstanley Biomass
Large biomass electricity generating plant proposed at the bottom of a bowl with residences and mountains above

PLUS:
Vermont Gas Systems Pipeline
Burlington to Middlebury & International Paper in NY

Southern Vermont Natural Gas Pipeline
Bennington to Rutland

VELCO NW Reliability Project
West Rutland to South Burlington

Wireless Smart Meters
Statewide electromagnetic radiation health impacts
The Wind "Moratorium Bill" Saga
The saga began early in 2013, when the new members of the Senate Resources and Energy Committee were selected. Four of the five were openly skeptical or opposed to ridgeline wind in Vermont, a huge change from last session. This was the single most important development of the session in terms of ridgeline wind and electric generation projects.

Several Senators created the initial draft of S. 30. The bill became known as “the moratorium bill,” as it contained a three year moratorium on large-scale wind projects. Other provisions were critical to us since we knew the moratorium language would be hard to pass in the Senate.

As the Committee began deliberations, VCE and our partners put together an extremely strong set of talking points, after three years of being shut out, were excited to finally be given a chance to speak.

Senators Joe Benning and Robert Hartwell led the way, holding a press conference before the legislative session scheduled during the summer and fall.

We are tracking the state’s regulation of the wireless smart meters’ internal communications system had been inadvertent. VCE’s Board Members Steve and Kathy Halford and Jennifer Vardeman presented detailed, scientific critiques of the report. The focus of the hearings was the presentation of a map VCE had commissioned that used GPS plotting to identify clusters of residents near wind turbines. An investigation into possible health effects of the moratorium bill saga.

VCE 2013 Legislative Summary by Matt Levin

Wind Noise Hearing in Senate
A few of our supporters who testified at the session hearing were having difficulty with the noise from their wind turbines. This was the single most important development of the session being a hearing in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee on the health impacts from wind turbine noise. No one from the Health Department attended the hearing. The only testimony from the “other side” was an insulting presentation by an aquarium owner about the noise by wind turbines in his New England town. renewable energy Vermont whose presentation was so bad, REI’s Director publicly apologized to the Committee for his remarks.

As our contribution to the hearing, moving testimony provided by a doctor who is seeing patients whose health is affected by turbine noise, a cardiologist speaking about the health effects of sleep disruption, and a Vermonter whose family, including small children, have suffered. Community members were clearly moved by the testimony. While the Committee chose not to follow up on the issue this year, the hearing was the first time wind-related health issues were formally considered by a legislative committee, and laid the groundwork for future action in the 2014 session.

Grassroots Advocates – Another Great Session
During the 13 session VCE built on our past success and expanded what can be accomplished in the House in support of legislation and to raise awareness about issues of concern in their communities. With support from our colleagues at Energy Vermont, especially Mark Whitcomb, we were able to provide mentoring and encouragement to a number of extremely effective citizen advocates from around the state. Not only did advocates speak directly to legislators and engage them in dialogue, but they helped to bring track committee meetings during the House session and provided support and encouragement to staff. Their involvement helped make VCE’s advocacy truly a team effort.

Regulars in the House State included David & April Howe, Ed and Kat Duke, Cameron & Sharon Reznick, Peggy Saphire, Jim and Ann Rademacher, Nancy & Kim Fried, Justin Lindholm, Steve Wright, Amy Cochran, and Ray Peeler.

Smart Meter Reports and Health Effects
After considerable delay, in April the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee took testimony about the Tell Report (the first phase of a series of studies to make a decision on how to test the health impacts of smart meters), and plans for an independent assessment of wireless meters, and plans for an independent assessment of wireless meters.

Bottled Water/Groundwater Extraction Tax
VCE worked with VNREC to rebuff a late-session effort to impose a bottled water extraction tax. As in past years where we have worked against taxing water, VCE opposes the tax as it commodifies a public trust resource. Putting a price on it means that large companies with money can argue they own the water.

VCE also filed a number of complaints about permit violations by Pristine Mountain Springs (PMS), the state’s largest bulk drinking water exporter. We are monitoring the permitting process that has been initiated for the PMS operation.

Energy Policy – NTAS, SPEED program, etc.
VCE staff attended numerous workshops on utility staff, regulators, and electricity producers as part of a Public Service Board process reviewing state energy policy and planning. In most cases, we were the only community-based voice in the room, and helped ensure the community perspective was present in discussions dominated by utility senior staff and generation developers.

Formaldehyde in Manure
VCE continues to work with citizens suffering from health effects connected to the spreading of formaldehyde-tainted manure in Franklin County. VCE staff persuaded the Senate Agriculture Committee to hold two hearings on the issue. Part of the focus of the hearings was the presentation of a map VCE staff created that used GPS plotting to identify clusters of people suffering health effects surrounding fields where the tainted manure is spread.

With the support of the Committee chair, Sen. Starr, the Committee requested an expert review of the Department of Health staff to look into the matter more closely. An investigation into possible patterns of health symptoms has been initiated. We await results.
Yes, I want to be a member of VCE and make a difference, too!

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Mail to: VCE, 789 Baker Brook Road,
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Members receive two newsletters a year.
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FUNDRAISING THANK YOUS

In the last six months, VCE's work has been supported entirely by donations from individuals!

THANK YOU!!

P.S. VCE has received no donations from fossil fuel, nuclear, or any other corporate interests.

VERMONTERS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT
789 BAKER BROOK ROAD
DANBY, VERMONT 05739

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This is VCE's 14th year!

Adding up all the donations we have received between 1999 and 2013 the total is $1,594,803

We looked at the budgets of VPIRG and VNRC for comparison.

VPIRG annual budget:
$1.4 million in 2012
$1.5 million in 2011

VNRC annual budget:
$891,781 in 2012
$1,036.60 in 2010

Comparison of Average Annual Budgets, 2010-2012

In 14 years, VCE raised and spent what VPIRG raises and spends in one year!!

VCE is a very lean organization that gets things done. Imagine what WE could do with a million dollars a year!!!

Join us for VCE’s Annual Meeting
July 11, 2013, 6:30 p.m.
Old Fire House, Tinmouth VT