

**The
Commons**

VOICES
Live!

*Public discussions by panels of experts from
business, academia, community organizations, media, and government
will discuss major issues affecting our towns and our region*

The path toward a

**POST-NUCLEAR
ECONOMY**

**Life after Vermont Yankee:
What's next?**

Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2013

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Hooker-Dunham Theater
139 Main Street, Brattleboro

About this program

This program was produced by *The Commons*, a nonprofit newspaper and website whose mission is to promote independent journalism and media literacy in Windham County.

Several weeks ago, when Entergy announced that it would be shutting Vermont Yankee in late 2014, we noticed a flurry of activity on social media and in the streets craving information and understanding of the constellation of issues and processes surrounding this issue: both the logistics of the plant shutdown and its economic effects.

In what we hope and anticipate will be the first in a regular series of similar gatherings about the VY issue and other issues in the region, we quickly assembled a team of people who could help take our community's questions and offer their answers.

Some ground rules we came up with for this forum:

- We want to take time defining the issues and listening to one another. You might hear the moderator or the editor jump in to ask for some clarification, or to get two speakers at least to try to reconcile seemingly contradictory information.

- We want to provide a model of respectful, civil discourse. We want these forums to be comfortable for everybody. We all share the problem of the post-nuclear economy, and we all have a stake in the solutions, no matter where we stand on the nuclear issue.

That doesn't mean that we want to compromise strong feelings. We hope our guest speakers and our audience will feel comfortable expressing any opinion.

- The audience was welcome to step up to the mike with questions.

I hope our audience walked away with just as many new questions — which, in turn, they'll pose to the community and to our readers in our letters pages in the days to come — and a new appreciation of the depth and breadth of our challenges.

As always, we hope you'll let us know what you think. Send your thoughts to voices@commonsnews.org.

Jeff Potter
Editor, The Commons



Chris Campany, executive director of the Brattleboro-based Windham Regional Commission, a regional planning agency whose jurisdiction is comprised of 27 towns within a 920-square-mile area of southeastern Vermont. The purpose of the commission is to assist towns to provide effective local government and work cooperatively with them to address regional issues.

Prior to his tenure at the Windham Regional Commission, Campany was an assistant professor of landscape architecture and graduate coordinator at Mississippi State University; deputy director of planning and zoning, and zoning officer, for Calvert County, Md.; deputy commissioner of planning for Orange County, N.Y.; federal policy coordinator for the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture in its work on the 2002 Farm Bill; founder and executive director of the Baton Rouge Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance in Louisiana; and a program analyst and presidential management intern with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.

He holds a bachelor of arts in political science and a master of public policy and administration from Mississippi State University, and a master of landscape architecture from Louisiana State University. He is a certified planner through the American Institute of Certified Planners.



Pat Moulten Powden, Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) representative and director of workforce development, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, joined BDCC, a non-profit, regional economic development corporation, in February after serving in the Shumlin administration for two years as deputy secretary and director of economic development at the state's Agency of Commerce and Community Development. She will assume her duties as executive director

of BDCC in December.

Prior to her appointment, Powden served for a short time as the vice president of public Affairs at the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. She was appointed commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor by Governor James Douglas in 2006, a position she held for four years, including the difficult years of the "great recession." Prior to her position as commissioner, Douglas appointed Powden to serve as the full-time chair of the Vermont Natural Resources Board and its predecessor, the Vermont Environmental Board.

Before her environmental regulation and policy work, Powden spent 22 years in the practice of economic development on the local, regional, and state levels. She has worked as executive director of three regional development corporations in Bennington, Windsor, and Orange counties. She also ran a local economic development office in St. Johnsbury and Lyndon.

In 1990, she was appointed deputy commissioner of the Vermont Department of Economic Development by Governor Richard Snelling and

subsequently appointed commissioner of economic development by Governor Howard Dean. She also ran her own economic development consulting company for several years.



Raymond Shadis has been an active nuclear safety advocate for more than 30 years. He served seven years on Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company's Community Advisory Panel on Decommissioning. He has been an invited presenter at U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission conferences, speaking on regulatory and technical issues, including Industry Voluntary Initiatives, Licensee Corrective Action Programs, and Citizen Involvement in Decommissioning.

In 2000, Shadis served on NRC's Initial Implementation Evaluation Panel for the new Reactor Oversight Process and was recalled to present in refining the Significance Determination Process. He has attended numerous American Nuclear Society and industry technical conferences on decommissioning and waste storage.

In 2001, he was a guest of Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company at a TLG Decommissioning Conference at Captiva Island, Fla. In 1999, he served on the Keystone Foundation National Dialogue on Decommissioning. In 2002, he completed a Department of Energy engineering tour of Yucca Mountain. In 2006, he received a fellowship to attend a conference on the aftermath of Chernobyl in Kiev, Ukraine. In 2008, he was invited to present at an international conference on decommissioning at Sosnovy Bor, Russia.



John R. Mullin is a professor in the Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, associate director of the Center for Economic Development, and former dean of the graduate school. His research and professional interests focus on industrial revitalization, port development, and downtown planning. A Senior Fulbright Scholar, Mullin has written or edited more than 100 book chapters, book reviews, technical reports, journal articles, and conference proceedings. He

is a retired brigadier general from the United States Army National Guard.



Mike Hebert, the vice-president of Green Mountain Billing Service, Inc., has represented the Windham-1 district in Vermont State House of Representatives since 2010. The district includes the town of Vernon, the location of the Vermont Yankee substation. Now in his second term, Hebert serves on the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee.

For 10 years, Hebert has served on the Vermont Natural Resources Board. He has served as president of the Vermont School Board Association-Southern District since 2000 and as a member of the Vernon Elementary School Board since 1985.



Olga Peters is the senior reporter for *The Commons*, an independent weekly newspaper serving southeastern Vermont. In addition to community news, Peters also covers economics, agriculture, mental health, and issues around Entergy's Vermont Yankee nuclear plant.

Peters has appeared multiple times as a panelist on *Vermont This Week*, Vermont Public Television's signature weekly public affairs series. VPT also interviewed Peters for its *Public Square Special: Impact Irene*. Her work has won awards from the New England Newspaper and Press Association.

Before acquiring press credentials, Peters worked in the film and television industry as a camera assistant and, later, as script editor and producer in the United States and United Kingdom.

Peters serves as president of VPT's community council. She holds a master of arts in screenwriting and producing for film and television from the University of Westminster, London, UK and a bachelor of arts in creative writing and literature from Alfred University.

Following is a preliminary transcript of the forum. We would be grateful to hear about, and to correct, any errors in the transcription.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, MODERATOR: I'm Randolph T. Holhut, I'm the deputy editor of The Commons, the source for independent news, views, and everything else. Welcome to our first edition of Voices Live! We hope this is going to be a regular event, where we're going to bring in people from around the area to talk about issues that affect all of us, and maybe all of us can learn something about what's going on. Tonight, we're talking about "The Path to the Post-Nuclear Economy: Life after Vermont Yankee — What's Next." And we've assembled a pretty good panel here tonight, and I'll let them introduce themselves, starting with Chris Campany of the Windham Regional Commission. We're going to let the panel for about two minutes talk about themselves and tell you their thoughts about Vermont Yankee.

CHRIS CAMPANY: I'm Chris Campany, director of the Windham Regional Commission. Thanks for having this forum. I know a lot of people are anxious to have a community discussion. At Windham Regional Commission, we're the regional planning commission for 27 towns in southeastern Vermont: all the towns in Windham County, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. We became involved in the discussions around the certificate of public good for Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee about seven years ago, and the commission purposefully took a neutral position on whether or not the plant should receive a Certificate of Public Good and whether or not it should continue to operate, specifically so we could facilitate the conversation among all sides within the region. This was particularly — we, in particular, participated in the Public Service Board hearings and represented ourselves pro se — we represented ourselves. We did this with all without a budget and relied heavily on volunteer commissioners, especially Tom Buchanan, who's here tonight; we have to thank him for his photographic and photographic memory. If you ever have a question about what was said and what page and summary, document file in the Public Service Board hearing, he could probably tell you exactly where it is. But our sole focus really has been on what should happen when the plant decommissions, and so when it was announced, we basically were in a position based on the evidence of the docket of what was in the best interest of the region when the plant eventually closed. So, glad to be here tonight to participate in this conversation.

PAT MOULTON POWDEN: Thanks, Chris. Thanks, Randy. I'm Pat Powden, and I'm the director of workforce development for Southeast Vermont Economic Development Strategies and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, soon to be executive director of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. That's a lot of words there. So I, too, want to thank you very much for having this forum and the chance to be here tonight and to be on this distinguished panel. We knew Vermont Yankee was going to close someday, so it's not a big surprise; but it's here now. So, having a

___ steps up the urgency of everything we've doing at BDCC and SeVEDS around economic planning for the future of this region. And SeVEDS has been engaged for a number of years in really assessing what's happening in our existing economy and how we are going to get our economy — which has been troubled for a number of years — back on its feet. The closing of Vermont Yankee exacerbates that.

But the good news is you have organizations in BDCC and SeVEDS who have been thinking about this for a while, and have a plan. And — most important — have been thinking regionally, working on helping this region come together and realize that our problems are shared, our assets are shared. So putting together a regional plan has really been the main focus. And we have that plan, and it will be unveiled on Dec. 5, so I invite everyone with advanced notice to an event on Dec. 5 to hear more about a conference of economic development strategy being developed for Windham County.

But one of our immediate concerns, really, is employees at VY. There's a lot of excellent talent there, which is an asset to this region; we want to retain as much of that talent as possible. We need those folks to stay in the region, particularly the young people, because there are plenty of us who are 50-plus, and we need more of us — those, excuse me — under 50.

We have a lot of work ahead. We need to continue to think regionally, leverage our regional assets and keep in mind, this is a marathon, not a sprint. None of this is going to happen overnight, but working together, we can accomplish a lot of good. And I think now's the time, regardless of your stripes, pro-nuke or anti-nuke, for us to come together and work on rebuilding that regional economy. I look forward to the discussion tonight, and I'm glad you all are here.

JOHN MULLIN: Good evening, my name is John Mullin, I'm a professor of urban planning at UMass Amherst. About 20 years ago, I got an assignment to do an assessment of the economic impact of the closing of Yankee Rowe. I wrote a paper on it. And I do an awful lot of writing, but it's incredible. The most popular computer downloading article I've had in the last five years is that darn article on Yankee Rowe 20 years ago.

The topic is certainly timely, and the topic, it's going to impact all of us, and I think there's a whole lot we can learn from places like Yankee Rowe and some of the others, and the thing of it is that it's not the end of the world, and we're going to pick up and go on. There are things that you can do.

My experience beyond that is I've done probably 50 different military base closings, and I've worked in about five to six mental hospital closings. So I'm very much aware of what I call the Big Bang, for lack of a better phrase, when it happens. And it takes all of us, picking up and organizing, getting our resources together. Hopefully, that theme tonight, we can all take away some benefit to help our communities. I'm happy to be here; thanks for inviting me.

RAYMOND SHADIS: My name is Raymond Shadis. I'm the technical advisor to the New England Coalition, on a consultant basis; I retired from that job in 2006, I think it was. And I've been a trustee off and on of the New England Coalition since about 1981. That organization, you should

know, has been involved with Vermont Yankee environmental and safety issues since the plant — well, actually, since before the plant was actually licensed in 1971. We have some skin in the game.

I also served as a delegate for the only environmental organization, environmental activist organization, directly involved with the decommissioning of Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station and served on a community advisory panel for about seven years. What I miss tonight — and it's not to lay blame or fault — what I miss tonight, particularly, is the presence of a representative from Entergy Vermont Yankee. And the reason may not be what you think.

Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company in negotiation, in conferencing, in communication with the community and also our own environmental organization in Maine, did, I think, its level best to soften the big bang, soften that initial impact. Workers at Maine Yankee were offered retirement packages, those who had built something toward their retirement. The workers where they could possibly be were retained in decommissioning. We dropped from 470 workers down to about 135 for the first couple of months, and four years later, we had 430 people on site, so that over the seven-year period, that impact was leveled out. A similar initiative took place with taxes and maybe we can talk about that.

MODERATOR: I'll also take the time to say we did invite representatives from Entergy to this panel, and they respectfully declined.

MICHAEL HEBERT: First of all, I'd like to thank Randy, Chris, and Leah for putting this together. It's a good event, and it's time we move on. As I've said to many people, what we've had in Vermont is somewhat similar to a civil war. We've had Vernon, VY, versus Montpelier, the North versus the South, however you want to phrase it. The Civil War's over. It's now time for recovery. And rehashing old battles will not get us to recovery. What we need to do is move forward in a positive fashion. I must say VY has reached out to our community to talk about what we are going to do for a tax base, how we're going to proceed forward. We've always had a very symbiotic relationship with VY, and we don't anticipate, while it won't be the same warm, fuzzy relationship it has been, while negotiating we're looking for a positive exit for the plant, and we don't see any reason why that can't take place.

I am the representative for Guilford/Vernon, which puts me in a strange situation, because if you poll, 90 percent of Vernon likes the plant, and only about 40 percent of Guilford likes it. So I've always had to dance the line there. But I think in all matters pertaining to the plant, I've been very fortunate; I've found members of both communities very receptive to a message and to be considerate and respectful in listening to all sides. So I've been pleased to represent all the towns. It's been a very positive experience. I've also served on the school board for 25 years, so I've had that relationship with VY.

I think what we have now is the opportunity to develop a recovery plan, and without that recovery plan, without looking at the continued plant, what we're looking at is we have a major employer with the impact of 1,288 employees leaving our state. Doesn't matter if it's a tool and dye industry, it doesn't matter if it's a nuke industry. We've lost a major employer. And

I'm hopeful that with Pat's leadership — I've worked with her before on the Natural Resources Board — she is very intelligent, very well versed — and I think we can look forward in a fashion that we will show other people that when you lose a major industry and you have tens of millions of dollars in the community, you can recover from that. And I'm very positive that we will come up with a forward-thinking recovery plan that demonstrates to other people that you can survive after losing a major employer.

Also, as I've said, I'm the rep for Guilford/Vernon, and I serve on the Natural Resources and Energy Committee in the House, which is a very appropriate committee for me. So I look forward to moving forward with where we're going to go. And I've also had contact from the speaker of the house asking for me to work with folks on this panel — Pat, in particular, and Chris — to develop what our needs are going to be from the legislature moving forward. So there has already been some pretty positive movement, and there has been a significant number of people that are saying they would like, it's time to recover, let's move forward in a very positive fashion, and I hope this is the first evening towards that goal. Thank you.

OLGA PETERS: Hello, I'm Olga Peters. I'm the senior reporter with The Commons, and I want to thank everyone on the panel for coming tonight and everyone in the audience — this is our first panel discussion like this, on a very important issue.

And as someone who has covered VY over the past four years, and also someone who has family who worked at Rowe Yankee who saw some of the impacts of that plant closing down on a family's income, I think one thing to keep in mind, as one of the other panelists mentioned, is, although it's really wonderful for us to learn from other towns that have had nuclear plants close, we have to remember we're not exactly like them, that our fate may not be exactly theirs. We have planning in place, we have — Vernon is located closer to job markets than some of the other rural communities have been — and also, maybe mixed blessings, we also had Tropical Storm Irene come through two years ago. And proved to ourselves then that when everything falls apart, we still what it takes to pull together and make something better happen. So, I think as much as there will be some very hard changes coming forward, especially for the people whose incomes will be impacted by the plant closing, I think we also have some opportunities as well. It will be really interesting for me as a reporter to go forward and cover all that. Thank you.

MODERATOR: OK, so for the rest of the evening, the format is going to be as follows. I'll be asking the panelists some questions for about 10 to 20 minutes or so, and then we'll open it up to the audience. The microphone is here on the side, so you can be heard, and so you can be heard on BCTV, which is also taping this forum tonight.

So I'll start off with what probably is Topic A all around New England, especially in places with nuclear plants: the front page of The Boston Globe today that had a story about Maine Yankee and their host town, Wiscasset, and how it's faring in the two decades or so since the plant closed. And it was the reporter who wrote the story for the Globe, David Abel, had hinted that this could be your fate, Vernon. Ray, since you were there, you saw it, you lived through it, and as you were telling us before the forum, the only

reason why you weren't in the story was because of an act of God [audience laughter], a lightning bolt that took out your answering machine, here's your chance, Ray, to tell us what the Globe got wrong.

SHADIS: What the Globe got wrong. Well ... the Globe really didn't quantify the economic impact, in particular — I guess, basically, they hit about three areas: a decline in business activity, a — taxes, tax increases, and, I don't know, I suppose, an overall fall in morale in the town. I realize that Maine Yankee closed, the decision to go into decommissioning was made in August of 1997, so if they haven't recovered yet, it's been a long time, and that's pretty serious business. The article points out quoting someone that taxes increased tenfold ... and that's approximately correct. When Maine Yankee was operating, it provided about 95 percent of the town's tax revenue. So homes that were being taxed \$200 a year are now being taxed \$2,000. And that's big. But if you look at the region, you find that the tax rate in Wiscasset went from the bottom quartile for comparable taxes in the region to somewhere a little less than the 50 percent mark. So really — I live just across the river; our taxes are quite high, and a lot of folks in the area can't help but smirk a little and say, this is real life, this is what it's like when you don't have a tax milk cow.

MODERATOR: You know, in Vernon...

SHADIS: I just want to, I just want to comment that region, region-wide, the towns in the area based on their valuation contribute to county taxes, supply the county taxes. And the tax burden for Wiscasset, the amount they pay in to the county taxes, fell by about 5.5 percent. So that had to be absorbed, the burden had to be absorbed by the other 24 towns in the county. It isn't like as bleak a picture as the Boston Globe had. It's more like the Boston Herald. [Laughter.]

MODERATOR: Representative Hebert, of course, in, VY accounts for about 50 percent of the tax base in Vernon.

HEBERT: Correct. At one point in time, it was approaching 90 percent. There's a great difference between our situation and that in Maine. One being we've already seen a tenfold increase in our tax on the education side because of Act 60. When Act 60 came into play, for all intents and purposes, Entergy came off our Grand List. So we've already had that kind of impact. We're looking at that impact on the town side. Also, it was not a 14-year early closure. We had lead time. And I must say, I'm very thankful for folks like Erna Puffer, who was the person in Vernon who negotiated much of the Yankee contracts. At her insistence, the town did create capital funds and reserves, and for a number of years, we put them in for the inevitable time when VY would close, we would look to have a stable tax base for about a decade. Act 60 changed that somewhat on the school side; all our reserve funds are depleted. We have very minor reserves for building and maintenance, and that sort of thing; there's still a little bit on the town side. So it's significantly different. And also, the communities themselves are different. We don't have our own high school. Maine Yankee had their own high school. So it's a different type of town; I think the impact will be different. It's going to be hard-felt. I think the main thing for

us in Vernon is to diminish the panic as much as possible. We don't want our real estate values to go into free fall, and all of that will take planning to calm the position on where we're going with all of this. And I think the town itself has known for a number of years that this is what was going to happen eventually. So it is not a shocker to us — it will not be pleasant, but it is not a shocker. And we're hoping that many of the folks who reside in Vernon now who are senior employees at the plant — long-time invested in the community, been there 25, some of them 30 years, their children are still in school or graduated from school, their mortgages are paid off. They very well may stay in town as a retirement home. So that's what we're looking for, to see how it all sugars off. And we won't know that this evening, we won't know that for another 18 months, because there will be people who will be retained at the plant until such time as the power goes off, and then there will still be a security force and a crew to monitor the plant. So 18 months from now, we'll have a better idea of what the picture is, but in between we need to be planning.

MODERATOR: So, Professor Mullin, you've had a chance to see both what happened in Rowe and what happened in Wiscasset. What do you think Vernon will avoid of the things that happened during the process in the other two towns?

MULLIN: I think the big difference is that Vernon's realizing that it's not alone. In other places, it really was a sense of loneliness. I don't think in the case of Yankee Rowe particularly that the region was prepared for the resources and skills that are there now, nor do I think the state of Massachusetts leaped to that notification. And above all, people didn't realize that this is not just a local problem, it's a national, federal, problem, and in fact now, I think there are plans put in place that are going to link us [inaudible]. In other words, this is a federal, state, regional, local issue, and people do not [inaudible]. And none of that [inaudible] at Yankee Rowe. The other thing is the sense of isolation they had at Yankee Rowe is quite different than what they have at Vernon; Vernon is part of not quite a metropolitan area, but it is indeed part of a lot of clustered communities that is inherently [inaudible]. Rowe is quite isolated, and so there are some fundamental differences. Above all, if you take a look not only at the closing of the nuclear power plant, the closing of military bases and many hospitals, there's a whole context of lessons learned, about how to handle these things that wasn't there 20 years ago. So I think, I think there's a different climate. I would agree there's much more [inaudible] than thought.

MODERATOR: And of course, for you, Pat, this is the ultimate plant closing. BDCC has had to deal with things in the past like the Book Press closing, going back to the '90s, some of the major employers in Brattleboro that left. But this is the ultimate plant closing problem for an organization like BDCC. What are the strengths of this region compared to other regions that might make this transition not quite so harsh as it's been for other places?

POWDEN: Well, this is the ultimate plant closing, and Brattleboro and Windham County have been through them before, and, as I said earlier, it's a marathon and not a sprint to recovery. And we have to look at continuing

to diversify our economic base, continuing to look at entrepreneurial opportunities, continue to help our existing businesses to grow, and we have a number of them that are growing. And I think this is one of the things that does differentiate this region. We are not isolated, as Professor Mullins says, in this neck of the woods; we're close to New Hampshire, we're close to Massachusetts, we share the economy of not just the Vermont region but those two states; we're close to Hartford, we're close to Springfield, Massachusetts, we're close to Boston. Those are some pluses. We've also got a very robust — and I'm not sure everybody understands the capability we have in broadband and the other technology that is being deployed literally every day in this neck of the woods. That's a huge asset that wasn't there at the time of a Rowe closing or possibly even a Wiscasset. We also have a very robust existing business community. And a very robust tourism economy, with two, three, arguably, major ski areas in this neck of the woods, and resources and assets that that can leverage for us. There's a whole lot of people coming up here skiing every weekend, or coming up here hiking, and they are entrepreneurs themselves, they are potential investors, they are potential young people who may wish to move here and take these jobs — I think these are some, these are many of the assets that we have talked about in the context of economic development strategy that we need to leverage regionally. And we need to keep in mind we are a region. Vernon is not alone, and Brattleboro is not alone, and we've already started initial conversations, we need to do more with our friends in Massachusetts and New Hampshire about collaborating on how we're going to address this situation. And the fact that as Representative Hebert has said, I really hope that a lot of our VY employees say, You know, this isn't a bad place to live. I want to stay here, I want to figure out how to make a career or continue my career here. And I think there are many opportunities for us to do that.

MODERATOR: You've had your foot in both these worlds in economic development and the nuclear world, and one of the things we've talked about in our office is the disparity of incomes in Windham County and the rest of Vermont, and the rest of New England, and you kind of wonder with some of the figures we've heard in the past couple of weeks from the Downtown Action Team about the wideness gap in income. And these were numbers that were obtained before the announcement that VY was closing. What hope is there for a scenario like Pat just outlined for those assets, the tourism economy, the existing economy here in Brattleboro, to be leveraged maybe enough to pull some of the slack from VY?

PETERS: Just to give folks context, what Randy's talking about numbers: Windham County has some of the lowest wages in Vermont and in New England, compared to the average give-or-take salary at Vermont Yankee is about \$100,000, and so it is a huge gap between a lot of the wages being earned at VY versus a lot of the jobs anyone could get in this area. And to add to the trouble, if you move just over the border to Keene or to Northampton, Mass., you could very easily up your income by thousands. And so it can be a retention problem here.

I think, as Randy asked, about hope for the future: I think that's why it's so crucial that we have some of these economic development actions happening right now is because Vermont Yankee closing may not cause

any new economic problems, but it's going to definitely exacerbate what we already have as problems. And the other kind of issue that we run into in this region is that we've got as number of towns with what I call mono-economies. So Vernon is set up around Vermont Yankee. Wilmington and Dover, their economy is set up a lot around Mount Snow. And when you have a mono-economy, it is very hard for the economy to absorb the changes, because there's less of a buffer.

And so, getting back to the economic strategies and the region, it's important, I think, that they're working on a regional level. And so that other towns — say, Brattleboro and Wilmington — can work at attracting new businesses, new entrepreneurs, people who love in the [inaudible], people who love to play at Mount Snow who now make this your full-time life, near the mountain, and get to work where you can play, I think is the tagline. So I think it will require a lot of work, but I do think it's a possibility that strategies like that can make a difference.

I think it's also crucial, if you don't mind, Randy, if we turn it over to Professor Mullin for a minute, because I asked him earlier when we met how does a region raise its incomes? How does it raise its wages? And I think that's a really important nut that we have to crack for this region.

MULLIN: I think there's a little bit in the conversation we had before the forum, looking at the various types of communities, and there are two ways, in the absolute sense of thinking about the economy, there are regions or places that make things, and then regions that go out and think of things. Making and thinking are two different things. And I wrote down some key words here in talking about this. On the making side, you have things like "engineering" and "building" and "enterprising" and "manufacturing," and on the thinking side, you have "teaching," "understanding," "nurturing," and the "comforting." And those words are all very laden. They also define directions in which communities and regions go after some economic situation's occurred. It's up to you how you choose. If I know I'm going to create something like — expand the Retreat, for example, you're going to get one set of jobs. Some of them are going to be high-paying, but many of them are going to be less high paying. If I go into manufacturing, the multiplier is much higher. And what it says, in communities there has to be some balancing, but what happens is communities will go and say OK, what is the easiest to get? This is something that you have to be wary about. And the thing is, over time, you go on the skill sets of making things and the engineering and those with the multipliers, and you'll see that your job base climbs.

Your culture — changing a culture is very, very difficult. If you're talking about Northampton and Amherst, where I'm from, we are comforting, we are nurturing, we don't like to make things. We don't have a strong industrial base, and we're very happy with that. But the thing of it is, you have to decide a sense of [inaudible]. Trying to find that way to the middle is not easy.

POWDEN: SeVEDS has defined this as, and as Olga has identified, this wage disparity issue, and there are strategies that we are pursuing to address that. And a lot of that comes in that still-development piece, and to Dr. Mullin's point about the making things: We make a lot of things here,

and we want to make more things here. We've also identified that we've had a large percentage of the population in this region that are non-wage-earners. They're either retirees or living on transfer payments. We need to shift that. We need to have more people connected to the economy. We also need to have a higher skill level. And part of why I am here initially working on workforce is to, recognizing that we have a lot of employers here with good jobs who cannot find the talent. We have a lot of talent that do not have the skills. So connecting those dots and trying to figure out how we can number one, fill in those skill gaps for our existing workforce, but number two, as we develop that pipeline to today's kids that are in the fourth grade and eighth grade and tenth grade, and help them understand the career opportunities that are here, and building career pathways that are very clear, where they can launch right in to jobs. GS Precision is making a huge investment in an apprenticeship program, because they recognize they can't find the talent and they are willing to grow it here. We need to do more of that, and the fact that we have six colleges in this region is a huge asset. And I think a lot of the wage disparity is because there _are_ a lot of thinkers down in Northampton. And we want to be the makers as well as the thinkers through our colleges. So these are all elements that are going to come together and slowly raise those wages for our region. But we need to do it faster, clearly.

MODERATOR: And then there's the 800-pound elephant in the room, and that is that when the plant [], what's going to happen once the day comes in the fall when the lights-out-party's-over-start-cooling-down-things, start pulling out the fuel rods. Which direction's it going to go? SAFSTOR? [Boos from audience.] Or the one that sounds like rat poison, DECON? [Laughter.] Chris, you've been working on this with Windham Regional. How do you view [inaudible]? Windham Regional seems to think the worst thing that could possibly happen to Windham County economy is to have that place tied up for 60 years where you can't do anything with it.

CAMPANY: Well, DECON certainly represents the softer landing. If you look at — what we rely on, just so you know, are interviews and filings with the Public Service Board docket we're on. What they say is going to happen when they close. And by their own information that they provided, the estimate is that within I think 9-12 months of closing, they'll drop from approximately 620 employees to about 250. Now, that'll gradually taper off, but if you go to the immediate decommissioning, the employment levels during that phase, which will be like five to seven years, will ramp back up to 300. Now, if you defer that, if you go straight on into SAFSTOR, you're looking at about 50 to 60 people working at the site, mainly security. And so the softer landing is DECON, and if you read the Connecticut Yankee closure website, if you read the Maine Yankee report, if you look at the United Nations nuclear organization, lots of — I think even the whole industry documents — the preferred industry method is DECON, immediate decommissioning. Because in part, you're able to retain those legacy employees, the people who know that plant, who know where everything about it is, so they can assist in dismantling. Under SAFSTOR, you lose those legacy employees. And so, our issues, our suggestion is that DECON is in the best interest of the region because it would represent

a softer landing, fiscally, economically, real-estate-wise, virtually all the different impacts that have been discussed. And the other issue, of course, with Yankee, is they're going to do the opposite, SAFSTOR. And that's why we're trying to take the Public Service Board process to say — we've never said the plant should stay open or close, but we've said, we're going to ask that based on the information provided us, immediate decommissioning is the best option.

MODERATOR: Ray, what kind of leverage does anyone have to make the process move toward the closure of the plant that would serve everyone's needs in terms of not tying it up for 60 years, being able to get it to green-field status as soon as possible so there's another use for it? Are we locked into whatever Entergy says right now?

SHADIS: [Inaudible]

MODERATOR: Well, I guess it is. [Laughter.]

SHADIS: The entire question of decommissioning, and economic recovery, and all of the impacts that come with the closing, are too big not to be made in concert with all of the interested parties. There's a process that worked for us very well in Maine, and that was to identify what our common interests, broadly. It could be everyone is very interested in a timely, quality decommissioning. But we've run into a few problems when it comes to defining what "timely" is. And what "quality" is. To what standard will this plant be cleaned up? The Connecticut Yankee, Maine Yankee, Yankee Rowe were all cleaned up to the radiological cleanup standard $2\{1/2\}$ times more strict than what the federal government allows. Do, you know, Vermont residents, the Vermont environment, deserve less? I don't know. That's a question that you have to come to.

The company is always making business decisions. Maine Yankee [inaudible] — and, by the way, with Entergy management — chose to go to prompt decommissioning, the DECON option, because it was in the long run cheaper, and more efficient — more efficient in part because of what Chris brought up about having employees there who were there when the plant was built. They know how to build it, they know how to take it apart, they know where it was modified, they know where the contamination is, so you don't have to go exploring. There was a huge cost savings that came from involving those employees. So this is all really part of being able to change your view. There are no enemies here. There are opponents. You can sit down at a table, you can break bread with your opponents and discuss what concerns you have in common. I think personally that the choosing the SAFSTOR option with the idea that the company is going to make a lot of money over 60 years on these investment funds is another bad business decision on the part of Entergy. And I can't wait to have the opportunity to talk to them about that.

MODERATOR: How do you think Entergy can improve communications with the town and with the region? [Audience disruption.] Because a lot of this is going to depend on a good two-way dialogue with Entergy and the towns and the region and the state and the feds.

SHADIS: Let me comment on that quickly, if I may, OK? I represent the opposition in terms of Entergy's continued operation or operation-business-as-usual [inaudible], and I've never had a problem sitting down and negotiating with Entergy corporation. You know, the breaks during the Public Service Board hearings and we would get together and talk shop. And I think it really has to be at that level. There's a certain mutual respect that needs to be developed and then the identification of common interests, and I think that companies have to be educated. I think we did that job in Maine with educating Maine Yankee and its Entergy managers to the notion that they were in a very green state, in one of the greenest parts of the country. And we had to get some environmental adjustment.

Anyway, I think the burden is not Entergy's. I think largely the burden is with the affected population.

MODERATOR: Would you agree with that, Mike?

HEBERT: To some extent, yes, I do. But I think the relationship between Vernon and Entergy has always been good, as I said earlier. We've never had difficulty negotiating. I think what may have contaminated the environment, so to speak, is that rather than negotiating, for a number of years, we've been litigating. And my concern here is whether it's DECON or SAFSTOR. It needs to be a negotiated item. And we need to stop litigating. It's time to really negotiate and not litigate, and my concern is that we're going to come to loggerheads with the state and Entergy, and we're going to be in court again to decide which way we're going to go. I would much prefer a negotiated settlement, as Ray indicated, where both parties can sit down, all parties can sit down, to see what's in our best interest. We have common goals and common needs.

One of my greater concerns is the failure of the federal government to have a facility to take the waste from the plant. As long as dry cask storage is there, the use of that land will be limited. You're going to have to have a perimeter fence, you're going to have to have security force. So I have grave concerns, that I'm less optimistic about the fed moving forward than I am our region, the state, and Entergy moving forward to a common goal.

POWDEN: If I might, Randy, too. We've already started a dialogue with the local management of Entergy around concerns about workforce and how we assess, if you will, what kind of talent we have there, credentials, education, security clearances, etc. And talking with them about what are we doing with SeVEDS? And what is the CEDS? And what are the strategies? And we want to keep that dialogue open and really basically say, "What's past is past. What needs to happen now is we need to talk about the future and how we're going to move forward together."

But for Representative Hebert's point about the whole decommissioning discussion. I get the sense they're expecting that to be a discussion, and I tend to agree a negotiated settlement would be a whole lot better, to everyone's benefit. Thus far, we've already had a pretty good dialogue with them and we'll continue that.

MODERATOR: Let's see if we can have a good dialogue in here now with your questions. So if you have them, go to the microphone on the side of the room, and identify who you'd like to ask question to, and they'll have

a couple of minutes to respond. Go ahead.

CHAD SIMMONS: Hi there. Thanks, everyone.

MODERATOR: Identify yourself.

SIMMONS: Yes, my name is Chad Simmons. I live here in Brattleboro. I've actually been thinking about this question for a couple of weeks now, what I would ask. It's been touched on a little bit, but I wanted to put it in the language of social justice rather than economics. And I think, while I agree in part with Pat about the idea of moving forward, I think it's important to understand the context in which a lot of these decisions are being made. My question is, how do we move forward in order to achieve justice, in order to achieve the values that are reflected in this room, in this community? And I think the professor spoke about it a little bit in terms of the values, the values-based, the value-laden language. And I think it's really important for us to answer, or to ask, those questions first, before we say how do we replace the jobs, how do we bring more money to our economy. And we ask ourselves, what is it that we want? What kind of community do we want? What's going to build resiliency? What's going to build community? And so, talking about it in terms of justice rather than jobs, or only economy and only money, because what happens then is you have —. I guess my question is, actually, how do we create that conversation? How do we talk about these issues in the form of justice rather than jobs?

POWDEN: Well, that's an interesting question. I think we've been having a conversation for a while about what do we want our community, what do we want our region to look like, "what do we want to be when we grow up." That's really what the regional forums and other conversations we're having around the CEDS and around the SeVEDS has been all about, and participation has been pretty good, regionally, and we've found some interesting differences around the region about expectations and wants, but clearly messages we want a good economic future for ourselves and our families, we want economic stability, we want higher wages, lower taxes, lower cost of living, good quality of life, environment, healthy ... we want all the things that we are enjoying to some degree, but we want more of that. So it's an interesting point on the "justice" question — I guess I'll defer to Professor Mullin or ...

MODERATOR: We'll let Olga jump on this one.

POWDEN: I just want to piggyback, too. I think Olga brings up the point of survival of Tropical Storm Irene and how we did come together as a region and a community, and this is another one of those marathon/sprint-type opportunities. It's yet another opportunity for us to have that conversation about how we're going to collaborate and find a way to be better than we were.

PETERS: Thank you. This might be slightly off topic, but it's something that as someone who covers economics I feel rather passionate about, so I'm going to bring it up, is that I think one of the things about discussions moving forward, economics, jobs, social justice, welfare — I think we need

a slight shift in perspective and the way we approach the discussion. I think often we approach the discussion of, OK, well, if we talk about economics, then it's all about money. If we talk about social justice, then that's something else. And what it is, is that I don't think we should be operating from the assumption that they are two different things. Because economics is about how we use our resources. And how we use our resources depends on our priorities. And our priorities come from our hopes and our dreams and our desires and what we want our community to be. And so I think, going forward, that's kind of part of what we need to drop, is assuming that it's either going to be social justice or economics, it's going to be good jobs or everyone have a job.

It's also why I come back to why I think we need a diverse economy, so that there is room for everybody. There's room for the artists. There's room for the manufacturers. There's room for everybody across the spectrum.

So that's my soapbox. I will get off it now. [Laughter.]

MODERATOR: Chris, jump on.

CAMPANY: So two things on the social justice side of the equation. One of the things that I hope will happen that we can take from the SeVEDS process is that it's very good that it's happening region-wide. One of the challenges has been actually getting more people to participate and actually engage in the conversation who, frankly, are wage- and salary-dependent. And hopefully, The Commons, the Reformer, everybody in this room will encourage people to engage in that conversation. Because oftentimes it's been organizations or [inaudible] talking about [inaudible]. I'm a former community organizer myself, and my task was to engage people. Anytime we found ourselves talking about, we realized, those are the folks who need to be in the room speaking for themselves. And that's the challenge in this region, and that's because, frankly, I've never been in a place where economic need, economic sustainability has been so little talked about. We have a lot of other priorities, and that has got to become more to the fore. It's actually because, you know, Vermont's unemployment rate is relative low, but I suspect it's because when you leave your job, you leave. So that's what makes us look good relative to other places. We need to figure out the dynamic where people can stay who want to stay and age in place here, and you're not here because you can afford to be here, you're here because the economy can actually support you.

I want to get to real quick to the social justice issue in the decommissioning discussion. It's important to understand that under the NRC rules, basically the plant has the ability to decide how it's going to close. And so what everybody says here is right: there needs to be a conversation, an open conversation, between the community and Entergy, and hopefully have a meeting of the minds about what is in our community's, all of our community's, best interest. There may need to be a national conversation. Actually, there probably has to be, and we can help lead this. There are five plants that have announced they are either, that have either closed or have announced they are going to close, five reactors, rather. Two in San Onofre, Kewaunee in Wisconsin, Duke Energy and Crystal River, and Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee. And there are expected to be a number of others of this older generation plant closing.

I don't know when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission wrote the rules that they were anticipating a slew of plants closing and possibly going into SAFSTOR for 60 to 80 years as decommissioning funds grow, as that makes these corporations look more cash-positive, as smaller subsidiaries are left holding the bag for eventual decommissioning of the plant, and the operators themselves actually own their own decommissioning companies. And so does this become a discussion about what's in the best interest of the host community where the plants are, or does it become more of a discussion about what's in the best interest of the corporate finance to kind of cycle the money back into the parent corporation? And so there probably needs to be a national policy discussion about what's in the best interest, without even getting into health, safety, and welfare, what's in the best interest of the local community, what kind of influence can and should they have, just simply for orderly redevelopment of what are oftentimes very valuable industrial properties. And just actually giving communities access right now. Once the plant comes up with a plan, you have a couple of public hearings, that's all they're required to do. And so, there's a social justice element to that. And hopefully, Entergy will recognize the need to have that conversation. Because what they decide to do here is probably what they're going to decide to do over at Indian Point. Frankly, the whole industry probably needs to become aware of how they're going to deal with this. And we need to have that policy discussion about what's in the best interest of the nation.

HARVEY SCHAKTMAN: My name is Harvey Schaktman. I have one suggestion.

MODERATOR: Yes.

SCHAKTMAN: My suggestion is, how about ceding the territory concerning Entergy's headquarters on Old Ferry Road, that as essentially a facility that's totally available, and also extremely skilled engineer workforce that already exists. Encourage Entergy to convert their headquarters into some kind of sustainable energy, green energy, kind of discovery center to develop new kinds of forms of safe, green energy.

And my question is, what I'm hearing is you're assuming that there's a process of negotiation that will take place. As if the regulations that exist now allow a community to have something to say about what the corporation's gonna do or say. My sense, and I may be wrong, is the NRC lets them go into decommissioning, in which they have to submit a plan, has to be approved, etc. Or they can go into SAFSTOR and pick the length of time. And those are two options that, from what I understand, are legally available to them right now. And I don't think the community has anything to say about that. Now, tell me if I'm wrong, because that would help.

HEBERT: I'll attempt to speak to this. We're optimistic that we can, we've always been able to negotiate things with Entergy, whether it's our tax base or several items that we've dealt with. You're certainly correct that they have the option of what they want to do. But it's up to us to take the steps to approach them and say, "This is what's in the best interests of our community." And the folks in control, in power, of the VY plant, not in Louisiana, have already stated that they want to go out with their heads

held high, in a good and proper fashion. So we're going to call them on that, say, "This is what we need to have happen," whether it's retaining employees, things we'd like to see happen. And I think that's what we have to work with.

SCHAKTMAN: But there's no power.

HEBERT: We don't have a lot of power, but what we will rely heavily on is our past relationship and their desire to retain somewhat of a positive—

SCHAKTMAN: This is also a corporation that has fought the state of Vermont time and time again and lied under oath. You're very optimistic, and I know it's going to be good to go in with a positive attitude, but I think historically—

HEBERT: —As—

SCHAKTMAN: —we see a different kind of behavior from this corporation.

HEBERT: —as I've said earlier, it's time to not fight the old battles. It's time to move forward in a positive fashion, and you may believe they lied, you may believe they've been dishonest... It's a new day, and we've got to move forward, and from our position, we need to take the most optimistic position possible. And that is that we _will_ hold them to the standards that they said they are going to leave with and apply whatever pressure we can, because the reputation you leave with here will carry into the other plants throughout the fleet. And if they leave here with a big black eye, it won't bode well for them in other communities. So we do have, if nothing else, a PR lever. But legally, we don't have a lot to stand on.

MODERATOR: Yes, sir.

LEO SCHIFF: I'm Leo Schiff from Brattleboro from the Safe and Green Coalition, and my question is really for all of the panelists. I'm not convinced this civil war is really over. It would be nice if it were, but I think that the interests of the community and the corporation really diverge in terms of SAFSTOR versus decommissioning [DECON]. And what I really want to know: Is there any panelist here, and I look to you the most, Mike, who will not fight vigorously for the decommissioning [DECON] option?

HEBERT: Well, first of all, what I would have to do is ascertain what Vernon wants to do as a community. We're talking about that, meeting about that, over the next several weeks. In fact, I'm meeting tomorrow with some people to talk about where we'd like to go. Certainly there are different options to be taken. If you look at SAFSTOR, there may be, I'm not sure financially if the plant there would get a little more property tax, I'm not sure how all that plays out, I think we need to study that situation a little more. But the bottom line is, do I really want a situation where it's my great-grandchildren that are decommissioning the plant? I'm not sure I want to go there. But at this point in time, I can't say what is the better option from our end. But I do want what will be in the best interest of Vernon, and if it's decided that it's decommissioning, then that's the way I will go. I'm the representative for Guilford and Vernon, and if that is the

best outcome for Vernon, that's what I'll represent.

SCHIFF: Even if it doesn't dovetail with the interests of the rest of the region?

HEBERT: Well, I'm not sure if it would or wouldn't. As we've said, Vernon is not an island. I mean, we fit within the region, so when I say what's in the interest of the community, I mean the broad community. So it's going to be, yes, Vernon's got to have some goals and objectives, and we would like [] as soon as possible, but also we need to be looking at what is the total best interest of the aggregate.

SCHIFF: How about the other panelists, starting with the professor?
[Laughter.]

MULLIN: Thank you very much. [Laughter.] Your question's really a good one, and it's very heavily [inaudible]. The first question is deciding what is the appropriate level of decision-making. Is it the economies of the region? Is it the state? Is it the fact that 300 workers who live in Massachusetts have a stake in this? And that is something that clearly in the realm to me of the leaders here. They have to decide what it is. Sometimes you come into a project, you decide too small a scale, you get in trouble; sometimes, you get too large and miss the fact that tons of people are impacted severely. There's no one-size-fits-all. And I applaud the response of the representative. Look, we all know about taking no-new-tax pledges, all right? I don't think asking a rep on this panel to come and choose now is the appropriate [inaudible].

The first thing is, get the appropriate scale. Then we get the appropriate intensity. And at that point, you can go forward. I've seen too often when things like this are done in a vacuum, and the help that these communities should have is not forthcoming. So, this is something that has to be done very, very carefully, in a very transparent way, in a way where those people impacted really have a say.

MODERATOR: If I can jump in here: Before the talk tonight, we were discussing about the possibility of using Vernon as a test case for the rest of the country that's going to be facing this problem in other towns shutting down their aging reactors.

MULLIN: At UMass we have the phrase, "If I ran the zoo, what would we do?" And in this case here, if I was in charge, the very first thing I would do is I would get, I would call a national conference here in Brattleboro, of every nuke across the United States. Those that have closed, those that are closing, those who are there. Define the best practices, the weakest parts of it, and have this put on your NPR station, have your senators and your rep here, and the goal of it — you can get on the national agenda very, very quickly. We have something, the Office of Economic Adjustment, which covers base closings. Why can't the Office of Economic Adjustment look at nukes? And the framework's all there, and the thing of it is, it shouldn't be the burden of Vernon, the county, or the state. And the fact is, you all have a consequence, but so does the fed, and so does the country.

And having this conference, having them come out and the idea of creating a manual of best practices, is clearly, it's time. Rather than having these single people going out and saying, "I've gone to Maine, this is what

happens," "I've gone to Connecticut," it's time to get a playbook here that determines the art of the possible. [Applause.]

CAMPANY: One thing related. We may be at the tip of the spear because I'm not sure what it's been in other communities that have actually looked into what the options are going to be now that your plant's announced that it's closed. Looking at press, not so many in Florida, because they already have a SAFSTOR reactor, because that's a multireactor complex, there's a coal facility on that site, too. But Kewaunee, Wisconsin, that took them by surprise. And there may be other communities that really had — you know, Vernon commissioned us to develop a resiliency plan for them, for when they closed. I'm not sure to what extent that's happened nationally, and what John's suggesting, I think, is a very valid strategy, because we really do need to have a national conversation about what the implications are when your plant announces and closes. The people, the communities realize how officially under, beyond negotiations, informal negotiations, how much authority they really have, how much input they're authorized to have in the process. I think they would be shocked. And the context has changed now. I suspect — I wasn't there, but I suspect that when the rules were drafted, they were thinking a plant would close periodically, [inaudible]. And now we're going to be looking at I don't know how many we're looking at realistically closing in this generation because of the gas prices putting them at an economic disadvantage, but it's not a small number. To me, it's also a profound national, global policy kind of dialogue. So I think, you know, Vermont leading the discussion would be a really good [inaudible].

POWDEN: To your question, Leo, I would just remind folks that SeVEDS did have a post-VY committee that filed a report and went on the record in support of full dismantling and decommissioning of the plant. I, too, agree with the case-study approach and really feel we have an opportunity here to study and look at the implementation of the strategies and activities we're going to undertake and really determine what works, what doesn't work, in rural areas. And I do think there's an opportunity for conversation with Entergy to say this is not going to be your first rodeo, your last rodeo, rather. So chance for you to work collaboratively with us to figure out how you go out on the white horse, not the dark horse, and the vibe I'm getting thus far is a willingness for that conversation. But we need, need the kind of conference that John is suggesting. I mean, five nuclear power plants already announced is a lot, and again, I'll go with the analogy of Tropical Storm Irene. FEMA learned a lot when they came to Vermont, and they've changed some of their practices. We have organizations like the Small Business Development Center here in Vermont that wrote a pre- and post-disaster planning book where none existed before — that is now being used heavily in Colorado, and in New Jersey and New York post Hurricane Sandy. So we have a similar opportunity to lead in this area. So I love the idea when you put it on the table, John; I do think that whether it's a conference or whether it's an opportunity for us to be a case study, a test case, with or without Entergy, frankly, we have an opportunity to do that and to have a national conversation about the fact that this is a base closing, only it's different. We don't have the asset of the buildings

and the land that any kind of military base leaves behind, which gives us an even greater challenge. It is time to engage with the NRC and others with, "What are we doing about this, folks, because this is not the last time this nation confronts this issue."

MODERATOR: Mr. Shadis?

SHADIS: I would like to briefly address the questions from the two last questioners. One, on the matter of the how do you bring the company to the table, and get that dialogue going? I would just say — litigation. I love it. [Laughter.] Well, here's why. Here's why. Everyone's under oath. Every, every positive offering needs to be backed with evidence. The company itself is open as it's never open in any other ordinary public venue because, of course, of discovery, where you can look at the documents and say, "Yes, what are your calculations for how the plant is going to be maintained over these many years?" You really don't look at that. So that's one. And litigation is the perfect venue for sitting down and talking turkey about stuff. A little coercive factor that's there — it's important.

With respect to social justice, I was really pleased to hear Mike say, you know, he had concerns about his grandchildren having to take care of decommissioning. It's an issue that we're bringing before the Vermont Public Service Board, and it's a thing called intergenerational ethics. OK, you've got people being born 60 years down the road that have never seen a kilowatt out of this plant, or a tax penny. And they are going to be asked at that point to assume the burden of securing this waste. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the federal courts plainly doesn't have a plan other the whole thing for what to do with the waste. So these are big issues.

There's not enough time... I speak too slowly, and in too convoluted a manner. These kinds of issues really need to be thought out, they need to be dredged up from our, our best instincts. And brought to play on the questions surrounding this decommissioning: the environmental effects, the [inaudible].

One last quick thing. In 2000, 2001, the Keystone Foundation sponsored a national dialogue on decommissioning. We had — I was asked to participate, and we had 20 to 30 environmentalists from around the country, we had about 50 industry people, and we had about 50 regulators from around the country, all about decommissioning. It turned out that basic question was, "Who's going to pay for it?" And when they got down to that, the dialogue broke down. The benefactors, the funders, withdrew their money, and in a matter of a lunch hour. So... good luck. I do think the amount of communities that are affected getting together and looking at how, what they have in common, what their concerns are in common, and then investigating what avenues for redress they have. How do we get this problem addressed? I think that could be productive.

MODERATOR: Vermont's record with litigation hasn't been too good lately, and I think Representative Hebert might speak to that. And also, just that — what leverage the state might have? I've heard the suggestion that, you know, make a deal, we won't tax the dry casks at 200 percent if you go to DECON rather than SAFSTOR, it's a little bit of horse trading going on over the various things the state is doing now to the plant.

CAMPANY: You know, the Public Service Board process is still open.

MODERATOR: Yes, it is.

CAMPANY: Litigation is not ended, and docket 7862 — and frankly, docket 7600, about the leaks — are still open, and Entergy requested, on the day they announced the closure, they amended their petition with the Public Service Board. So they seem to recognize that they still need a Certificate of Public Good to continue operating; they're asking I believe through December 2014. So one of the things that Ray was talking about. The reason we know the intent of Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee is when they close, it's because of the information they've provided through the dockets. Other states don't have that. They probably have no earthly idea what Dominion or Duke or other companies or plants will do. The only reason we know is because of the CPG process. Now, you've also got the decommissioning plan they submit to the NRC, the nuclear fuel plans, but it's through the docket that we can actually ask their witnesses, "Tell us what you're going to do." And so there's real value in that. The reason I was shaking my head over the continued litigation is, we can't. We've been doing this with no resources whatsoever. It's a hell of a way to run a regulatory process. We basically have to rely on volunteers to participate in the region's interest. But, so how the CPG will proceed? How the Public Service Board is going to do is going to be, we're going to have a status conference on October 1, and I guess we'll find out, and reply briefs are still due I believe is October 12.

MODERATOR: When the legislature convenes in January, is there any, or rather are there any plans coming up with a state plan for dealing with the closure?

HEBERT: Well, in my committee, there has been discussion of greenfields, things like that. Also there will be some legislation filed along with language that would set the stage for immediate decommissioning. So that sets the stage for how do we negotiate or litigate. One of the reasons I'm not a fan of litigation is it costs the state a lot of money, and we've had very little success. So I think we need to explore our other options first. If we can work cooperatively as much as we can with Entergy, we come up with a solution that works well and the [sequence?] is very early in the process. There's a lot for us to digest, there's a lot for us to study and say what is it that we really want to do? Your questions this evening: very broad. What is it you want to do? I don't know how many people in the room here, quite a few, and I'll be you as a roomful of attorneys, you've got, everyone's got your own opinion. So we've got to come together with a like mind before we decide we want to litigate, we want to negotiate. It's a long process, and I think Pat alluded to, it's not a sprint, it's a long-distance race.

LISSA WEINMANN: Hi, I'm Lissa Weinmann. This question's mainly for Ray Shadis, but I'm sure everyone will have some comments on it, and it goes back to that issue of just accepting that Entergy calls the shots when it comes to how they choose to decommission. And while the NRC rule says they — that's what the NRC rule says, we can influence the NRC rules as citizens. And we can also, when you talk about the national policy,

you know, the rules regarding radioactive waste are being rewritten right now. Senate is writing a bill on national nuclear waste policy. Sanders is on the committee. There are lots of ways as citizens that we can, we don't just have to roll over and accept what the corporation says we should do. We can rewrite the rules. We can rewrite how we're going to deal with this national problem. So my question is, Ray, I mean, really — what can we do? The courts have closed down the NRC's ability to license or relicense any new reactors, so the industry has to do something because basically nuclear power has been shut down until we can decide to do with the waste, what we can do with the spent fuel pools. All of this is in play right now. So when we say, you know, we're just going to accept what Entergy wants to do and tell us what to do, I would say the citizens have a unique opportunity at this confluence in time to influence the process, both at the rulemaking at the NRC and on the federal level, so I would like your opinion on that, Mr. Shadis.

SHADIS: When the nuclear industry first rolled out with congressional approval, the industry complained because many states wanted to institute their own rules, their own regulations for radiological releases and all the rest of it. They said they could not conceivably comply with 48 or 50 different sets of rules. And so the concept of federal preemption over nuclear regulation was born. The states said, "What about our rights in the representative process?" And the tradeoff was a whole series of hearing rights. When a plant decides it's going to decommission, they issue to NRC a permanently defueled certificate — that's probably what it's called — and then within a certain period after that, they have to put together a post-shutdown decommissioning activities report, that releases a little bit of funds to them, and then they have to provide what's called a license termination plan. This basically lays out exactly how they are going to proceed with testing the site for radiological materials, for cleaning it up, for taking care of the buildings and so on. Every radiological aspect has to be in the license termination plan. Each of these steps is an opportunity for citizenry to intervene. It's not litigation we go seeking, but it is litigation that is brought to us. The company's application itself is an invitation to litigation. At Maine Yankee, when we citizens attempted to intervene, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff opposed it and they came up with a raft of objections to our intervention. Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company filed on our side and said, "You ought to let them intervene. You're being a little overly legalistic." Surprise, surprise — we had already established dialogue. And they were open to it. Maybe to their error, because then, of course, we used it for leverage to get to the bargaining table [inaudible].

In the case of Vermont Yankee, it's not our choice, particularly, to seek litigation before the Vermont Public Service Board, but Vermont Yankee said, "Give us a permanent CPG for one year instead of 20, unconditionally." We think it needs to be conditional. We think it needs to be conditioned on a prompt, quality decommissioning. And that's what we're going to go in and litigate on. The Public Service Board has routinely conditioned Certificates of Public Good, and, you know, we're going to go treading into preemption waters, and there's going to be a fight. We don't see any other way to get there, but we're always willing to talk. I just, I kind of needed

to clarify that. [Applause.]

MODERATOR: Well. [Laughter.] So what have we learned tonight? I'll go around the panel and have them give their final thoughts, beginning with you, Chris.

CAMPANY: So I mean I do hope, we've reached out to Entergy basically we were told, [came from the top down]. But hopefully that line of dialogue will continue. It's good they're talking to BDCC and SeVEDS about the jobs side; it's absolutely essential they're talking to Vernon, but we've got other, larger regional plan issues maybe [] because we're a party with PSB because... hopefully, there will be a better flow of communication. I do want to call to attention that I have reached out to my counterparts in New Hampshire and Mass., we are working together. I'll be going down to talk to the Franklin County Council of Governments [Franklin Regional Council of Governments], because it really is — this doesn't, not just Vermont, but it's this major impact on Hinsdale, major impact on communities in Massachusetts. So there is an opportunity that comes out of this, when we start talking about our economic opportunities moving forward together. Because we are inherently related. You just look at the license plates going down Main Street. So hopefully, this will be an opportunity to talk beyond the traditional boundaries of state lines and start working together. I did want to bring up that other possible silver lining.

POWDEN: I just want to thank The Commons again for this forum tonight, and also belated thank you, Mike, for your great comments. But I take no credit. This is going to require all of us to pull together, continue to work as a region, hopefully within Vermont and Vermont/Massachusetts/New Hampshire, on finding solutions together. But the good news is, we are sitting where we have a plan. We have been working on an economic development strategy for a while, we're nearing its completion, you'll hear that that process has been delayed a bit to incorporate the known data for VY closing, and what strategies we might want to be looking at around workforce, but — and we recognize that the urgency has been ratcheted up big-time. The volume's been cranked up, we need to get going. So. But it's going to take time, you don't turn an economy on a dime, you don't turn it overnight, economic development isn't a process whereby you flip the light on and, boom, problems are solved, but it's a process where you flip the light on and start the conversation that we've been in now for a while. So.

We defer to the Windham Regional, who's been engaged big-time for a long time, on the whole question of decommissioning. They have the expertise, they know the process, we want to support them, but we will continue the dialogue about how we recover our regional economy and how can we keep as many of the people, the good people, who are employed at VY here, gainfully employed and pursuing the quality of life that they want to? Thank you again.

MULLIN: I have a couple of points. One, I think that the dialogue, yes, get it to the national level well beyond what's going on here. And with that should come federal funds. And I think it's not just your issue. Sometimes I worry about Vermont, because you're inward so much. This is one time you need to look national and outward. I applaud very much the work

that Pat and the CEDS team has done; I think it's the right way to go, and I would urge strongly, by the way, that you might even consider putting that conference as one of your items in the CEDS—

POWDEN: I know, I know.

MULLIN: —Vermont shouldn't have to pay for this. I think that it's something that people who could gain from it. And if the University of Vermont doesn't want to help, UMass will. [Audience disruption.] I just want to put that out there. And I think also in this is the issue of the of all, and that's the notion of transparency. And transparency and trust. And that comes back to social justice. The point of it is, this has to be done in a way that is understood. And I worry about that all the time. I hear these acronyms. I'm president of the AAL — the Anti Acronym League. [Laughter.] I hear these acronyms floating back and forth up here, and I say, "Good gosh, I'm supposed to know these things, and [inaudible]. Somehow, this transparency and understanding the process and where I as a homeowner is absolutely crucial every step of the way. Those are my thoughts.

SHADIS: In 2001, five years into decommissioning the Maine Yankee, we undertook a little economic study of the consequences, looking particularly at the effect on the economy of the — we looked at every economic indicator we could find for the area, the tri-county area, around Maine Yankee. And what we found is once we got outside the host town, over that five-year stretch, we could really find no economic bumps. It may be that one contributing factor was that the workers came from a radius of about 50 miles commuting to the plant, similar to your situation here, where you have workers coming from the tri-state area. Whatever economic multipliers you have there, one job at Vermont Yankee equals 1.8 jobs somewhere, you're going to have a hard time finding, never mind fixing it — addressing it, patching it up. I think a large part of that is going to come from the vibrancy and resiliency of the economy that's out there. You know, I hope that's a helpful kind of thing for you. The state's economist at the time, Charles Colgan found similarly that there were very, very small economic impacts outside the immediate area. And he said a large part of that had to do with the fact that atomic power plants or nuclear power plants are really economic islands. They order exotic parts from far, far away. They get very little down at the local Trust Worthy hardware store.

And that's kind of what showed up in the Maine — I would say that, take some comfort in that. Expect the worst, plan for the worst, do your best in terms of trying to patch up an economy you anticipate is going to be hit with a deadly slug — but our experience, that's not what happened.

HEBERT: Well, also, I'd like to thank everyone for showing up this evening to have this forum. I think there's been a lot of important ideas expressed, some concerns expressed, but I do think for the most part we here at the table are fairly hopeful that we're going to progress forward, in little ways, and hopefully those little ways will add up and in the long run we'll have the recovery that we desire.

One of the smaller bright lights of this moment is there is a local company who's been trying to attract exactly the type of person who works at Vermont Yankee, they've been trying to attract nuclear engineers and

those types of folks. So they will have some people hired, and they have a significant number of jobs. So that's a positive, and it's a first step forward. [Audience disruption.] As for the town of Vernon—

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Who are you talking about, Mike?

HEBERT: It's Robotics of Vermont. I don't know if people are familiar with that. They are in the process of negotiating international contracts and are anticipating within the next two or three years they will double or triple in size. And this is a company for a high-school graduate going to work for them, who has some reasonable skills, math and science-wise, to start out at somewhere in the neighborhood of \$52,000. I don't think we have a lot of employers who take kids out of BUHS and pay them that much money, or from the Career Center. So that's a very positive thing. And I think the more that we look for those types of opportunities, the better off we'll be, and that'll require that we keep the dialogue open, whether you're pro-nuke, anti-nuke, you want nuclear energy to continue, you'd like to see it stop is irrelevant. The issue is we need to move forward economically and I personally think as far as social justice, you cannot really achieve social justice if you don't have a strong economy. I spent the morning with the Hunger Council, and we looked at some of the statistics for our local schools, and most of the schools in Windham County are more than 50 percent on the poverty level for free or reduced lunch. Vernon, luckily, is way under that. Hopefully, that doesn't change dramatically with the close of Yankee, but certainly those are the things we look at social justice and say, "How can we better that?" And one of the ways to better that is to have a stronger economy where you can send more resources to the people in need. So again, I'd like to close on a hopeful note, from at least my standpoint. Thirty years, we've had a good working relationship with folks at VY; I'm going to hold them to their word of leaving on that white horse, that they're going to leave in the proper fashion. I'm not going to commit to either decommissioning [DECON] or SAFSTOR until we come to a determination as a community as to where we want to be, but certainly the standard of leaving in the appropriate fashion — we all have to hold them to that standard. And they've put that standard out there themselves, so I don't think there's any reason for us not to call them on it. Again, thank you for this evening. It's been great. Randy, Leah, Chris — thank you.

PETERS: Yes, thanks everyone, for coming out tonight. As a reporter who's in print, so often we put stories out and we don't always know who's reading or the impact they're having. So it's wonderful to see everyone out here tonight and to hear the panelists' views on the issue. I think for me, the takeaway is, yes, the Civil War is not quite over. Case in point: right after Entergy announced its closing, I bumped into family members who said it was my fault the plant stayed open as long as it did, because I'm a journalist [laughter], and I met family members who felt the plant had closed because I'm a journalist. So we do have some of our own muck to clean up in our communities, since this has been an over-40-year discussion, and sometimes a very heated one. But we also have the opportunity where we can make this next transition what we want it to be. There's a lot out of our control, in many respects: the NRC, what goes on at the federal level, Entergy's decisions, but there's still a lot in our control. And I don't think

we should ever underestimate — and again, I say this as a journalist — we should never underestimate the power of holding people accountable. And as Mike said, Entergy has kind of set their own standard, and so now we hold them accountable to that. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The last word tonight for this evening will go to Jeff Potter, our editor, who would like to offer a few words about why this event came about and what it will take to have future events just like this one.

JEFF POTTER: Thanks, Randy. I've got to say, this is something that I've fantasized about having, bringing the Voices section into a theater with actual people here instead of a harried editor upstairs two or three floors, working at 3 a.m. There's no interactivity, at least as much as I'd like, and that's so great to see all of you here. And I hope this isn't the end, but the beginning. I'd love to see all of you interact if you are feeling strongly about what any or all of our panelists have discussed tonight. Send a letter to the editor. Write an email: voices@commonsnews.org. Put a comment on our Facebook page. We love, we love to hear from readers. And if you're not a reader, we'd love to have you reading our paper. I should say this forum is going to be broadcast on Brattleboro Community Television; I'd love to thank Maria for coming [applause]; we'd love to see you spread this far and wide. And finally, this doesn't come free. We're a nonprofit organization. And The Commons is published — the reason that we're here tonight, the reason there are newspapers out there for you to enjoy — all of that comes not only from our advertisers but from our members. It's like public radio in print. We need your help. If you found value in what we brought you tonight, I hope you'll reciprocate that with a little bit of love in our donation box. I really appreciate that, and we appreciate you. So thank you all for coming here tonight, this has been fantastic. [Applause.]

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- To everyone who is engaging with these difficult issues.



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