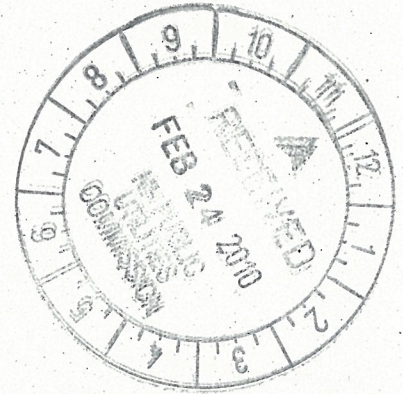


# BERRY HILL FARM

Testimony for PUC Public Hearing on DER  
Docket DE 09-137  
March 2, 2010



## **Introduction and Purpose of the Testimony**

My name is Caroline Robinson.

I am a commercial organic farmer in Stratham, on the seacoast. I sit on the Farm Energy Committee assembled by Lorraine Stuart Merrill (Commissioner of Agriculture) and Thomas Burack (Commissioner of DES). I also sit on the Coalition of Sustaining Agriculture, founded in 1998 by Lorraine Merrill, myself, and representatives of agricultural agencies throughout the state. I am a former member (term 2003-2009) of the Governor's Advisory Council on Agriculture.

I am quite familiar with solar energy. I own a small house in Francestown, which has been powered by PV since 1988. The system is not connected to the grid, but downloads into batteries. I also have three domestic hot water panels on my home in Stratham, which have successfully been preheating our hot water for 25 years. And finally, I have a PV panel on my farmstand which connects to and powers an electric cart for farm use.

Today, I am sending this letter to testify in favor of Docket No. DE 09-137, a petition from Unitil Energy Systems related to Investment in Distributed Generation.

## **Project History**

Three years ago, when the budget was being discussed for Stratham's new fire station, I got involved by asking in public hearing about the possibility of powering the station, partially or wholly, with solar photovoltaics.

Knowing that municipal solar was nonexistent in New Hampshire, we assembled a team to design and work on fundraising for an installation of a 40Kw system on the roof of the new fire station, which was completed in 2008.

Fundraising for the project did not prove successful: neither federal nor state grants for municipal installations existed, and being a municipality, we could not match a private grant through tax credits. Distributed generation was not yet legal. We had to wait for RSA 374-G and SB451 to pass in 2008.

Hoping to become a demonstration project for municipal solar in New Hampshire, we started working with Unitil to develop a proposal. We had a rough idea of the costs involved, having solicited bids from all of the current solar contractors in NH.

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Stratham, New Hampshire 03885

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**Now to the present docket request;**

It is still our belief that fire stations are an excellent location for solar energy, for many reasons:

1. By providing a portion of the fire station's energy needs, now and especially in the future;
2. By promoting energy security by serving as a potential back-up for outages affecting emergency response systems and vehicles;
3. By exemplifying a huge public commitment to energy conservation, reduction of greenhouse gases and of the town's carbon footprint;
4. By promoting economic development in the state, considering the design, production and installation of the system;
5. By supporting the state economy through the utilization of *New Hampshire Made* products, in the purchase of solar panels manufactured in Merrimack, NH, as opposed to importing panels from China. (<http://www.gtsolar.com/>)

*Examples of fire station installations elsewhere:*

Union City, Georgia

[http://www.georgiapower.com/spotlightsolar/project\\_firestation.asp](http://www.georgiapower.com/spotlightsolar/project_firestation.asp)

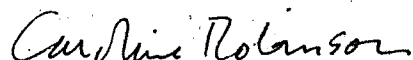
Scottsdale, Arizona

<http://www.evliving.com/2009/09/09/solar-energy-award/>

Windsor, CA

<http://solarcraft.com/news/news-article-2009-10-solar-panels-windsor-fire-station.html>

Thank you for your careful attention to this project.



Caroline Robinson