



## The “*Energizing Our Communities Act*”

**U.S. Senator Peter Welch**

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### **Legislation:**

The *Energizing Our Communities Act* would support the community-developer relationship by providing automatic benefits to towns, counties, and tribes hosting Department of Energy (DOE) backed projects.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Create a fund with revenues DOE generates from certain transmission development programs.
- Require DOE to provide towns, counties, and tribes that are hosting projects sponsored by those same programs with a one-time award from the fund. DOE would establish a formula to distribute the awards.
- Require that the host communities receive awards no later than 18 months after construction on the projects begins.
- Allow communities to use up to 80% of the award for public infrastructure (hospitals, parks, broadband, schools, etc.) or workforce training.
- Allow communities to use 20% of the award for conservation projects.

The bill clarifies that parties should negotiate other community benefits in addition to those provided by DOE through the fund.

### **Background - Climate Change and the State of Our Grid:**

Climate change is [progressing rapidly](#). To stave off its worst impacts, the U.S. needs to lower greenhouse emissions and quickly bring new clean energy onto the grid. President Biden set the important goal of achieving 100 percent clean electricity in the U.S. by 2035, but we will only be able to achieve this if we boost transmission capacity around the country.

[Transmission capacity is vital](#) to renewable electricity transmission. Without increased capacity, grid operators struggle to find space on the grid to bring new clean energy projects online. This results in time-consuming interconnection processes, delayed projects, and higher energy costs. The U.S. must invest to upgrade our aging transmission infrastructure.

### **Supporting Host Communities:**

Fostering a strong relationship between developers and the communities hosting transmission projects is key to achieving the upgrades we need. Providing tangible incentives to host communities facilitates the planning, financing, permitting, and construction of this critical infrastructure. As they support our clean energy future through transmission capacity expansion, these communities should benefit directly from their participation in the process.

### **Endorsing Organizations:**

The *Energizing Our Communities Act* is endorsed by Protect our Winters (POW); REI, VELCO; Vermont Electric Power Company; Grid Action; Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT); National League of Cities (NCL); National Association of Counties (NACO); Pathway Power; and Burton.