

# Letters to the editor

## The state can't be trusted with assisted suicide regulations

To the editor:

As members of the Senate Judiciary Committee prepare to study the "doctor prescribed death" bill, they would do well to critically evaluate whether the state has the ability to protect terminally ill Vermonters from manipulation, exploitation and coercion under an act promoted in the name of compassion.

One specific, timely and highly relevant illustration of a major regulatory failure can be found in connection with the state's duty to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. In early December 2011, a disabilities rights group filed a suit against the state of Vermont because of its failure to protect disabled and elderly and otherwise vulnerable citizens of this state. This is not a trivial problem. The backlog has been running in the order of 300 cases yet to be

investigated. The abuse and exploitation alleged ranges from financial manipulation and exploitation to physical and even sexual abuse! And sadly, much of that neglect and abuse is done by very family members and those others charged with the care of the vulnerable adults.

It is blatantly absurd to suggest that the state of Vermont is competent to effectively manage a program that oversees doctor prescribed death when it cannot even investigate and clear a backlog of 300 reported cases of abuse of the disabled and elderly, let alone prevent the abuse in the first place!

Assisted suicide is laden with the potential for manipulation and exploitation of the worst kind — i.e. exploitation and manipulation with fatal consequences.

Pete Gummere  
St. Johnsbury

## Wilderness is a form of freedom, power companies aim to put it in chains

Dear Sir:

About Green Mountain Power's wind project on the Lowell Mountains in particular and the attempt to turn the state of Vermont into a wind farm in general.

Do people know:

— That wind power from Green Mountain Power's wind project legally can and will go out of state?

— That Green Mountain Power helped to finance Governor Shumlin's election?

— That an adviser to Governor Shumlin wants to put giant wind turbines on 200 miles of Vermont ridgelines (David Blittersdorf, who made his fortune selling wind turbine parts)?

— That Green Mountain Power is a wholly owned Canadian corporation — and will rake in some forty million dollars in federal production tax credits on its Lowell project?

— That wind companies target low income towns like Sheffield and Lowell — the bait is the promise of lowered property taxes? But visual

pollution is the result for neighboring towns — who are treated to red-night-lighted, daylight waving arms surrounding them. Take a look at Sheffield's shattered skyline. You can see it from many towns, and from Interstate 91.

— That it isn't necessary for Vermonters to sell their wilderness birthright for a mess of potage? For just one instance, Hydro-Quebec sits there with enough excess energy to supply Vermont forever.

— That a three-man Public Service Board (only one of whom is full time) is deciding Vermont's wind farm fate? And so far they have yet to encounter a wind corporation they didn't like. Their decisions "in the public's interest" are in a wind corporation's interest, rather.

— That wilderness is a form of freedom and out-of-state wind companies, for the sake of profit, aim to put that freedom in chains?

Yours truly,  
Addison Merrick  
Craftsbury

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## Lockridge's leaving would be a great loss

To the editor and to North Country residents:

I was sent to see Dr. Lockridge because of low blood platelet count. On our first visit I found that he had already looked up my past medical records to determine the history of my problem. He then gave me a very clear account of my situation. I have rarely experienced that much attention. In addition, he is a nice guy. I have only seen him a few times, yet I regard him as

a friend. I hope the North Country Hospital board of trustees will reconsider their decision. His leaving would be a great loss to our community.

Sincerely,  
John Ceraso  
professor emeritus,  
Rutgers University  
West Glover

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