**To:** Vermont Public Utility Commission

**From:** Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Board of Trustees and the Southeastern

 Vermont Economic Development Strategies Board of Directors

**Date:** January 4, 2018

**RE:** Statement of Support For The Town of Vernon at January 4th Public Meeting Docket 8880 NorthStar Entergy Vermont Yankee Transfer.

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) is a 60 year old private, nonprofit economic development organization that serves as a catalyst for industrial and commercial growth throughout Southeastern Vermont, including Windham County and the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg, and Weston. BDCC serves as the State of Vermont’s certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) for the greater Windham County area.

**BDCC’s statement of support for Vernon in the Docket 8880 proceeding**

BDCC’s predominant interest in the closure and transfer of the plant is in mitigation of the tremendous long term negative economic impacts to Vernon and the region caused by the closure: loss of jobs, people, tax revenues and payroll.

Most existing U.S. nuclear power plants are located in small rural towns like Vernon. In the U.S., there is not a wealth of best practices available for towns like Vernon or entities like BDCC to consider as they plot out economic recovery from the closure of nuclear power plants. BDCC, in partnership with both the Shumlin and Scott administrations, our private sector businesses, our sister agency Windham Regional Commission, our 27 town region’s municipalities and the Institute for Nuclear Host Communities has played a leadership role in helping Vernon, the State of Vermont, the Vermont Yankee tri-state labor shed and the U.S. begin to develop economic mitigation strategies for communities facing nuclear power plant closure.

BDCC takes no public position on the environmental, safety or financial aspects of either **decommissioning or transfer of ownership of the plant**. Many other organizations have been and continue to be focused on those aspects. BDCC and its affiliates, task forces and regional partners have taken a public position that the regional economy will be significantly impacted by the closure and loss of jobs and that public and private resources should be made available to mitigate those impacts.

The Vermont Yankee sale and potential for accelerated decommissioning versus SAFSTOR was greeted by BDCC with cautious optimism when it was announced by Governor Shumlin in 2016. *BDCC believes that if a safe accelerated decommissioning is environmentally and financially possible, that would be of greater benefit* ***to the economic recovery*** *of Vernon, the Windham region and the State of Vermont then SAFSTOR.*

*BDCC supports a PUC decision which will allow economic reuse and redevelopment of the site to realize the town’s goals including for recreational, new energy production, village center and/or industrial development uses as articulated in Vernon’s approved Town Plan.*

*In addition, BDCC generally supports the testimony regarding specific actions Vernon wishes to be considered in the PUC proceeding as provided by Robert Spencer’s November 15th 2017 testimony for* Docket No. 8880

In December of 2017 BDCC staff and the Board met with Vernon Municipal leadership representatives to discuss BDCC participation in future hearings. We are pleased to have the opportunity to present this statement regarding our support for the Town of Vernon. Vernon and the Windham region will be feeling the economic impacts from the closure for the next 10 years. We look forward to our continued partnership with the Town of Vernon and helping to ensure their wishes are heard and that their vision for Vernon’s future is achieved.

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**Explanation of supporting documents**

**BDCC and our regional affiliate Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) have engaged and invested in a substantial body of work specifically to support the economic recovery of the Town of Vernon and the Windham Region. A high level summary with attached reports follows.**

**How BDCC and our affiliates are supporting long term economic recovery in Vernon**

Beginning in 2011 and continuing through today, BDCC has worked with both Governor Shumlin and Governor Scott’s administrations to ensure adequate state and regional capacity exists to develop strategies and implement action plans to address the local and regional economic impacts of a Vermont Yankee closure.

SeVEDS is an affiliate of BDCC that grew from a 2008 grassroots effort, initiated by BDCC, to reverse the economic decline of the Windham Region and plan for the economic impacts from the closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. In 2014, after multiple years of regional input, education and data gathering, SeVEDS received approval of the Windham Region’s federally recognized S.M.A.R.T. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Since 2011, BDCC has invested more than Six Hundred Thousand dollars of its own private sector resources in this effort with both financial and human resources.

In 2011 a Post Vermont Yankee Task Force was established by BDCC and SeVEDS to identify the specific economic impacts a Vermont Yankee Closure would have in the region. That non-partisan effort took no position on whether or not the plant should close, only that one day it would close and consideration of the impacts of closure was important to the region and the Town of Vernon. The Task Force, Chaired by former Vermont Speaker of the House Stephen Morse, [issued a report in 2012](http://seveds.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/PostVY.pdf). Those findings were incorporated in their entirety into the [2014 Windham Region CEDS](http://seveds.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/FINALCEDSReport.2013.pdf).

In October of 2013, the Vermont Legislature took testimony in Vernon on what was needed to mitigate the economic impacts of the announced closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. BDCC and SeVEDS [provided substantial testimony](http://seveds.com/testimony/) based on the developing CEDS and the completed Post Vermont Yankee Task Force, indicating $2M dollars in funding for multiple years was needed. This included the need for capacity to assist Vermont Yankee employees in business start ups and addressing primary and secondary job losses through increased regional workforce development and retention programs. In 2014, as part of a settlement agreement between the State of Vermont and Entergy, $10Mdollars in funding was identified to promote economic development in Windham County.

The 2014 Windham Region S.M.A.R.T. CEDS [received a 2016 award for implementation](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/bdccseveds-receives-excellence-economic-development-award-international-economic-development-council/) from the International Economic Development Council. Putting this regional action plan in effect as well as developing projects listed within the CEDS are done with private and public sector partners from around the region, our neighbors in border counties, state and federal agencies. To date, [cross-regional, entrepreneurial and workforce](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SeVEDS-Driven-Initiatives-2014.docx) program developments have been leading BDCC’s staffed implementation efforts. Highlights include a 2015/16 [tri-state partnership project](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/southern-vermont-ceds-projects-funded/) with the State of Vermont and the Economic Development Administration to mitigate the impacts of the tri-state job losses resulting from the closure of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. This project has resulted in the [Ecovation Hub](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/bdcc-receives-2017-neda-marketing-award-tri-state-ecovation-hub-marketing-video/),[Instig8](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/instig8/), and the national release of a best practices for nuclear host communities white paper: [When People and Money Leave (and the Plant Stays) – Lessons Learned from the Closure of the Vermont Yankee Power Station: A Tri-Region Experience](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/people-money-leave-plant-stays-lessons-learned-closure-vermont-yankee-power-station-tri-region-experience/).

In July of 2015 BDCC and the State of Vermont announced creation of the Windham County Advisory Council consisting of BDCC, SeVEDS, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Vermont Small Business Development Center, Windham Regional Commission and Windham region towns with downtown designations – Brattleboro, Wilmington, and Rockingham – plus Vernon. The Council provides local and regional input and advice to ACCD on program development, reviews Letters of Intent to Apply, and provides annual program review for the $10M settlement funds to promote economic development in Windham County. Final recommendations for funding are made to the governor by the Vermont Economic Progress Council

During the late summer and fall of 2016 BDCC staff participated significantly in the town of Vernon’s Vermont Council on Rural Development Process which helps rural communities set priorities and then find expert advice and resources to make those priorities a reality.

In November of 2016 NorthStar announced its intention to purchase the plant from Entergy and pursue an accelerated decommissioning. In March of 2017 BDCC’s Executive Director and senior staff members met with NorthStar CEO Scott State, at NorthStar’s request, to hear about the plans for decommissioning.

In July of 2017, BDCC’s Executive Director and senior staff asked for several meetings with Town of Vernon administration and individual members of the Vernon Planning and Economic Development Committee. The purpose of those meetings was to encourage the town of Vernon to participate in an official capacity in the PUC proceedings, that given the scale of documents their administrator needed to review, and the volunteer nature of other town officials, the town should consider hiring their own legal representation for the proceeding; and to testify about the town’s current work and future plans for economic recovery. BDCC sent [a follow up memo](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By_hEruUVEGOZm01WkR4VTdUZVY3Rjd1LVBzUVNTanlFQ2hZ/view) with recommendations on participating in the PUC process. BDCC was subsequently invited to attend the Planning and Economic Development Commission’s interviews with attorneys under consideration to represent the town.

In December of 2017 BDCC met with Vernon Municipal leadership to discuss BDCC participation in future hearings. We are pleased to have the opportunity to present this statement regarding our support for the Town of Vernon. Vernon and the Windham region will be feeling the economic impacts from the closure for the next 10 years. We intend to continue leading the region’s sustained efforts to assist Vernon and grow the regional economy. The BDCC & SeVEDS 2017 [Annual Report](https://brattleborodevelopment.com/fy17-bdcc-seveds-annual-report/) describes programs and projects encompassing our work with major employers and startups, workforce and students, as well as work with the 27 towns served in the Windham Region.