

# VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Published monthly by The Vermont Natural Resources Council, a non-profit citizens' conservation organization supported by membership dues and contributions. 26 state street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602  
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FEBRUARY, 1976 --- NUMBER 48

## James Griffin & Scott Skinner discuss: Nuclear Power in Vermont

### JAMES GRIFFIN:

James Griffin is President of the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation. He is also President of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation, the corporate owner of Vermont's only nuclear power plant in Vernon. Griffin has been a leading utility spokesman for nuclear power in Vermont.

### SCOTT SKINNER:

Scott Skinner was Director of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group from 1972 until 1975. He played a leading role in the fight to require legislative approval of further nuclear plant construction in Vermont. He worked in the New England region on energy-related matters for Ralph Nader. He has been a consistent opponent of nuclear power.

### INTRODUCTION:

No region in the United States is more vulnerable to the continuing crisis of energy than New England. No-one needs to tell us of Vermont's special geographic place in the New England Region, nor does anyone have to remind us that Vermont is particularly exposed, being at the end of the line for ever-more-scarce and ever-more-expensive supplies of imported petroleum.

Fully over 70% of Vermont's total energy needs are today supplied by oil. 75% of that oil is imported.

As Forrest Orr, Director of the State Energy Office, has pointed out, our dependence on oil in the near future will continue. This will happen, not because we want it to, but because it takes at least eight years to bring on any of the available alternative fuels.

Essentially what we are looking at today is the need to make a decision on the kind of energy that we in Vermont will use eight or ten years hence. It cannot be oil. Not even the opening of the Alaskan pipeline will help. As Forrest Orr again points out, the peak of our domestic oil production has already been reached and these supplies are declining.

In the circumstances, we have some choices to consider. Should we choose coal? Should we seek to buy power from Canada? Should we choose to rely on nuclear power? Should we attempt to develop new alternative sources of energy? Should we inaugurate a tough program of energy conservation? These are difficult and timely decisions.

On January 23rd, VER Editor, Nat Frothingham, moderated a taped discussion in Rutland on the subject of nuclear power. Participants in that discussion were James Griffin and Scott Skinner, two men who have been deeply involved in the consideration of Vermont's energy future.

What follows here is the first of a two-part series taken directly from the edited transcript of that discussion. In "PART ONE" of this series, Griffin and Skinner debate the "ECONOMICS OF NUCLEAR POWER." In "PART TWO" of this series which will appear in the March VER, Griffin and Skinner will discuss some of the safety questions that have been raised about nuclear power.

(During the course of these discussions, James Griffin indicated that a decision to build a second nuclear power plant in Vermont is now being actively discussed.)