

## My Turn Plant is good for economy, good for environment

By: Hunter Carbee For the Monitor

The Monitor's May 15 editorial presented strong economic arguments for **Concord Steam** Corp. to build a new power plant. Here are some additional reasons to support this endeavor: Environmentally, this provides a chance for us to locally reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Over 80 percent of the heating in the Northeast is supplied by oil. The city of Concord is poised to be a leader in the Northeast by continuing to use clean, renewable biomass for its heating needs. The State House, heated by wood chips, could be an American symbol of energy independence, a model for weaning ourselves from fossil fuels.

Today, about half of America's electricity is produced by coal. An energy expert commented at a recent hearing, "For every boxcar of coal that comes into New Hampshire to produce electricity, a boxcar of cash leaves the region. Conversely, the money paid for every chip van that delivers wood to our local wood plants stays right here in New Hampshire." The contribution of forest-based manufacturing to the state economy is nearly \$1.15 billion, with 8,160 jobs and an annual payroll of \$384 million per year. That is a lot of money.

A recent survey found that among 20 New Hampshire logging companies, nearly \$38 million is contributed to the state economy. At the local level, **Concord Steam** will create more than 100 full-time permanent jobs - plant maintenance and operations work, loggers, truckers, foresters, mechanics, etc. Wood sales alone, purchased by **Concord Steam**, will pump approximately \$7 million annually into the region. That, too, is a lot of money.

Lastly, for the layperson who is concerned about cutting trees, forests are managed sustainably in New Hampshire. Only one third of the annual growth of our forests is harvested, resulting in a forest that is getting larger and older, on average. This continues, year after year, with a strong, viable forest industry. Why? Because landowners recognize the economic returns of long-term forest stewardship. Renewable biomass harvesting provides a great tool to promote even healthier, more vigorous forests and enhanced wildlife habitat.

**Concord Steam** is the model that everyone in New Hampshire should embrace for the future of our energy needs. In New Hampshire, we know how to grow trees and we know how to help the local economy and environment while doing so.

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