

## Olivia Campbell Andersen

sunshineOliviaC@gmail.com

802-522-8501

As a local business and family farm founder, I deeply understand the need for reliable, affordable, and clean energy in our rural community. I dwell in possibility, believing that nothing is impossible with hard work, creativity, and integrity. I have nearly two decades of experience creating collaborative partnerships and crafting innovative policies as a communications, renewable energy, and sustainability advisor to non-profit, business, and government leaders. My experience advocating for consumers and small businesses at the Public Utility Commission and state legislature, working with other electric utilities in Vermont and nationally, as well as securing federal funding for local projects can directly benefit WEC and its members.

I'm grateful to be considered for the opportunity to serve on our electric co-op's Board because I believe that we are stronger, smarter, and more effective when we work together and everyone in our community is served fairly and treated respectfully.

Affordability, reliability, and the impacts of climate change are the most significant issues facing the cooperative. Families and businesses cannot afford to stay, grow, and thrive in Vermont when faced with expensive and unreliable electricity bills and expenses. Over the last decade, the annual cost of electric outages and storm recovery exacerbated by more frequent and intense weather events due to climate change cost each Vermont household hundreds of dollars every year and in recent years cumulatively caused WEC members to lose millions. WEC has a responsibility to build and maintain a distributed, resilient, and modern energy system we need today and tomorrow.

Change is needed to make our electricity and services from WEC more reliable and reasonably priced. Change is needed to ensure that everyone that wants to can access and benefit from cost-saving climate technologies. We also need better and more communications from WEC re: outages in times of emergencies and storm events as to when folks may expect power to be turned back on and other information so that everyone can be safe and healthy and best manage their own household's needs and expenses, especially during winter outages.

Rather than digging further into debt, WEC needs to proactively act and plan for greater reliability in a way that limits the cost to members. Ideas include strategic vegetation management along power lines, creating microgrids, and home or business energy storage as offered by most other Vermont utilities.

I believe that we all deserve to have and make our own choices related to our family's electricity, heating, and transportation needs. Too many Vermonters are unable to directly access the benefits of cost saving climate solutions—like cold climate heat pumps, advanced wood heating, geothermal, and electric vehicles, and I don't want our community to be left behind due to our rural location. WEC can serve as a facilitator and where appropriate a service provider to increase equitable access to broadband, climate, and energy resilience solutions.