

Jeffords promotes wind power to kids

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MOUNT HOLLY -- U.S. Sen. James Jeffords says the state should glean more of its electric power from wind.

Wind energy protects the environment and the pocketbook, said Jeffords, an independent and ranking member of the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

"It's so important for the whole state," Jeffords said of wind energy. "You don't have to pay much for wind. Why pay money?" he told the students of Mount Holly Elementary School.

Jeffords is the benefactor of the alternative energy project at the school, having landed \$1.5 million in federal funds that helped put wind turbines at several schools around Vermont as pilot projects, including Mount Holly's.

Jeffords stopped short of endorsing the proposed East Haven wind farm in the Northeast Kingdom, but he said he believed that Vermonters could tap the wind over the Green Mountains for electricity. Some Northeast Kingdom residents oppose the East Haven project.

Only one commercial wind project is generating power in Vermont: the Green Mountain Power Corp. and enXco partnership in Searsburg. A planned expansion of that project has been put on hold by enXco, a French company, because of delays in obtaining environmental permits needed to expand part of the wind project into the Green Mountain National Forest.

Principal Craig Hutt Vater said the school's wind turbine provides 10 percent of the school's electricity needs.