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STATE OF VERMONT
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602
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FOR RELEASE AT 10:00 A.M., DECEMBER 23, 1994

Finding that the overall costs to the public are likely to outweigh the benefits, the Vermont Environmental Board today denied an Act 250 permit for the proposed Wal*Mart store in the Town of St. Albans.

The Board also found that the proposal is likely **to** cause a net job loss in the Franklin County region and a negative impact on the downtown City of St. Albans.

The Board stated that the applicants may continue to seek a permit and pointed out areas that must be addressed if they do.

The Board's decision comes under portions of the Act 250 law which protect government from negative financial impacts caused by development.

"We've had to take the time to give careful consideration to this difficult and complex case," said Board Chair Arthur Gibb. "After a thorough review, the Board believes that the most accurate projections are that the overall impact of the project will be negative."

The relevant Act 250 criteria include 9(A) - "impact of growth" and 9(H) - "costs of scattered development."

Under these criteria, the Board also concluded that insufficient evidence had been provided regarding the total growth and rate of growth which will be caused by the project and by new development which will be attracted by the proposed Wal*Mart - so-called "secondary growth."

The Board stated that, if the applicants continue to seek a permit, they will need to make an adequate study of the secondary growth and associated public costs and benefits.

The Board further stated that the applicant will need to propose a mechanism such as a bond or impact fee to pay for the burden on any local government.

The Board found in favor of the applicants on many Act 250 criteria, including those involving water pollution and traffic.

The Vermont Environmental Board is the Act 250 appeals board. It consists of nine citizens appointed by the Governor.

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