

**Witter Swanson**

**Summer 2021 Internship**

**Sustainable Energy Advantage, LLC**

I started at SEA in June following my graduation from Amherst College with a degree in Environmental Studies and Political Science. Prior to SEA, I had interned with an energy co-op working on public engagement for offshore wind. Prior to that, I had completed a research internship at Amherst focused on solar development and the college's electricity purchases.

If you want to quickly ramp up your knowledge of everything renewables, SEA is the place to be. Despite SEA's high status in the New England renewable market, the small size of the company still allowed for lots of interaction between intern/entry level workers and upper management. This created many opportunities to work with and learn from true experts in their field, all within the structure of a very friendly and supportive environment.

My main work as an intern was on Eyes and Ears, SEA's renewable policy news subscription service. After only a couple of weeks, I was given the responsibility to track regulatory developments in Rhode Island, Maine, and Vermont. This tracking process meant I was constantly learning about the most pressing developments in New England renewable energy policy. After tracking developments in my three states each week, I would write short stories summarizing and analyzing everything important for our subscribers to know. This process of tracking and writing allowed me to write about a wide variety of topics, including offshore wind permitting, legal disputes over distributed generation interconnection, transmission line planning, hydrogen fuels and battery storage legislation, to name just a few topics. Working on Eyes and Ears gave a bird's eye view to the important issues in the world of renewables, but also the opportunity to dive into the details on a particular issue week to week.

I was also able to help the team with projects in both the public and private sector. My first project was providing administrative support on a proposal for a NYSERDA consulting project. My role involved helping the project lead make sure that all the required documents were formatted correctly, that we received the correct information from our partner companies and that our partners received all our correct documents. While those might not sound like the *most* engaging or interesting activities, they are necessary activities, and it was informative and a good learning experience to see the operational process of submitting a consulting proposal, as well as the procedural steps from brainstorming to submitting the final product.

Another consulting project I worked on involved an arbitration dispute between a solar developer and a utility regarding historical REC prices. I contributed to that project through data entry in the early stages of the project, and later by helping the project lead compile his expert report. I also worked on a project to understand historical electricity tariff prices in New Jersey. While both projects involved mostly routine data entry, the project leads were always willing to help teach the bigger picture and how my work was contributing to our goals.

Near the end of my internship, I accepted an extension of the internship to continue working in my previous role but also to assist Bob Grace, SEA's president, with sales of our subscription services. This project is just ramping up as I write this letter, but it has already given me the opportunity to see up close how the sales process works at SEA and the wide-ranging need of our clients. Also, from what I can tell

so far, Bob is an incredible salesman, and it has been an educational experience to see him at work in sales calls.

I started at SEA remotely and moved to Boston half-way through the summer to start working in person. SEA's operations team of Kat and Dan was very supportive throughout my internship, and I especially appreciated their flexibility and support with equipment and on-boarding while I was moving to a new city. Additionally, due to the pandemic and the nature of my previous jobs, SEA was the first place I had an office job that was in an actual office, and it was a great office to work in. Everyone at SEA is very friendly and passionate about their work, and that combination creates a very special and supportive work environment.

SEA has been a perfect job for someone right out of college who is still exploring where they might fit in the renewable industry. The wide range of topics and experiences has been a great learning opportunity, and I would encourage anyone to pursue an internship here.