



To: NH Site Evaluation Committee

Date: December 23, 2015

Memorandum

Project #: 12650.01

From: VHB, Inc.

Re: Attachment A - Environmental Updates

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Structure, Work Area and Accessway Revisions - PSNH

Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (PSNH) has been working with abutters along the Project right-of-way (ROW) since the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) Application was filed to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential visual impacts that may result from the installation of structures for the Merrimack Valley Reliability Project (MVRP). To avoid and minimize impacts to abutters, PSNH has relocated six structures including structure numbers 213, 221, 230, 231, 232 and 233. Structure relocations are depicted on the enclosed Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheets 70, 73, 76, 77 and 78 and the enclosed Eversource Energy Engineering Drawings, Plan and Profiles (Sheets 2, 3, and 4).

The six structure relocations occurred in uplands and will not require permanent wetland impacts. However, at two structure relocations the work pads need to extend into wetlands resulting in temporary wetland impact. Structure 213, as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 70 and Eversource Energy Plan and Profile Sheet 2, requires 258 square feet (sq. ft.) of temporary wetland impact in Wetland 87A in the Town of Hudson. To avoid direct impacts to an existing vernal pool in wetland 87A, the work pad was shifted to the edge of the wetland. In addition, access was extended to connect the proposed laydown area to the work pad of Structure 213 to improve constructability. Structure 221, as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 73 and Eversource Energy Plan and Profile Sheet 3, requires 5,033 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact in Wetland 93 in the Town of Londonderry.

PSNH has been working with abutters along the ROW since the SEC Application was filed to obtain rights to access the ROW from private property (off-ROW access) to avoid and minimize impacts within the ROW and improve construction efficiency. PSNH successfully obtained property rights to access the ROW from Wheelwright Circle across private property as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 90. PSNH also obtained new access from Trolley Car Path via private properties on Hovey Road as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 96A. In addition, PSNH obtained new access from Snowflake Lane as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 97 and 98.

The new off-ROW accesses occur in upland areas and do not require any additional wetland impacts. The new access to the Trolley Car Path, as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 96, resulted in the removal of a temporary construction accessway within the ROW that traversed the western portion of Wetland 149. Temporary wetland impacts within Wetland 149 were reduced by 6,333 sq. ft.

Structure, Laydown Area, Work Area, and Accessway Revisions – NEP

New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid (NEP) added and shifted laydown areas and accessways within the ROW to improve constructability of the Project. These changes are summarized as follows:

2 Bedford Farms Drive  
Suite 200  
Bedford, NH 03110-6532  
P 603.391.3900

1. A laydown area was added adjacent within the ROW to Dutton Road as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 34.
2. A laydown area was added within the ROW and access was added adjacent to Newcomb Field Parkway within the ROW as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 43.
3. A laydown area was added adjacent to Windham Road (Rte 111A) within the ROW as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 44.
4. A laydown area was shifted within the ROW to abut the work pad of Structure 34 of the 3124 Line as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 59.
5. An accessway was relocated within the ROW to reduce wetland impacts and improve constructability in Wetland 75B as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 64.
6. 3124 Line Structure 148 was relocated in order to avoid breaching a stone wall as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 63 and as depicted on National Grid Plan and Profile Sheet 400298-C-R-714.
7. The work pad for 3124 Line Structure 81 was reduced in size along the access road as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheets 34 and 35.

The revision listed as number 5 above is the only revision that resulted in a change to wetland impacts. The relocation of the accessways within Wetland 75B, as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Sheet 64, resulted in a decrease of 1,957 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact from 4,013 sq. ft. to 2,056 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact.

NEP also relocated structures, work areas, and accessways in order to accommodate the occurrences of rare plants within the ROW. Changes did not result in any impact on wetland resources. These changes are summarized as follows:

1. A laydown area was relocated near Shelly Drive and the work pad for Structure 58 was shifted to avoid rare plants as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 52.
2. Structure 60 of the Y-151 line was relocated, the work pad was shifted, and the access was reconfigured to avoid impacts to rare species as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 53 and as depicted on National Grid Plan and Profile Sheet 400298-C-R-309.
3. Work pads for Y-151 Structure 62 and 3124 Structure 127 were shifted and access was adjusted to Structure 127 to avoid rare plant occurrences as depicted on Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheet 54.

### Wetland Permit Application

Structure, work area and accessway revisions resulted in changes to temporary wetland impacts in the Towns of Londonderry and Hudson. The wetland impact table, wetland permit application forms, and Wetland Permitting Plan Set Sheets have been updated accordingly. Overall, the temporary wetland impact area was reduced by 2,999 sq. ft. through the modifications discussed above.

In addition, the vernal pool table has been updated to include an observation of a spotted turtle in Vernal Pool 38.

### Mitigation

A revised mitigation calculation is included in this Supplement that reflects changes to temporary wetland impacts and additional guidance provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The Applicants determined through further consultation with USEPA that for projects that require ROW clearing adjacent to existing maintained ROW, mitigation for clearing within and adjacent to vernal pools should be calculated as follows:

- \*15% for clearing within vernal pool buffers (100 feet from the vernal pool)

- \*30% for clearing in the vernal pool

MVRP's SEC Application utilized a 250-foot vernal pool buffer at a 15% mitigation ratio and 15% for clearing within the vernal pool. These numbers have now been adjusted to reflect the most recent guidance.

In addition, the In-Lieu Fee Payment calculation has been updated to reflect impact changes, 2015 land values, and the increase in the DES administrative fee. Mitigation and In-Lieu Fee Payment spreadsheets are included with this Supplement.

PSNH and NEP have finalized the mitigation proposal for MVRP to include one in-kind mitigation project in the Town of Pelham and the balance of mitigation in the form of an In-Lieu Fee Payment to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund. NEP and Pelham are finalizing an NEP commitment that would transfer approximately 5.5 acres of NEP-owned land identified on Tax Map 30 as Lot 7-11. See Potential Mitigation Site, Pelham, NH Site Plan. In the event that the transfer of land cannot be completed by the end of May of 2016, NEP will defer to an In-Lieu Fee payment in order to prevent a delay in the Project. The final mitigation package in accordance with Env-Wt 800 will be submitted to the SEC before the final Committee hearings.

### Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

Rare, threatened, and endangered species surveys were conducted in 2015 and are proposed to continue in 2016. The results of 2015 surveys are included as separate confidential memorandums to New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) and New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau (NHNHB). Proposed 2016 protocols and proposed best management practices for rare plant surveys were developed in coordination with NHNHB and are presented in a separate confidential memorandum. These memorandums are included with this Supplement. The Applicants are currently

coordinating with NHFG to finalize rare species field protocols and best management practices during the construction of MVRP.

This Supplement also includes a *Northern Long-eared Bat Acoustic Survey Report* dated October 28, 2015 which includes the results of acoustic surveys that were performed to detect the presence of northern long-eared bat within the Project area. Based on the results of this Report, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has made a determination of no effect, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred according to communications between NEP and USACE.

#### Alteration of Terrain Application

Structure, work area, and accessway revisions described above were made to the Alteration of Terrain Permitting Plans, Sheets 34, 35, 43, 44, 52, 53, 54, 59, 63, 64, 70, 73, 76, 77, 78, 90, 96A, 97 and 98. These plan sheets are included with this Supplement. The changes did not result in a significant change to land disturbance required by the proposed Project. The plan sheets have been provided only to reflect the most recent changes in the Project.

#### Sherrie Trefry Pre-Filed Testimony

Revised Pre-Filed Testimony has been provided to reflect the updated wetland impact numbers.