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November 20, 2017

By E-Mail & U.S. Mail

Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator
New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429
pamela.monroe@sec.nh.gov

Re: Docket No. 2015-06 – Joint Application of Northern Pass Transmission, LLC and Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy for a Certificate of Site and Facility

Dear Ms. Monroe:

Enclosed for filing in the above-referenced matter is the following:

1. Counsel for the Public's Memorandum Regarding Visitation Data for Coleman State Park.

Thank you.

Regards,

Elijah E. Emerson

Enclosure

cc: Chris Aslin, Esq.
Thomas Pappas, Esq.
Service List



MEMORANDUM

To: Christopher Aslin
From: Michael Buscher
Date: November 20, 2017
Re: Visitation data for Coleman State Park

Toward the end of his questioning on October 16, 2017, Mr. Oldenburg asked questions about how a visual impact assessment considers different recreation experiences, specifically at Coleman State Park (see transcript 101617 NPDday47AM_F.pdf, page 111, line 12, through page 116, line 9). A selection from this exchange is:

(Oldenburg) So when you do your assessment, how do you take into account the different uses and the different types of access? You know, an ATV user might have a different impression or expectation than a hiker would or a fisherman would. How do you review that and come up with your "low," "medium," "high" assessments? Do you do it individually by use, or is it a cumulative review? (page 112, line 18 through page 113, line 2)

(Buscher) I think we tried to understand what uses might be impacted greatest by a project like this. We had the fortune of having the New Hampshire Lakes study which did evaluate specifically different types of users on water bodies within New Hampshire, including non-motorized boating which is done for a recreational purpose that has a high expectation for scenery. And the survey said that those users would feel that a significant change to the landscape would have a profound impact on their use and enjoyment of those facilities.

Mr. Oldenburg continued by asking more specifically about the experience of an ATV or snowmobile user, a fisherman, and a hiker. He concludes with:

(Oldenburg) ... how do you weigh one against the other, and then how do you weigh the thousand ATV users versus the 15 hikers? Is it a qualitative analysis or a quantitative analysis that you're looking at? (page 114, lines 10-14)

To this question, Palmer replied:

(Palmer) For almost all these places it's a qualitative analysis. And the information isn't available. If there were particular sensitive sites, then we would recommend that there be an on-site survey that asked these questions. And you would essentially get a cross-section of the people who were there during the survey and then they're weighted appropriately. I mean, that's one of the reasons to do intercept surveys. (page 114, lines 15-24)

The follow-up questioning was:

(Oldenburg) So when you went to Coleman State Park, did you talk to, like, the ranger on duty or get an idea of use? Did you talk to anybody at the Parks Service to see what the uses were before you sort of threw all these numbers together?

(Buscher) We did contact the parks department and found out they don't keep track of numbers.

(Oldenburg) So is it from an observation for the uses?

(Buscher) Partly.

(Palmer) Well, we didn't do a VIA in the SEC process. So if you think about it in the federal process, the way that was handled was using the same data that DeWan used. And that data base has information about primary and important secondary recreation activities that are happening in the recreation areas. So we were using that information. But again, in the federal process, they were not interested in us kind of developing all of that information. It would be certainly possible. And it's your all decision about how deep that should go. (page 115, lines 1 through page 116, line 9)

At this point, Mr. Way asks some follow-up questions:

(Way) So when you contacted probably the Parks Division, they said that they didn't have counts of people? And Mr. Buscher, I think I'm referring back to a statement you made earlier that they didn't keep track. Didn't keep track of what?

(Palmer) Visitation counts. Say annual visitation counts.

(Way) They didn't keep track of annual visitation counts?

(Palmer) Well, we could not find a source of that, yes.

(Way) Okay. So that's different than saying they don't keep track of it. You're saying you didn't find any. Did you talk to someone about that?

(Palmer) I believe in the federal process that we did, but I would have to go back and check those e-mails.

(Way) Okay. Because that's quite a statement to make, that we don't keep track of visitor counts, which I believe we do.

(Palmer) Okay. We've not been able to find them. We've been looking pretty assiduously. But it's possible --

(Way) But you did talk to someone you said.

(Palmer) I would have done it by e-mail. So I could try to find that out, to go back --

(Way) Could you do that?

(Palmer) Yes.

(Way) Thank you. (page 116, lines 14 through page 117, line 20)

This memo is in response to this line of questioning, and particularly Mr. Way's request.

After reviewing our correspondence, T. J. Boyle Associates has not found any record of why we held that belief—there was no email correspondence with State Parks about visitation statistics. However, it is possible that the belief came from a conversation with a State Parks employee, a member of the recreation team working on the DOE NPT EIS, or one of many published reports.

It appears that most New Hampshire State Parks determine daily visitation based on visitor fees collected at staffed park entrances. The limitation to this approach is that many parks have entrances that are not staffed, including both trails and roads. Further, there is no collection of information about visitor activities and uses, other than the day-use and overnight fee categories.

A weekly report of year-to-date day use visitation is presented to the NH State Parks management team. A copy of the report for October 18, 2017 is attached. Coleman State Park has had only 14 recorded visitors this year, because Coleman State Park does not collect a day use fee (the person preparing the report could not explain why any visitors were recorded). It is possible our understanding that visitor data are not collected was generalized from a team member's conversation with a Coleman State Park employee.

This line of questioning began with Mr. Oldenburg's inquiry about the importance of scenery to different recreation experiences (e.g., page 113, lines 10-14). If we assume that visual impacts will have a different effect on different types of recreation experiences, then the visitation statistics we would need include a breakdown by type of recreation, and perhaps some demographic data. These data are not routinely collected by NH State Parks. However, such studies are possible—for instance, the New Hampshire Lakes Association sponsored a sample survey of lake users in 2006.



Total Day Use Visitation New Hampshire State Parks January 1, 2017 through October 18, 2017

| <u>Park</u> | <u>Total Paid</u> | <u>Total Passes and Prepaid</u> | <u>Total Comp</u> | <u>Total Day Use Visitation</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bear Brook | 12,879 | 2,457 | 2,684 | 18,020 |
| Cannon Mountain Tramway | 91,955 | 49 | 21 | 92,025 |
| Chesterfield Gorge | 0 | 7 | 156 | 163 |
| Clough | 14,669 | 2,678 | 3,472 | 20,819 |
| Coleman | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| Dry River | 0 | 44 | 0 | 44 |
| Echo Lake | 11,529 | 1,820 | 834 | 14,183 |
| Echo Lake - North Conway | 30,415 | 2,444 | 3,668 | 36,527 |
| Ellacoya | 19,280 | 6,662 | 3,657 | 29,599 |
| Flume Gorge | 161,541 | 110 | 70 | 161,721 |
| Franklin Pierce Homestead | 1,533 | 9 | 382 | 1,924 |
| Greenfield | 9,149 | 1,184 | 896 | 11,229 |
| Hampton Beach South | 108,922 | 6,633 | 4,456 | 120,011 |
| Hampton Seashell Complex | 0 | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| Jericho Mountain | 1,624 | 192 | 5,529 | 7,345 |
| Kingston | 15,501 | 4,224 | 4,953 | 24,678 |
| Lake Francis | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Livermore Falls | 1,828 | 62 | 90 | 1,980 |
| Milan Hill | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Miller | 22,949 | 3,744 | 4,404 | 31,097 |
| Mollidgewock | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Monadnock - Gilson Pond | 1,807 | 73 | 135 | 2,015 |
| Monadnock - Headquarters | 75,335 | 8,502 | 2,879 | 86,716 |
| Monadnock - Old Toll Road | 13,617 | 868 | 643 | 15,128 |
| Moose Brook | 365 | 85 | 0 | 450 |
| Odiorne Point | 25,324 | 4,065 | 6,252 | 35,641 |
| Pawtuckaway | 35,689 | 7,715 | 6,707 | 50,111 |
| Pillsbury | 1,347 | 4 | 268 | 1,619 |
| Pisgah | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rhododendron | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Robert Frost Farm | 1,874 | 5 | 393 | 2,272 |
| Rollins | 8,350 | 862 | 1,000 | 10,212 |
| Rye Harbor | 1,925 | 183 | 397 | 2,505 |
| Silver Lake | 8,024 | 218 | 1,770 | 10,012 |
| Sunapee | 25,076 | 8,364 | 5,737 | 39,177 |
| Umbagog Lake | 189 | 24 | 0 | 213 |
| Wadleigh | 1,850 | 523 | 1,065 | 3,438 |
| Wallis Sands | 106,029 | 26,629 | 22,018 | 154,676 |
| Weeks | 1,022 | 7 | 619 | 1,648 |
| Wellington | 29,017 | 11,030 | 9,872 | 49,919 |
| Wentworth | 5,329 | 1,015 | 1,181 | 7,525 |
| Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion | 973 | 9 | 254 | 1,236 |
| White Lake | 19,129 | 3,741 | 4,688 | 27,558 |
| Winslow | 12,145 | 827 | 1,272 | 14,244 |
| Grand Total: | 878,205 | 107,115 | 102,422 | 1,087,742 |

Please note: These numbers do not reflect winter activities at Franconia Notch. These numbers also do not reflect visitation at Mt. Washington State Park or the Hampton Beach metered parking lots. Further they do not reflect visitation at any non-fee area such as waysides or natural Areas. Finally, these numbers only reflect day-use visitation, they do not reflect visitation in the campgrounds.