

OLAF ZWICKAU ZWICK-OLAF

Northern Pass Hearing – March 16th - 6:00 PM – Deerfield

✓ Good evening, my name is Olaf Zwickau and I am a small business owner in Auburn. By background, I am an energy engineer and work in the business of measuring and improving the airflow of HVAC systems around the state, region and country with special emphasis on energy efficiency.

✓ My business is the science of efficiency. The HVAC systems I work on generate some of my clients' greatest expenses: the cost of electricity to power their heating and cooling systems... so I am uniquely aware of the struggle many businesses in the region have trying to make their systems as efficient as possible...they desperately seek to save money.

✓ Cost matters. In our state, electricity costs a lot more than it does in the rest of the country. In a competitive economy, when your monthly electric bill is 50% higher than it is elsewhere, business owners start exploring other places to set up shop. This is a critical issue with impacts on our state's economic and employment outlook.

✓ Is this project the solution to our problems? Not hardly. But I am frustrated watching time pass from weeks to months to years and seeing no progress on a clearly identified problem. Quite frankly, that lack of response to the needs of families and small business owners may add to the anger and frustration we see playing out in national politics.

✓ My point is this: we have a project that is a step in the right direction, which can bring a clearly stated savings to residents and business owners,

as well as tax revenue to the host communities to offset the potential impacts of the Northern Pass project.

I know there are people in this room who oppose the project. I respect your concerns and I hope there is room for compromise. Our state needs lower electric rates, and when this debate is over, we need to talk much more about other energy projects we can bring here to further cut rates and ensure a reliable supply of energy.

That brings me to a final point: *clean* energy. With all the talk of poles and wires – the environmental impact of this energy resource has been largely ignored. Our state proudly protects its scenic beauty and has for generations. We also support environmentally friendly projects.

Northern Pass is one of those projects. By using hydro-power, this project will reduce carbon emissions by three million tons every single year.

What exactly does it mean to reduce 3 million tons of carbon emissions through hydro-power energy? I wasn't sure so I looked it up. According to the EPA, cutting three million tons of carbon emissions per year is like parking 574,737 passenger vehicles for the whole year. It's like closing down the chimneys of a quarter of a million homes. From Mother Nature's perspective, cutting three million tons of carbon is like performing carbon sequestration on 2.2 million acres of forest.

If people care about the environment, and I know they do, these numbers should get their attention. I understand view impacts, and I respect

balancing property owner interests against the public interest. But these statistics are unequivocal: this is an environmentally friendly energy resource, one which we should be exploring how to expand.

Finally, on this topic, I wonder: what is the environmental impact of digging the type of tunnel needed to bury a 190 mile electricity line from Canada to this community? Isn't there potential for a significant impact on woodlands, streams, waterways, and other natural resources?

The vast majority of Northern Pass would string a powerline along an existing corridor of powerlines. Isn't that precisely why our predecessors established these corridors in the first place?

This project will save business owners significant money. It will save families money each month. It is far cleaner energy than anything we use now. Even opponents to this project admit older power plants are retiring and we need new energy sources to replace them.

—If not this project, what's Plan B? (Silence) That's what I thought.

To the members of this committee, I ask that you find a way to move this project forward and make it a reality for our state. Thank you.