

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ([david.Wiesner@puc.nh.gov](mailto:david.Wiesner@puc.nh.gov))

March 17, 2015

New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee c/o David K. Wiesner, Staff Attorney

N.H. Public Utilities Commission

21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10

Concord, NH 03301

Re: New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee Rulemaking, Docket No. 2014-04

Dear Mr. Wiesner and Members of the Site Evaluation Committee:

A daily check of the Rulemaking Docket shows valuable public input being added continuously in an attempt to strengthen the proposed rules governing the siting of energy facilities. I am writing to encourage you to heed this advice and follow the original intent of SB99, SB245, and HB1602. Members of the public have volunteered considerable time and energy providing important recommendations that should be taken into account as evidenced when reading the letters, testimony, and especially the pre-rulemaking reports provided via the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP). I also hope that when you read the OEP reports, you will keep in mind the roles that Industry Members played while these reports were being formulated and understand industry desires for easier siting do not necessarily equate in balance with the need to protect the public and the natural assets for which NH is so treasured. You are entrusted with a great responsibility and the consequences of getting this wrong are too great.

I would like to reference this quote below taken from the SEC website:

*"The introduction of major new energy facility proposals for a site or sites in New Hampshire presents the local community, the state, and often the New England region with fundamental impacts to the environment, energy supply, economy, and the public's health and welfare which must be carefully analyzed before proceeding. The impacts may be either positive or negative, temporary or permanent, or more commonly a combination of each. Since such major changes carry with them the potential to influence so many sectors of our daily life, a comprehensive, high-level approach geared toward "balancing" these impacts has been established to ensure that these new facilities are evaluated in the public's best interests, and that they are designed, built, and operated in a manner that will protect and preserve the high quality of life enjoyed by New Hampshire's residents and visitors alike."*

The last sentence from the excerpt above is crucial. How can we evaluate potential projects to determine if they are in the public's best interests? Is this what we have been experiencing in the recent past? Looking at the recent rush to attempt to build large scale industrial wind farms throughout the state with resultant power being sold out of state, one would have to say no. Our current experiences show how important it is to strengthen the rules. We have already seen negative permanent impacts to the landscape, wildlife, view shed, real estate values, and health and safety. Imagine the cumulative effects of continuing to build hundreds of miles of industrial wind turbines along with the associated transmission lines and substations. Imagine those effects now combined with the proposed Northern Pass? Maybe we could look at it this way: If an energy project were coming to your town, your neighborhood or even the lot next door, what would you consider to be proper siting rules?

Key factors, per the OEP, regarding writing the new rules are: Aesthetics; Orderly Development; Wildlife, Rare Plants, and Natural Communities; and Health and Safety. These are critical but even more so when held up against what is unique about the state of NH. NH's economy is predominantly tourism based and why is that? Specifically because of the "aesthetics" or incredible natural scenic beauty. The "orderly development" which has preserved the natural environment, the wildlife, and

the air and water quality keeping much of it unspoiled. NH is known for its pristine scenic vistas bringing thousands of visitors, new residents, and retirees to the state each year. We have phenomenal state parks, hiking trails, mountains, and lakes, all of which enable recreation on a large scale. An energy siting plan compatible with what NH represents would only make sense if it strongly protects all of these aspects that are so vital to the state and its residents.

Additionally, energy siting rules need be protective in the very serious areas of health and safety. We are hearing from many project abutters who have had to abandon their homes and are experiencing very real harm. Related lawsuits have been on the rise and the detriment to people's lives is tragic. The effects of sound, including infrasound, shadow flicker, ice throw, fire hazards, lightning strikes, and blade failure, need to be accounted for with proper distance setbacks. The increased frequency of industrial wind turbine accidents and health and safety issues has been astonishing. Picture our scenic vistas and imagine a 500' turbine distributing burning debris hundreds of yards into the forest. Could our local fire departments contain this? Are roads maintained year round to enable access in the event of an emergency?

See: <http://www.caithnesswindfarms.co.uk/accidents.pdf> and <http://turbinesonfire.org/>

Finally, when energy projects are being considered, how can we ensure that host towns are given a fair deal? Is there enough local control and protection? How can small communities with limited budgets afford to pay for legal expertise and ensure that decommissioning agreements are adequate so those costs will not eventually come back to rest with the town? Typically projects are built by large multi-national companies who set up separate limited liability companies or LLC's to shield the parent company should issues arise. Parent companies that can easily become financially unstable without existing tax credits and incentives as evidenced by review of their public financial statements. Also, during construction, who will oversee these projects to ensure the rules are adhered to and construction is performed as permitted without the violations we have evidenced in recent past? And, what about the tax effects and valuation of property in these towns? How will they know what the true cost vs. benefit will be, and if there actually will be any benefit? Will we also consider when the power isn't needed by NH and is only sold out of state to meet arbitrary RPS goals?

The quote I referenced above refers to the need to "carefully analyze" the "fundamental impacts" when siting new energy projects. The new rules should be written to reflect just that. Thank you for your time and your effort during this process.

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