

Open Letter To
Site Evaluation Committee
11/25/15

Chairman Honigberg,
Site Evaluation Committee Members Members,
21 South Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Site Evaluation Committee Members;

I sat at your last hearing on November 18th quite dismayed over the SEC's public retreat from what I believe are its statutory responsibilities as it effectively gutted just and sensible SEC preliminary ruling decisions regarding Northern Pass (NP) siting matters that appeared to be the result of pressure from JLCAR and from the Northern Pass Lobby. The ink on your original rulings hardly had time to dry. What was even more startling is that the SEC also appeared to leave in place, essentially the same sensitive siting criteria involving the cumulative impacts of wind projects - rules that it had just barely excised from the applicable siting regulations pertaining to NP.

Perhaps the SEC members decided it would be wise to switch rather than fight JLCAR in the open court of public opinion - one can only hope that in the final analysis, they will still vote their consciences and do the right things for the people of New Hampshire. To a casual, but interested on-looker, however, it appeared that NP had the "fix" in with JLCAR. Why do I feel this way you ask:

- JLCAR has 18 members, 8 of which are alternate members. Only 1 of the 18 permanent and alternate members is from a district affected by the Northern Pass. None, not one of the other 17 members lives in an area directly impacted by NP's announced routing. Not a single one of these 17 members has had to look out his or her living room window and contemplate what NP would do to the quality of their property's view scape or deal with a real estate broker's disappointing price opinions on that owner's property values.
- The one JLCAR member that represents Senate District 17, John Reagan, has long been a well known supporter of Northern Pass pointing to the high yield of property taxes on PSNH properties in his district that includes Deerfield. He may well feel that in a town so riddled already with transmission line infrastructure, one more new line probably won't matter. He has hardly been an objective listener to the thousands of negative comments about the NP project's destructive impacts constantly being discussed around the state.
- Even though the Department of Environmental Services (DES) has opined that the NP has not met DES requirements for proceeding with permitting, the SEC appears to be proceeding with its own permitting process even though many important questions are still pending answers.
- NP still does not have complete control of its stated choice of routing. Additionally JLCAR is now aware that one or more serious legal actions are underway in the state's

Superior Court System that could lead to the elimination of access to one or more sections of NP's chosen routes - again, an indication of incomplete control over NP's announced routing. Yet, the SEC is allowing the incomplete route permitting process to proceed causing JLCAR to weigh in by posting its own set of conclusions that appear on the surface to be greasing the skids for NP to slide through the remainder of the SEC siting process.

No one wants to see a public bloodletting process ensue, but giving the NP what appears on the surface to be a free pass through the siting process while demanding full compliance to the rules by wind projects is patently unfair. There are good reasons why siting regulations in RSA 162-H regarding wind projects goes into substantive detail about not only negative impacts on people and property, but they also cite cumulative impacts that could mount up over time from elements of wind projects in ways that are very much the same as transmission line projects.

Please restore my trust in the system by holding transmission projects up to the same level of scrutiny as wind projects. The people on JLCAR do not comprise a jury of the impacted citizens' peers. JLCAR members will never have to look out their windows at a transmission tower in their backyards. They will not ever feel the hair on the back of their necks rise up when they go out for a walk. They won't hear the hum that emanates from high voltage power cables when they're raking their lawns. JLCAR members won't ever feel like turning away from a sunset over the mountains out in the distance because silhouetted against the sky are ugly thick dangling cables looping from one steel lattice work tower to the next. They will never feel the sense of depression that comes from needing to move, but not being able to because they can't sell their houses at any price. And unlike me, they will never face the desperation of losing their business because they can't market their real estate because customers just won't buy the product. Please put yourself into the shoes of people who will be impacted in the ways described above before allowing NP to route itself anywhere, but underground.

Please follow the wisdom of your consciences in these proceedings. Please do the morally right thing even if it's not the politically correct thing to do. What you decide to do will have a profound impact on New Hampshire, many of its citizens, visitors and businesses for decades to come.

Sincerely,

--

Thomas N.T. Mullen, Former owner, Owl's Nest Resort & Golf Club
President, Winterbrook Realty, Inc./Mountain Country Realty
438 NH Route 49, PO Box 1656
Campton, NH 03223
tntmullen@gmail.com
[603-759-2510](tel:603-759-2510) mobile
[603-726-3742](tel:603-726-3742) office