

October 23, 2018

New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee  
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 271-2435

**RE: Eversource – Seacoast | SEC Docket No. 2015-04**

Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the Project. I am opposed to it for most of the reasons provided during the public hearing held on October 11.

In addition to the comments I made at that public hearing, I provide further detail below.

First and foremost, I echo what I believe Representative Marjorie Smith noted at the hearing: You don't know what you don't know. Eversource's public outreach, counter to the company's claim, has been insufficient. Examples include:

- Durham residents were told in April 2015 that Eversource was coming to us early in the game, when that turned out to be patently false, initiating a **distrust that has persisted**.
- Online posted maps and diagrams are tightly packed with detail and shrunk to a size that makes it impossible to discern what is important or to identify points of interest in detail, even when zooming in on the digital versions.
- Some applicant documents were submitted after the close of discovery.

A famous women's clothing retailer states, "An educated customer is our best customer." And surely we are dealing with a much more consequential issue. So **why hasn't Eversource done a better job of educating us?**

**Eversource's argument of need**

Eversource claims that the demand for Seacoast region electricity warrants the project. Yet the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy issued a research brief, dated March 7, 2017, titled "New Hampshire's Electricity Future: Cost, Reliability, and Risk" <<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/perspective/nh-electricity-markets>>

Among its "Key Findings":

- "New England does not need to increase energy use to continue to grow its economy. From 2005 to 2015, real state GDP in New England grew by 9.7 percent while energy use fell by 9.6 percent (Figure 1). Over the same time period real GDP for the entire U.S. grew by 15.2 percent, while energy use fell by 3.4 percent (Figure 2).

- “While the price per kilowatt hour of electricity in New Hampshire has been higher than the national average for decades, the average residential electricity bill is equal to the national average and the average commercial electricity bill is lower than the national average (Table 1). New England has adapted to higher electricity prices via improvements in energy efficiency and a transition to a less energy-intensive economy. The energy intensity of the New England economy is much lower than the national average (Figure 3).
- “During this period of rapid transformation in the global and regional energy markets, there is significant stranded cost risk to electricity ratepayers for large infrastructure investments with uncertain return on investment. This includes publicly-funded expenditures for new natural gas capacity.”

So, why should rate-paying customers believe Eversource? Is it any wonder that many are skeptical that we will be the beneficiaries, rather than our southern neighbors, although we may foot the bill and bear the burden of construction and impacts?

### Questions related to the proposed utility poles

Please see below photographs of the type of utility pole that I believe the public assumes will be installed for the Seacoast Reliability Project. The photos were taken at the entrance to “The Crossings,” the Portsmouth mall on Gosling Road, where Trader Joe’s and Staples are located.

To put it nicely, the size of the pole can only be called “outsized” relative to the landscape.



- 1) Where is a schematic route map showing where poles will be installed by segment of the route? (Without this information, how can we evaluate what the impact will be at a specific location?)
- 2) Will the poles all be of this towering, 8-foot-diameter, rust-brown style?
- 3) What will the optical cable be used for—and by whom? Is there an alternative to locating it at the top of a tall monopole?

- 4) With today's software technology, Eversource could provide a digital model of a viewscape. Our planning boards ask developers to provide something that facilitates visualization of the completed project. Has Eversource done this? If so, where can the public access and view it easily? If not, why not?
- 5) Has Eversource provided a list of locations where the proposed monopoles are already installed? Has Eversource provided a location where a typical "standard" pole is installed nearby a proposed tall monopole, so the public may compare the two visually? Has Eversource provided a photomontage showing proposed monopoles juxtaposed to mature trees growing along the proposed route?
- 6) To a person, the response to my observation that the proposed monopoles are likely to be eight feet in diameter has been shock. If Eversource had communicated better, more people would have known what I also only learned about three weeks ago from someone who has been "living" this project.

### **Monopoles: Unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics, ..., the natural environment...**

It appears that Eversource has committed to enormous monopoles with significant stacking of lines, yet we haven't heard sufficient rationale for this choice.

As others have stated, monopoles could be shorter if the only lines were the 115 kV transmission lines or the only lines were the 34.5 kV distribution lines. It is the combination of both transmission lines and underbuild of the 34.5 kV distribution lines on the same monopole that causes the stacking effect, resulting in poles higher than the tree line.

What is the rationale for this design? Why hasn't Eversource chosen lower poles with horizontal arms, or multiple poles with horizontal arms? Is this configuration allowed within a 100-foot-wide?

We don't know.

### **Choose alternate routes**

First and foremost, the SRP should be routed on the 'Northern Option', from Madbury to Dover to Eliot ME to Portsmouth **shown in Appendix 23, "Overview Map of the Three Different Route Alternatives."** The easement along this route is much wider, there are already tall poles, multiple lines, and high-voltage transmission lines, and that area is already ruined aesthetically. It would not require going UNDER water, would therefore be less disruptive to the Bay, to property owners and the environment.

Second, if the SRP does pass through Durham along the railroad tracks, Mill Road, and Bennett Road, Eversource should choose as an **access road the water tank driveway**, NOT the Class VI road access. This latter is of historic value, passing by a graveyard

that always reminds me of Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*. It also passes through woods long treasured by recreational users for their serenity.

While I know exactly where the railroad is and may choose my route so as to avoid it when I walk or cross-country ski in these woods, I am not at all sure that I will have a choice to not see the 100-foot industrial monopoles. The potential loss of this nearby respite from the "noise" of everyday life and problems of the world saddens me.

Many, if not most, Durham residents choose to live here for its natural setting, including easy access to the enjoyment of woods and water, not merely for exercise but also for their beauty. Serenity and contemplation are incompatible with industrial equipment.

We can do better, but we must speak up. That's what Seacoast residents have been doing. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely yours,

*Robin Mower*  
*6 Britton Lane*  
*Durham, NH 03824*