

State of New Hampshire

Site Evaluation Committee

Joint Application of Northern Pass Transmission, LLC and Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy for a Site and Facility for the Construction of a New High Voltage Transmission Line in New Hampshire

Docket 2015-06

Post-Hearing Memorandum of Whitefield-Bethlehem Abutters

The Whitefield to Bethlehem Abutters group offers this memorandum in further and emphatic opposition to the Application of Eversource Energy and Northern Pass Transmission LLC (NP) to site and construct their proposed transmission facility. We oppose it for the reasons set forth in our testimony, and that of our professional witness, Peter W. Powell, as submitted by us and as offered during our appearance on November 9, 2017, all of which we incorporate by reference.

From Bruce & Sondra Brekke, Whitefield;

We are intervenors and have been actively following the proceedings, either by attendance in Concord, or by reviewing the written transcripts. Before that we attended, and participated in, the public comment sessions in the North Country. Throughout all this, we have seen the arguments from both sides, with each presenting their expert witnesses only to be countered by the opposition. It is unfortunate that the opinions of the experts do ring of truth and fact, but are, in the end, still opinions, and in some cases, purchased opinions.

The Applicant relies on expert testimony as burden of proof. The truth is that the expert testimony is an opinion, based on incomparable observations, projected onto inexact situations that are then interpreted as fact. The fact is that no one will know what the impact of the tall metal structures will be until they are erected. At that time it will be too late to agree that the opposition to the project was correct. In the field of conservation and preservation, victories are temporary, defeat is permanent. The only acceptable mitigation is lowering the structure heights to that of the existing structures. If that is not possible, then burial of the transmission line, or abandoning the project, would be acceptable.

From the beginning, our interest in the project has been the effect that the proposed towers will have on our lifestyle and wellbeing. Our initial shock was that a project of such magnitude could be considered in the North Country where nothing close to this exists today. When we

realized that the existing Right of Way that abuts our property would be part of this proposal we felt devastated at the prospect that 100-foot metal lattice towers would be placed closely and directly across our spectacular, panoramic view of the Kilkenny and Pliny Ranges.

It is since then that we have taken every opportunity to express our concerns to the SEC. We have been accepted as abutting intervenors and submitted pre-filed testimony, submitted supplemental testimony and appeared before the Committee for direct and cross examination.

We have discussed our concerns with James Wagner, the Northern Pass Landowner Outreach Specialist, during his visit to our house in December 2017. He was shown our beautiful view of the landscape, which includes Mt Cabot, Mt Waumbek, Prospect Mt and the Mountain View Grand Hotel, and he understood that existing wooden structures, barely visible at tree top level, would be displaced by metal towers and power lines that would be over twice the height. He understood, but whether his understanding has any effect on aesthetics mitigation remains to be seen. Meeting with landowners is one aspect of reaching out, taking action is yet another.

The statewide opposition to this project is remarkable. There have been over 3000 public comments submitted to the SEC website, most of which oppose the project. A central inquiry before the Subcommittee is whether the Project will have an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics along the proposed route. The public has made it clear that an unreasonable adverse effect stands before the Subcommittee.

We purchased our dream house in 2008 because of the beauty, privacy and solitude the property provided, and we have since retired and plan to continue to enjoy the fruits of our labor because we love what we have created here. We take great pleasure in watching the wildlife and raptors that we see on a daily basis, and the amazing views of distant mountains. When we have friends, neighbors or relatives come to visit, they marvel at the stunning view. Even Jim Wagner was impressed.

The last thing that we want to witness is the destruction of a huge part of our daily life caused by the construction of the proposed project. The Northern Pass, through the "forward NH plan" initiative, has offered and promised various financial incentives to businesses, schools, civic organizations, towns and landowners for their support of the Project. It is not their money that we and many others in New Hampshire want. What we want is respect for our privacy and our property, and we want to be rid of this proposed project.

We respectfully request that the Certificate for Site and Facility for the Northern Pass Transmission, Docket 2015-06 be denied.

Bruce and Sondra Brekke

Whitefield

From Tim & Brigitte White, Whitefield;

Please vote AGAINST NP. Our house is located some 150-200 feet from the power line where the proposed route is to go. We love our home but if this gets voted through, we will be forced to sell our home of 20 years. Twenty years of buying our first home, having and raising our children and the endless memories. That CANNOT be replaced. We worked hard for what we have and it can be destroyed by a vote of yes. We don't want to see these towers and all the negative implications it will have on our health, property value, scenic views, the list goes on. We DO NOT want to sell our home. Put yourself in our shoes, what would you do if this were your home?

Tim & Brigitte White

Whitefield

The rest of this memorandum will emphasize points that bear summary focus following the overwhelming quantity of data and the many statements that must now be assimilated and deliberated by SEC members. We ask for your frank and deliberate consideration of the following:

1. We firmly believe that, in balance, this project is a poor choice among the many ways the State of NH may offer its resources, its land, its standing strengths and their long-term promise, for the benefit of our people. If transmitting Quebec hydropower, or power of any other Quebec source, to southern NE is important, then we implore the SEC to choose the project that will have the least negative impact, and provide the greatest benefit to this State, without sacrifice by the region which can least afford it.

- NP would be devastating to us.
- NP is not needed, especially in the face of better alternatives.
- NP is overshadowed by other projects that offer equal or greater outcomes without such high degrees of sacrifice and controversy.

In sum, NP should be rejected for its immense and negative impacts on people, property and communities, with little to no benefit for the areas affected. Instead, it promises long lasting degradation and certain offense to our nature and ourselves. NP is not the only act in town. We should not allow it to behave as though it were, but instead encourage, by its rejection, those projects which present us with better alternatives.

2. Northern Pass does not pass the tests established by NH statute. It would negatively impact the aesthetics and natural resources of our region, and the values of our property. As abutters, we state this personally and emphatically. As members of communities that may be permanently affected, we say it as well for our neighbors, our families and our region.

- The testimony by NP contractors hired to present retrospective appraisals of various properties that will be affected by NP, was neither objective, adequately researched, accurately reported or properly applied in the preparation of their reports. Without correct data, an understanding of local markets and a working knowledge of the behavior of those who purchase properties in our region, there is no way their conclusions can be believed or supported. They fly in the face of all that is obvious and true, as we have stated and demonstrated in our testimony.
- The factual data presented by NP contractors relative to NP's impact on property values was biased and incorrect, leading in some cases to the unheard-of result that appraised values, offered by Mr. Underwood, were actually below the prices paid by willing buyers in arms-length transactions that actually occurred. This was not only the result of inexpertly gathered and poorly interpreted data, but was also due to the lack of familiarity and understanding of local markets. We join Counsel for the Public in observing that absurdity, for which no explanation was offered by NP.
- Setting aside all the data that can be offered ad infinitum from opposing sources, the broad and consistent reaction and testimony of affected parties, relative to the very real and already realized impacts of NP on local real estate values, especially in northern NH, are indisputable.
- All the words of all those affected are the best possible reflection of the attitudes of real buyers in this region, knowing that ugly doesn't sell for much, if at all, and the great majority will not buy what they don't like to see. All the voices of all the people who have spoken throughout the many years of this process are evidence enough to measure the impact this project would have on individuals, families and communities.

3. The NP project would not be in the public interest. It is a simple cost/benefit analysis for us.

- The costly impact on property values, historic and community values, many of our businesses, countless acres of land, countless families and individuals in their use and enjoyment of their property, and in their right and opportunity to benefit from its value, would be severe, sacrificial and without recourse or recovery.

- There would be no corresponding benefit in our view, or in the view of hundreds if not thousands of others who would be affected. You heard us speak of the threats posed to us personally and to our property, some to be realized if NP should be approved, some already being realized to the detriment of health and safety. You listened compassionately to one story about a family unable to retrieve its equity in the property they own, equity needed intensely but incapable of being extracted for the care of ill and physically challenged family members. This is but one of many stories, and NP offers no concern or recourse. We consider this harsh and disgraceful, and we are offended by our neighbor's unnecessary suffering. Were it not for Northern Pass, their lives would be better and more manageable.

4. Finally, as observed by so many others, including our regional planning commission, the North Country Council, this project will and already has interfered with orderly development. It proposes a long and unforgiving corridor, destined to be expanded and used in the same way even more intensely if ever allowed to begin. Along its length, projects, investments and initiatives that require natural beauty, with unfettered views, well preserved landscapes, and a sense of natural wonder, as recommended by NH Grand and other initiatives fostering our region, will simply not occur. The controversy over the Hilton hotel proposed in Bethlehem is a prime example of this. Such investments would have to search within a more narrow range of options in a region so broadly affected by the incursion of NP, and in many instances will have to search in other states to capture a fickle public. There are over 40 states in this country which claim tourism as a major enterprise and factor in their economies, and a key to their success. New Hampshire is but one, and in this region, our economy is delicate enough to struggle along without Northern Pass. We must not tamper with this economy, but allow it to strengthen and grow, serving us as we protect it and foster its growth. Please do not put this region, this delicate region, at further risk of decline and disappointment.

Respectfully submitted,

David Van Houten, Secretary

Whitefield-Bethlehem Abutters

