

March 21, 201
New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee
Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

(via email)

Re: New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (“SEC”) Docket No. 2015-06

Northern Pass Transmission Project

Comments on Municipal Groups in the Order on Petitions to Intervene

Dear Ms. Monroe:

The Ashland Conservation Commission respectfully requests the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee remain open to reconfiguration of the three (3) Municipal Groups defined in the committee’s Order of Motion to Intervene, dated March 18, 2016. We support the committee’s effort to avoid “duplicate arguments and ineffective process” in regards to “assur[ing] the prompt and orderly conduct of the proceedings” (Order, pp. 8-9). However, we possess great concern at the broadly-sized groups of municipal entities.

While we agree that “every intervenor has some characteristics that make it unique”, the “common interests and positions expressed by each” should not be the sole argument for such extensive consolidation (Order, p. 8). Furthermore, the sheer physical size of territory within the confines of each Municipal Group makes the designation of “a single spokesperson for the purposes of filing pleadings, conducting discovery, and for examining witnesses at evidentiary hearings” burdensome and unwieldy (Order, pp. 8-9). Not all municipal entities share interests and concerns with the co-entities assigned to their respective group and coordination of efforts hampers the effectiveness of collating our specialized knowledge into a meaningful position.

Of specific concern to this commission is the hardship imposed on volunteer members of municipal entities. These individuals are not paid staff members who are able to devote a full, 40-hour workweek to this case. Furthermore, we are concerned about the undue burden of responsibility placed on a Municipal Group’s single spokesperson. Most of the municipal entities cannot afford the luxury of a lawyer, leaving them at a disadvantage in asserting their concerns and interests.

We recognize the provisions of the statutes and rules governing intervention and realize they “allow limitations to be imposed on intervenors, including consolidation and combination of intervenors” (Order, pp.47-48). However, it is our deep concern that the limitations are “so extensive as to prevent the intervenor from protecting the interest which formed the basis for intervention” (RSA 541-A:32, IV). We disagree that the “many common interests and positions that make the combinations and consolidations [...] appropriate” (Order, p. 48). Furthermore, these limitations imposed on the affected municipal entities will impose undue harm on the

entities in presentation of their views on the orderly development of the region, per the provisions of RSA 162-H:16, IV(b).

We respectfully ask the committee members to remain open to reconfiguration of the Municipal Groups to better reflect the issues and concerns, as well as the geographic territory and socioeconomic standing of the affected municipal entities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashland Conservation Commission

Walter Durack, Chair

Harold Lamos, Secretary

Kathleen DeWolfe