

# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM



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Pamela Monroe  
Administrator  
Site Evaluation Committee

RE: SEC Docket No. 2015-06  
Comments: Municipal Groupings in the Order  
Of Motions To Intervene of March 18, 2016.

Dear Ms. Monroe, Mr. Honigberg and Members of the SEC,

We are requesting a reconsideration of the Municipal Grouping of Bethlehem with the Towns of Pittsburgh, Clarksville, Stewartstown, Colebrook, Northumberland, Dalton, Whitefield, and Littleton. The factors we are asking to be reconsidered are the distance and large size of the grouping. The farthest Towns of Pittsburgh and Clarksville are over 60 miles away with a travel time of at least one and a half hours. As most Board members in northern towns work, this amount of time and travel will be a hardship that interferes with adequate collaboration. It is our understanding that at least one Town has legal representation which means we would have to incur large legal fees to connect or interact with that attorney. We feel that Towns such as Dalton and Whitefield do not have the same set of circumstances that Bethlehem faces.

We understand that on the surface many of these Towns look similar but that is the fallacy of viewing the North Country as all being the same. Bethlehem is unique in that we are scheduled to have above ground lines as well as underground lines along with Transition Station #5.

The Bethlehem Planning Board has spent many years in developing Zoning Ordinances that maintain and enhance the small community and historic essence

of our Town. Our ordinances are reviewed to ensure they meet the New Hampshire Planning and Land Use Regulation published by the NH Office of Energy and Planning. Our history of Grand Hotels is still seen today in remaining cottages and areas such as the Rocks Estate which has a rich history and still functions as a well known conservator of the land.

Our Zoning Ordinances are required to be followed by our current and prospective citizens and businesses. The exception to this is the Northern Pass where our autonomy has been removed by the authority of the State of New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC). That local loss of control results in far reaching consequences. As we are unable to do Site Plan Review on the towers and substation that are proposed for Bethlehem how then, do we do site plan review on any abutters to that property. Northern Pass as an abutter would then have all the rights of an abutter should anyone desire to build in that area, but no responsibility to follow the local ordinances. This sets up a two tier system where one citizen is reviewed locally while a business is treated differently on a state level. We believe this will discourage any future development of this area and takes away the voice of the Town legislature by removing Town approved oversight.

We strongly believe that due to the unique circumstances in Bethlehem our voice would be better heard if allowed to be a group of the three Boards in Bethlehem, Select Board, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission.

We respectfully request your reconsideration of this petition to allow the Bethlehem Select Board, Bethlehem Planning Board, and Bethlehem Conservation Commission to be a single grouping as an Intervener.

Respectively submitted,



Bethlehem Planning Board