NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources
19 Pillsbury Street, Concord NH 03301-3570
Voice/ TTY RELAY ACCESS 1-800-735-2964
http://www. nh.gov/nhdhr

603-271-3483
603-271-3558
FAX 603-271-3433
preservation@dcr.nh.gov

March 7, 2017

Pamela Monroe
Ms. Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator
NH Site Evaluation Committee
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord NH 03301-2429

Subject: Northern Pass Transmission, LLC & Public Service of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy – Docket No. 2015-06 (RPR # 1448)

Dear Ms. Monroe:

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (DHR) is providing an update on the status of historic review relative to the above-referenced project. On August 23, 2016, the DHR requested an extension date of March 1, 2017 in order to continue consultation with the Department of Energy (DOE) and the applicant to identify historic properties as part of the federal Section 106 review of the Northern Pass Transmission Project. The Section 106 consultative process is not complete and continues to identify archaeological and historic resources in the project's area of potential effects. Once resources are identified, DOE, DHR and the consulting parties will consult to assess the project's effects and resolve any adverse effects through avoidance, minimization or mitigation. Public involvement is a key component in the Section 106 process and time has been allotted to incorporate the public's concerns and comments.

As reported in our August 23, 2016 correspondence with the Site Evaluation Committee, the DHR also executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the applicant on December 4, 2015; it outlined a number of stipulations and deadlines for the identifying historic resources along proposed transmission corridor. The "best effort" deadline for completing the identification effort in the MOU was October 31, 2016. The DHR's goal in executing the MOU was to provide the Site Evaluation Committee with timely comprehensive information about the historic resources potentially impacted by the proposed project.

The current status of the identification efforts are:

Archaeology: To date, 100 percent of archaeologically-sensitive areas have been assessed during Phase I studies. A total of 22 potentially eligible archaeological sites (12 pre-contact; 10 post-contact) have been identified within the direct area of potential effects as part of the Phase IB survey effort. Phase II testing is planned for all 12 of the potentially eligible pre-contact sites along the route. Phase II testing is planned for six of the potentially eligible post-contact sites (4 of the 10 potentially eligible post-contact sites will be avoided by the project).

Above-ground/Architectural Resources: Cultural resources consultants working under contract with the DOE identified 20 individual properties and eight historic districts already determined eligible and/or listed on the National Register of Historic Places with the project's area of potential effect. (Historic districts are clusters of historic properties and can range in size from a handful of properties on several acres, to hundreds of properties on thousands of acres). Reviewing the DOE consultants' recommendations for further survey, DOE, DHR and the applicant determined that 108 individual properties and potential historic districts within the area of potential effect require survey and evaluation in order to determine whether they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. To date, evaluations for 50 individual properties and 20 historic districts have been accepted as complete by the DHR. The remaining properties are scheduled for DHR review and/or have been reviewed and needed additional data or analysis to complete their evaluation.

Cultural Landscape Studies: The applicant has contracted with a multi-disciplinary team to identify and evaluate cultural landscapes throughout the entire corridor. A cultural landscape is a reflection of human adaptation and use of natural resources and is often expressed in the way land is organized and divided, patterns of settlement, land use, systems of circulation, and the types of structures that are built. The character of a cultural landscape is defined both by physical materials, such as roads, buildings, walls, and vegetation, and by use reflecting cultural values and traditions. The deadline for completing this evaluation was February 1, 2017. While this deadline was not met, investigations continue in order to determine the exact number and location of eligible cultural landscapes in the area of potential effects.

As reported on August 23, 2016, the DHR had hoped that the project would be further advanced at this time in order to provide the Site Evaluation Committee with a complete update on the historic review process. Given that the information remains incomplete, the DHR cannot forwarding its findings regarding the final number and significance of historic resources in the project area, the proposed project's effects on those resources, and the measures planned to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

The DHR would be glad to discuss the progress of the historical resources review further with you or with Committee members in order to determine the most appropriate manner to provide the necessary information, per RSA 162-H:7 VI-c. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nadine Miller
Preservation Project Reviewer