

PROSPECT FARM - LANCASTER LLC

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To: Pamela Monroe, Administrator (pamela.monroe@sec.nh.gov)
The New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC)
Public Utilities Commission, Martin Honigberg, Chairman
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10, Concord, NH 03301-2429

Date: February 3, 2016

RE: The Joint Application of Northern Pass Transmission, LLC and Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a/ Eversource Energy for a Certificate of Site and Facility (SEC Docket No. 2015-6) by John W. Davidge, Prospect Farm-Lancaster, L.L.C., Lancaster New Hampshire:

Dear Ms. Monroe,

I, in right of ownership of Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC, Lancaster NH, respectfully request to intervene in the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) proceedings under Docket No. 2015-06 relating to the proposed Northern Pass Transmission project, as per their most recent application (4 December 2015). Pursuant to NH CAR Site 202.11 and RSA 541-A:32, I am sending this request to you, both electronically and in hard copy form. The electronic filing copies the SEC's distribution list for this proceeding, as noted in the "cc" line.

Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC (PF-L) has been in my family since 1803. The 450-acre property is located on south-facing slope of Mt. Prospect (elevation 2,077') with commanding views of the entire Presidential Range of the White Mountains from the Northern Section to Mt. Moosilauke in the southern White Mountain National Forest (WMNF).

The 70' high above-ground Towers of the proposed Northern Pass Transmission project (Northern Pass) would pass *within* one (1) mile of Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC. From Mt. Prospect, eighty-six (86) of the proposed Towers will be visible from Cape Horn in Northumberland, across the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge at Pondicherry and south to Whitefield and Dalton. Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC lies well within the 10-mile "visual impact zone" used by the US Department of Energy (DOE) to assess similar visual impacts from Northern Pass. It also lies within the SEC's rule for a 10 mile "area of visual impact" for rural transmission lines built on existing rights of way where tower heights are increased, as is the case for this segment of the proposed Northern Pass line.

As proposed, the above-ground Northern Pass Towers would affect the view from historic Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC of both the Northern and Southern section of the WMNF. Prospect Farm was the homestead of James Brackett Weeks, brother of Maj. John Wingate Weeks (I). Maj. Weeks led NH forces in the War of 1812, served NH as a legislator and as a US Congressman. He was also one of the 1820 party of eight who climbed up Mt. Washington and gave the Presidential Range their names.

Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC was part of the John Wingate Weeks Estate, established in 1910 and remained so until 1941. At that time, my grandmother Katherine Weeks Davidge and her brother Sinclair Weeks gave over 400 acres to the State of New Hampshire for a Park to celebrate NH's crucial role in the passage of the Weeks Act of 1911 and the creation of the WMNF, soon to celebrate its Centennial. The trails and historic structures in Weeks State Park today are used year-round, for outdoor recreation including hiking, bird-watching, skiing, and botanical study. For the past several years it has been selected as one of four NH State Parks for First Day New Year's hike. On account of its unique situation and elevation, the DOE selected Mt. Prospect as one of only 15 Key Observation Points (KOP #LA-2a) for its Environmental Impact Statement review of the NP project.

Sharing the same location, Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC continues to farm the historic homestead, and its open fields serve as precious habitat for many NH birds and animals. It's close connection to the history of the region and, in particular to the WMNF and the Presidential Range, is enjoyed by the many visitors to the Lancaster region.

I believe that the proposed Northern Pass will have a significant Adverse Effect on Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC.

Adverse Impacts of the proposed Northern Pass project

The particular rights, duties, privileges, immunities or other substantial interests relating to these properties that may be affected by the SEC's Northern Pass proceedings include the following:

1. **Close Proximity:** The proposed Northern Pass Transmission line ("Northern Pass") passes within one (1) mile of Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC (and Weeks State Park).

2. **Adverse Visual Impact:** Due to its location, the proposed above-ground 70'+ Northern Pass Towers will directly affect the view from Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC of the Presidential Range, the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge in the Pondicherry Basin, and Northern and Southern sections of the WMNF.

The DOE's Key Observation Point (KOP #LA-2a) for the assessment of environmental impact (U.S. Department of Energy *Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Northern Pass Transmission Line Project* (July 2015): S.5.4a, p. S-10, map 8 and chapter 3 "Affected Environment") notes that, under the NP proposal, Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC would be subject to at least thirty-four (34) visible structures, over twice (2x) the existing fifteen (15), currently less visible at 45' in height (see <http://www.northernpass.us/towns.htm>; maps # 52 - 62).

The view from the State Park on Mt. Washington itself (see attached photo #1, Mt. Prospect is on the Right and Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC is on its visible slope) shows that the entire Pondicherry basin - Mt. Prospect to Bethlehem - will be adversely impacted. It would be a tragic irony to have giant metal Towers march through the proximate view-shed of this iconic view of outdoor wilderness and national forests. NH's millions of visitors do not visit the region to see power line Towers, such as those which scar the Quebec landscape in every direction.

3. **Adverse Impact on Recreation:** The open fields and forest areas of Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC afford my family recreation year round. Construction of Northern Pass less than one mile away and within full view would damage the setting, use and enjoyment of these lands.

4. **Damage to overall property:** Northern Pass's transmission lines would impair the marketability, value, use and enjoyment of the Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC property as a whole. Its 450 acres also have significant value for town revenues.

5. **Township & County-wide stigma from Northern Pass:** Northern Pass's preferred route crosses a substantial part of Lancaster with damaging above-ground lines instead of the buried lines proposed for other townships south of Whitefield and Dalton. Northern Pass thereby creates a stigma for Lancaster as part of the group of New Hampshire's "loser townships" - those Coös County townships north of Franconia Notch with insufficient political and economic weight to protect themselves (through successfully insisting on line burial) from Northern Pass's degradation. This township/county-wide stigma impairs the marketability and value of the entire region as well as public and private use and enjoyment of these Sites. Coös County depends upon the unique beauty of its natural beauty, including my property, to attract visitors to support its challenged economy. As consistent with RSA chapter 162-H, I believe that Northern Pass would substantively erode that fragile economy and jeopardize the tourist and recreation industries that are its best hope for future economic growth. By affecting the economic well-being of the region, they would potentially reduce the services (hospital, schools) and access to goods enjoyed by my family.

Petition for Intervener Status

New Hampshire law recognizes that each property is unique and distinct. I respectfully submit that granting Intervener status to me, whose property is well-maintained and managed, is in the public interest. Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC would be directly and adversely impaired by proposed Northern Pass.

In support of this part of this request, I submit the following:

1. Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC includes significant features that fulfill the SEC's statutory and precedential benchmarks, including natural features (historic field and farm land, wetlands, pond, varied forest types, varied wildlife habitat, bogs, forests), historic features (one (1) historic pre-Civil war farmstead with barn) and aesthetics (combination of fields, forests, mountains and local and extraordinary long-range views), as well as a location and scale that are significant for local and regional land use considerations.

2. The adverse effects on Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC is directly relevant to areas for which the SEC will make findings, including orderly development of the region, aesthetics, historic sites, natural environment, property values, economic effect, and, therefore, are in the public interest. I therefore wish to have the opportunity to provide specific testimony regarding the impact of the proposed Northern Pass without limitation. Out of concern for this matter, Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC filed in 2010 to intervene in the matter of the NPT LLC application for a Presidential Permit with the US Department of Energy. I believe that *full burial* of the NPT, from Pittsburg to Deerfield, (DO, Draft EIS, Alternative Route 4A) is in the best interests of Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC, the people of New Hampshire and its visitors from around the world.

3. My personal and professional background and experience include deep knowledge of the sites and region, expertise in finance, and experience in historic property management. I wish to have the opportunity to use this knowledge and experience personally and directly in defense of this unique property.

4. Prospect Farm-Lancaster LLC is unique, historic and the Adverse Effect by the proposed Northern Pass is substantive. I believe that my contribution to the Committee's findings will benefit the public interest.

Thank you for your consideration of this petition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Davidge R".

John W. Davidge

cc: SEC distribution list (as of the date of this email) for Docket No. 2015-06. Copies sent by email.
Copies of this letter and enclosure have of this date been forwarded via email to all parties on the SEC email distribution list for Docket # 2015-06.

Photographs re. Prospect Farm LLC Lancaster NH- NOW, *without* Northern Pass Towers

1. View from Mt. Washington - Pondicherry Refuge and Mt. Prospect (R) Lancaster



2. Weeks State Park - The Lodge (1913), Lancaster to Cape Horn (Northumberland) & WMNF (N)



3. View of WMNF from Prospect Farm, Lancaster NH - without NP Towers



4. White Mountain National Forest - Northern Lancaster section (Mt. Weeks)

