

Office of Selectmen

Town of Whitefield, N.H. 03598

"Heart of the White Mountains"

603/837-2551

October 9, 2013

Brian Mills, Senior Planning Adviser
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE-20)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Mills:

Subject: Northern Pass Proposed HVDC Transmission Line EIS Comments

The Whitefield, N.H. Board of Selectmen and the Whitefield Planning Board offer the following comments as you begin to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement as part of the NEPA process for the Northern Pass. The Selectmen are concerned that the long term reliability and security of the energy infrastructure in our area be maintained. However, we are also most concerned that our fragile tourism economy of northern New Hampshire not be adversely impacted by the above ground transmission line. We have lost our paper mills and furniture manufacturing in western Coos County, and we have to rely more than ever on the natural scenic beauty of our area and tourism, such as offered by our Mountain View Grand Hotel in Whitefield.

We ask that consideration be given to burying the entire HVDC through Whitefield.
Specifically:

1. Just north of Whitefield Village the proposed overhead HVDC line will require multiple structures (DC608 through DC614) which will be located a short distance, and either side, of major primary State highway Route 3 and nearby residences. Multiple structures are required, because the existing PSNH substation is in the middle of the existing 115kv ROW. Also, these structures will be up to 115 feet tall versus 55 feet for the existing pole structures. Such a scenario will make for a terrible aesthetic gateway to our Village and the Mountain View Grand Hotel.

2. The Mount Washington Regional Airport in Whitefield serves the local tourism economy and the Mount Washington and Mountain View Grand Hotels. The Airport Commissioners and FAA are planning a 1000 foot runway extension to accommodate jet and commuter air traffic with a 5000 foot runway. The existing 115 kv transmission to the west and north of the Airport are 55 feet high. How will the proposed 90 foot HVDC towers in this ROW affect the safety of the Airport?

3. The proposed HVDC line will run through the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge in Whitefield. Pondicherry is designated a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service because of its wetlands and diverse bird life.

4. The HVDC will cross Route 142 and be very close to subdivisions on either side of Route 142. How will the higher transmission towers affect local property values?

5. The proposed 90 foot tall tower (versus the existing 55 foot tall poles) HVDC line would run just to the west and parallel the entire length of Burns Lake and many lakeside cottages and run in the valley between Dalton Mountain and Kimball Hill, an important local scenic area. Likewise, the HVDC would cross the Forest Lake State Park road and run to the east of Forest Lake. Not only do the local folk, but tourists value the natural scenic values of the area. Reviewing the visual simulation at Burns Lake and from the Forest Lake Road, the PSNH monopole option offered would appear to be much more aesthetically attractive than the truss towers, however, clearly the buried HVDC alternative is the better choice for Whitefield.

Finally, we recall pictures of the 100's of miles of transmission towers taken down by the Quebec ice storm of 1998. Will not buried lines be more secure and reliable than overhead? We also ask why can the proposed buried 300 miles HVDC Hydro Quebec be so much less expensive in New York State than that estimated for underground by Northern Pass in New Hampshire? The proposed HVDC line through Whitefield is in the valley and low lands where a review of USDA soils maps indicates deep soils to depth with minimal ledge.


While not an aesthetic or environmental concern, we asked PSNH two years ago in Whitefield how will the proposed HVDC line be depreciated and over what time period? PSNH has had a history of continually challenging municipal utility assessments, and PSNH has been unable to give an estimate of how depreciation expenses would be determined.

We thank you for your consideration of our above concerns, and we ask to be included in the mailing list as the EIS is being developed. Our email address is townofwhitefield@ne.rr.com.

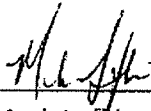
Sincerely,

Whitefield Board of Selectmen

Wendy Hersom



Duane Hall



Mark Lufkin