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Martin Honigberg, Chairman
New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Resources
29 Hazen Drive
PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302 – 0095

Dear Chairman Honigberg: Re: Northern Path Transmission Line/Historic Resource Assessment

I have had an opportunity to review the Northern Pass Project Historic Resource Assessment (Assessment) on my property at 185 Mount Prospect Road, Lancaster, New Hampshire, a copy of which I attach for easy reference. I am writing to advise you of my strong disagreement with the Assessment's conclusion that the Northern Pass Project (Project) does not appear to have an adverse effect on my property.

First, I need to correct a statement that I made in my September 6, 2015 letter to the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee, a copy of which I attach hereto and incorporate by reference herein. In that letter I stated that the existing wood utility poles in that portion of the proposed transmission line that will run roughly parallel to and approximately two – tenths of a mile from the eastern border of my property are not visible from my property. Although none of the existing wood utility poles (approximately 43 feet in height) were visible from my property when I wrote my September 6, 2015 letter, now that the foliage is gone one of them is indeed visible from my home as I write this letter in February, and the others are just below the top of the tree line.

The Assessment correctly finds that my entire 20-acre property “appears to have potential for National Register eligibility based on visually related areas of significance” but then wrongly concludes that the “Project does not appear to have an adverse effect on the property.” (Assessment, 2, 3.) The latter conclusion is based on flawed assumptions and statements that are not supported by the facts on the ground.

The Assessment maintains that the proposed “structures will not be substantially visible in the view from the house, because the Project is at a lower elevation and separated by over a half a mile of wooded land,” that the “transmission lines will be screened by the tree line,” that the “use of weathering steel monopoles in this location will reduce visibility,” and that if “there were intermittent views of the new structures from the house, only the very tops could be visible and those would be silhouetted against the dark trees on the hill behind.” (Assessment, 3.) These statements are simply incorrect. First, the elevation of the Project increases substantially from west to east, and most of the land between my home and the Project has been cleared. There is only a narrow area of wooded land between my home and the Project, and most of that land (especially on the eastern half of our view shed) is at a much lower elevation than that portion of the Project crossing our view shed. The proposed transmission towers will be considerably taller than the existing wood utility poles, one of which I can see now and the others are almost as tall as the tree line. Although the proposed weathering steel monopoles may be less visible than shiny steel lattice towers, they will still be plainly visible from my home. The Assessment concedes that there may be “intermittent views of the new structures from the house,” but dismissively minimizes this fact by asserting that “only the very tops could be visible and those would be silhouetted against the dark trees on the hill behind.” In light of the height (twice that of the existing wood poles), width and appearance of the proposed steel transmission towers, their elevation relative to my house and the trees below them, and the fact that one of the existing wood utility poles is presently visible from my home, I submit that a significant portion of the Project,

and not just “the very tops” of the towers, will be plainly and substantially visible from my home and in historically significant views from the historic resource. Moreover, the Assessment ignores the fact that the mountains behind the proposed transmission line are covered with snow for at least six months of the year and that, therefore, for much of the year the transmission towers will contrast starkly with the bright white backdrop and will be even more visible than they are during the summer.

The Assessment recognizes that Mount Prospect Road is a locally-designated scenic road but maintains that “the property’s scenic view to the east is only minimally visible from the road.” (Assessment, 3.) This assertion is likewise incorrect. Mount Prospect Road has been designated a scenic road under RSA 231:157-158 precisely because of the splendid scenic views of the Pliny and Presidential Ranges that members of the public enjoy from the road. As I noted in my September 6, 2015 letter, in 1887 Persis Chase observed that from the “farm owned by Mr. Johnson [my property] one can see the village of Jefferson, with Mount Starr King rising above” and that “towering grandly over all [is] the White... Mountain range.” Today, one can still see the village of Jefferson, Mount Starr King, and the other mountains in the Pliny Range from Mount Prospect Road at my house, including those portions of the road depicted in photos one, four and five in the Assessment. A number of the proposed transmission towers, especially on the eastern side of our view shed, will also be plainly visible from the road and will ruin the public views of the Pliny Range. The Project will indeed be substantially visible in the main public views of the historic resource.

The seriously-flawed conclusions of the Assessment of my property remind me of what my husband’s law school evidence professor once said about experts: “experts remind me of the eunuchs in the courts of ancient kings; they know all about how it’s supposed to be done, but they can’t do it themselves.” The so-called expert who prepared the Assessment of my property, and who does not live at my property but only visited it briefly, may opine that the Project does not appear to have an adverse impact on my property, but I know my view shed and its topography, I know what I can see now, I know the height and appearance of the proposed structures, and I know that the Project will indeed be substantially visible in the main public views of the historic resource and from my house.

The principal consideration that prompted my husband and I to purchase this particular historic property for our permanent residence was its location in a pristine landscape with stunning views. We would not have purchased this property if the proposed transmission line had then been in place. The proposed above-ground transmission line in our view shed will have unreasonable adverse effects on our property, its aesthetics, its quality as a historic site, and its market value.

I submit that the Project will most certainly have an adverse effect on my property. I invite the members of the Site Evaluation Committee to visit it and see for themselves. I request that the Committee not issue a certificate unless all such transmission towers and lines in my view shed are completely buried

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,



Linda Upham-Bornstein, PhD