

Northeast Ice Storm of 1998

During the Eversource presentation at the March 14, 2016 SEC hearing in Holderness, NH Mr. Quinlan stated during his presentation promoting the Northern Pass project that line burial technology was prohibitively expensive and could not be justified. He stated that in addition to a greater installation cost that maintenance of the lines would be more difficult and more expensive than overhead. While it is true that installation costs would be greater there is evidence to show that overhead lines have significantly more maintenance issues than do buried lines. Further, line fault location information is just as effective with buried cable as is with overhead.

Trans Energie, the construction engineering subsidiary of Hydro Quebec, testified before FERC at a 2004 energy hearing in Hartford, CT that undergrounding HVDC lines is comparable in cost to overhead and that underground lines do not suffer storm damage. And, history has shown that storm damage can, and has, caused very high repair costs. Additionally, the inconvenience, possible discomfort and loss of revenue to the public, industry and business can be very significant. Mr. Quinlan responded to a question about the Trans Energie testimony by stating that he knew nothing about this subsidiary of his business partner, Hydro Quebec. That statement greatly stretches our credulity.

Mr. Quinlan also justified his company's refusal to completely bury the line, based on his estimate that burial would cost an additional billion dollars. Over the life of the proposed Northern pass project repairing storm damage could easily exceed the additional cost of burying the lines. The 1998 ice storm in eastern Canada and New England cost a combined \$4.4 billion dollars to repair. \$1.4 billion of that cost was in NE, considerably more than Mr. Quinlan claims in additional costs for burial of the lines. But, the storm repairs were only part of the cost of the storm. More than 500,000 residents in northern New England lost power. The extensive power outages lasted for days and in some cases weeks. Sixteen people in New England and twenty eight more in Canada died from hypothermia due to the lengthy power outages in very cold weather. This, and more information on that storm is available at:
<https://www.wunderground.com/news/top-10-worst-ice-storms-20131205?pageno=10>

The only excuse Eversource has given for refusing to bury Northern Pass is that it is too expensive. This is a for profit venture. It is unimportant to us whether this project goes forward or fails. What is important is the welfare of our people and their environment. Bury it or forget.