



# The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

**CHARLES W. MORSE**  
President of the Senate

June 2, 2016

Commissioner Martin Honigberg  
Chairman  
NH Site Evaluation Commission  
21 Fruit Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301

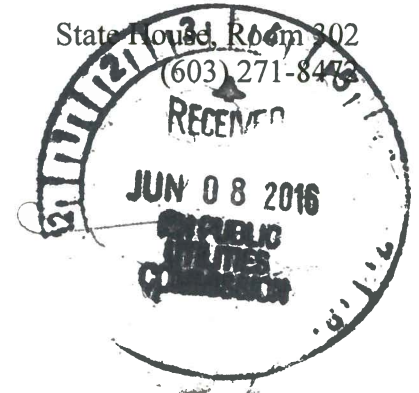
Dear Commissioner Honigberg,

I am writing to express my concern with the recent decision by the NH Site Evaluation Commission (SEC) to extend the application review of the Northern Pass project a full nine months beyond the statutory requirement of 365 days as outlined in RSA 162-H7. The SEC's decision shows a major disregard for the timetable set in state law.

As you know, the statutory timeline for consideration of SEC applications was recently extended from nine to 12 months. The Legislature's decision to extend the SEC's timeframe for consideration of applications was the result of years of debate, public input and professional study. This was a focus of the Multi State Energy Facility Siting Review report, which involved the development of a coordinating committee, focus groups, multiple citizen workshops. This issue was further debated in the legislature, which included many stakeholder meetings led by the New Hampshire Senate. Considering the robust and broad discussion that lead to this policy change, it is disappointing to see the SEC casually disregard the timeline set in state statute. Further, this establishes a troubling precedent for future projects that will come before the SEC.

While state statute does provide the SEC with discretion to extend this one-year review, the intent of this provision is to provide brief extensions to the committee for internal deliberations at the end of the application process. The intent was not to extend the entire process for nearly a full year. Further, given the clear statutory requirement, extensions should only be granted with a clear demonstration of need and not routinely decided at the outset of the application process as has happened here.

Beyond this particular project, this action by the SEC highlights a concern raised by many businesses and individuals trying to do business in our state, and is another example of state agencies causing delay and hardship for citizens and businesses acting in good faith to abide by state laws regarding permits. It is particularly concerning in this situation considering that state laws and administrative rules were just recently updated to ensure the SEC had the tools necessary to effectively decide these matters, and the SEC was an active participant in those discussions and changes.



Finally, it should be noted that by pushing out a decision on this project by almost a year beyond the legal requirement, the SEC delays a potential solution to the current and future electric costs increases coming to NH. Unfortunately, I believe this will cause negative impacts and will likely result in a direct financial hit to our economy, jobs and homeowners' pocketbooks.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter, and I would urge the SEC to reconsider its decision and attempt to develop a timeline for consideration of the Northern Pass application that is more consistent with existing state law, and that reconfirms the importance of the statutory guideline for future projects seeking SEC approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Morse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Chuck Morse  
Senate President  
District 22