

Testimony of Stephen M Duprey to the Site Evaluation Committee on Docket No. 2015-06

My name is Stephen Duprey. I am a long-time resident of Concord New Hampshire where I am engaged in real estate development and management. I regret that due to an early season bout of the flu I cannot appear in person so I will submit my testimony both to Pamela Monroe by email and will have this hard copy left at the public statement hearing this evening.

Briefly, I started my career as an attorney representing Eversource's predecessor, Public Service Company of New Hampshire, almost 40 years ago in the "Qwip" hearings to determine how the Seabrook nuclear power plant would be financed. I mention this because I have tremendous respect for the great work our N. H. power companies do in providing us with safe and reliable, albeit expensive, power.

That said, I am opposed to the Northern Pass plan as presented for a number of reasons.

First, my business in the hotel and hospitality sector depends on tourism, and people passing through Concord on their way to vacations in the North Country. The visual appeal of the landscape is a prime attraction. In my opinion, the above ground lines proposed through significant aesthetically important tourism areas of the state will have a negative impact on our tourism economy.

While Eversource is to be commended for their willingness to bury portions of the line, in my opinion they do not go far enough in doing so. Frankly, I think the entire line should be buried and while I have read reports that this would make the project economically unviable, I think the project proponents should have to demonstrate that. In my own business, when a local land use board requires that I make improvements that could tip a project from feasible to not, I am required to submit, in public record, the proof of my claim. To date I have seen nothing that shows that this line could not be buried along the entire route.

Second, and more specific to Concord, the lines as proposed to run through Concord will have a serious negative visual and aesthetic impact on our City. The line will traverse almost 8 miles through Concord so we will feel and see the visual and aesthetic impact more than most communities. The current height of towers through Concord is 43 feet. The AVERAGE proposed tower height of Northern Pass will be 100 feet, and in some locations will approach the height of the state house dome.

These new lines will not only be visible from many of the City's conservation areas but, according to the report of the Northern Pass Viewshed Analysis by Chesapeake Conservancy showing which areas will have increased structure visibility, will be visible from almost every single office building in the downtown and in our Main street from the second floor up.

I have invested over 60 million dollars in the downtown area in the last five years in office and hospitality properties. Tall power lines will have a negative visual impact on those properties, to varying degrees. To the extent this project adds property taxes I am sure that there will be

diminutions in assessed values to surrounding properties like mine that will offset some substantial portion of the additions to the tax base from the project.

The City of Concord just spent 11 million dollars to redo our Main Street to increase economic viability and growth in the core downtown. New office buildings help with that. But new office buildings with a view of unusually tall power lines do not help. Similarly, our efforts to build market rate housing in the Main Street area will hardly be helped by a view line that will have a power line as the predominant feature.

Third, and while not specific to Concord, the fact that New Hampshire will bear the burden of hosting the line but will not necessarily see any greater benefit than any other state in the region in the form of a lower price for a certain percentage of the power is regrettable. Forty years ago ISO served as a utility run clearinghouse that helped even out peak demand and supply among various utilities. Today, in effect, it has become a mechanism for price supports for utilities and effectively precludes a state which assumes the burden of providing power generation or transmission from receiving the benefit of the bargain in the form of lower prices for doing so. While the site evaluation committee doesn't have jurisdiction over this issue directly, the fact that New Hampshire would be burdened with a visibly unattractive power line that could negatively impact our tourism economy should warrant not approving the site as proposed. The proposed Northern Pass line should be, in my view, buried in its entirety. If that is not economically viable, that claim should be verified with public information, or, in the words of President Reagan- "trust but verify." In any event, substantially more portions of the line need to be buried, including the entirety through Concord. Thank you for allowing me to offer this testimony.