

SEC COMMENTS COLLECTION

SECDocket	2015-06 Northern Pass Transmission - Eversource
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Dear Members of the Committee,

I'm not a lawyer, but I am a law student, and I find it hard to believe that any reasonable observer would fail to see the myriad of issues associated with the Northern Pass proposal. These problems have been apparent since the very beginning of the process, when Eversource's methods of obtaining land in northern NH were quite suspect, and have continued throughout the Massachusetts proposal-selection process and the NH SEC decision-making process.

For instance, the very first day of hearings featured the alarming revelation – from none other than Eversource President Bill Quinlan – that the much-touted Forward NH Fund that is supposed to provide the “public benefit” necessary for receiving an SEC permit doesn't even exist. That day also brought up the concerning fact that money had been wired to several Northern Pass intervenors almost immediately after they agreed to publicly testify on Northern Pass' behalf.

Eversource continues to claim that the Northern Pass will open the door for many new renewable energy projects in NH. I find that claim quite unbelievable. Are we to believe that their running of a transmission line through our state (to the detriment of our tourism, forestry, and environmental sectors) is going to be the catalyst for a sudden wave of renewable energy development that is supposedly just waiting to grow until the Northern Pass is built? What renewable energy ideas are they talking about (that aren't already in process)? Will these new forms of energy all of a sudden receive enough funding that the Northern Pass' construction will somehow throw them into state-wide use? And how exactly does the building of 192 miles of towers relate to energy development in NH's towns, especially since the energy it will be transmitting isn't even coming from NH or going to NH? I, for one, feel that having to do mental gymnastics to try to understand Northern Pass' supposed public benefit is not a reassuring sign.

Perhaps the public benefit will be found in the money it will save NH ratepayers on electricity. The think-tank Brattle Group, however, did a study on that exact topic and found that the Northern Pass would only reduce the average electric bill by less than \$1 per month

(https://www.nhsec.nh.gov/projects/2015-06/testimony/2015-06_2017-04-17_supp_test_newell_weiss_exa_redacted.pdf). While saving a couple bucks a year in electric costs is nice, it is certainly not an amount that justifies the damage that Northern Pass will do the state's tourism industry, forestry industry, hospitality industry, and environmental quality.

What about all of the other proposals that are much more economically and aesthetically feasible than the Northern Pass? Transmission Developers, Inc., Granite State Power Link, Emera Group, and many others have submitted very viable and, in the case of the Power Link, more energy-efficient ways to transmit power. The best option, however, is to use the existing National Grid power line, which the Brattle Group just determined would emit a significantly smaller amount of greenhouse gases than the Northern Pass while delivering the same amount of energy

(<http://indepthnh.org/2017/09/21/study-granite-state-power-link-bests-northern-pass-on-co2-reductions/>).

Why isn't the SEC interested in such an array of excellent proposals? Better yet, why is the Massachusetts RFP

committee treating the Northern Pass like it's the only option on the table when in fact there are at least six other (better) proposals out there? It's simple – because Eversource has ties with the state through its lobbying power and effectively controls the Massachusetts RFP process.

All of this has been done in the face of an 11 to 1 opposition to support ration regarding the Northern Pass and the hundreds of NH citizens that have showed up to defend their state. I adamantly urge you to listen to us, the citizens of the state you represent, and decide against the Northern Pass.

Thank you,

Thomas J. Philbrick
JD Candidate, Class of 2020
