

Public Comment of Nancy Martland to New Hampshire SEC

Northern Pass Transmission Docket

December 21, 2017

Please do not certify this project.

It has been a long slog for all of us. For me, all of this began over seven years ago when I first learned of Eversource's (then PSNH/Northeast Utilities) plans to run a high voltage transmission line through my town of Sugar Hill. At that time, my town and many others were virtually unanimous in opposition to the presence of Northern Pass within our borders. Little has changed on that score. As recently as our last town meeting in March of this year, Sugar Hill appropriated funds for the legal expenses needed to continue to fight Northern Pass. I bet you know how hard it is to get added funds appropriated at town meeting and what that signifies.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to take very seriously the views of the municipalities. Please do not disregard the voice of the towns in this matter. The towns will bear the burden of Northern Pass impact long after you all have moved on to other things. We will live with your decision for the rest of our lives and our children's lives. I find it difficult to believe that you can permit this project over the solid, well-reasoned and unified objections of the towns it will seriously damage.

During the testimony of the municipalities in recent days, I was struck by the applicant's efforts to portray the towns as ignorant of the benefits of the project (or too foolish to see how wonderful they are) and to chide them for their refusal to be willing partners with a company they do not trust and whose proposals they reject. **Rest assured, every town knows exactly what benefits Northern Pass has promised.** Every town has been approached by Northern Pass to partner with them. Many if not most have refused. Simply put, there is no way to make this a good deal for the towns, no matter how hard the applicant tries.

Northern Pass' implication that it is some kind of failure on the part of the towns not to take them up on a great deal lands wide of the mark. In fact, it is insulting to the careful, dedicated, hard-working people who strive to represent the best interests of their towns and their citizens, often as volunteers and always with a limited budget.

I cannot state this strongly enough: the towns are well aware of the so-called "benefits" touted by Northern Pass. The towns are also well aware of their own circumstances and the impacts the project would have on them. They would rather do without the temporary tax windfall and the non-binding MOUs that only address the minor issues Northern Pass wants to address in order to preserve and protect the essential character of the towns where we all live and work and which we love. We are unwilling to be bought off, or to be used as props by a company that seeks falsely to show how benevolent they are towards us.

Did you know that in many North Country towns, the number of second homes is close to 40% of all homes? In some towns it is higher. Impact on tourism here means impact on well-heeled second homeowners from away who choose to vacation or retire here and make a major contribution to our economy, through the property taxes they pay and the local services they purchase. These people have a choice, and they are very unlikely to choose to build or buy a home in view of a massive power line.

Despite what applicant's experts have testified, that is a simply matter of common sense. Just ask yourself if you would choose to have your special home with or without a powerline in view.

It is critical to North Country towns' future development that you refuse to allow Northern Pass to spoil the very landscapes their economies are built on and could be built on going forward. There is a reason visitors are attracted to our area – our landscapes are very special and they define the essence of our towns. These landscapes are so important they have been designated a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Just recently, the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources deemed a number of the impacted landscapes eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as Cultural Landscapes. Northern Pass would degrade these treasures.

The carefully considered and well-founded objections of the towns Northern Pass will damage amply demonstrate that the project is not in the public interest and will hinder the orderly development of the "host" towns for decades to come.

If Northern Pass chooses, as is well within its capacity, to modify its route to make it respectful of our lands and livelihoods, I am sure the towns would be willing to take another look at a future application with a fair and open attitude. Another project, Granite State Power Link, took this approach and has been welcomed by the towns on its route. For now, this application is rightly rejected by many impacted towns due to the indescribable damage it will do.

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