

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

BEFORE THE

NEW HAMPSHIRE SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

DOCKET No. 2016-06

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
ERICK B BERGLUND JR and KATHLEEN A BERGLUND

OF DEERFIELD ABUTTERS INTERVENOR GROUP

NOVEMBER 15, 2016

Qualifications and Purpose of Testimony

Q Please state your name and address?

A We are Erick B Berglund Jr and Kathleen A Berglund. We live in Deerfield, NH. Our address is 23 Nottingham Rd, Deerfield, NH 03037. The PSNH ROW that Northern Pass proposes to use runs over our property.

Q Are you familiar with the proposed Northern Pass Transmission project?

A We are very familiar with this project. Erick was a member of a committee formed by the Deerfield Selectboard in 2011 to study this project and its impact on Deerfield and recommend a course of action for the Selectboard. Both of us have attended numerous public information meetings on this project throughout the state since the original announcement of this project in 2010.

Q What is the impact of Northern Pass on your home and property?

A Forty five years ago we left New Jersey and moved to Deerfield, NH. We wanted a nice community to raise our three children with open space, clean air, a natural environment and the outdoor recreation opportunities that Deerfield, NH and New England offer. We could not be happier. We are now retired and our homestead continues to be right here in Deerfield.

Over the years we have worked diligently to retain and restore the historic character of our farmhouse home. Our farm is under the protection of a federal Wetland Reserve Program conservation easement. We manage our farm and surrounding lands to encourage wildlife and protect wildlife habitat. We are fortunate to have a beautiful view of the fields and forest behind our house. Pawtuckaway North Mountain is seen in the distance across the wetlands in the foreground. The PSNH ROW over which the Northern Pass transmission line is proposed to be built is about 800 feet from the back of our house and is barely visible during leaf-on seasons. During leaf-off seasons the transmission lines between the poles are quite visible.

We adamantly oppose the Northern Pass project as originally proposed and we do not want to see it built. This project will have many unreasonable adverse impacts on us and our life. Following is a list of many:

- Destruction or serious and permanent degradation of a high quality wetland
- Destruction of wildlife and wildlife habitat
- Continued ruination of our hayfield
- Loss of aesthetic views
- Real Estate loss of value

Q Please provide details of these unreasonable adverse impacts on your home and property.

Construction and Operations Impact on our land and our life

Wetland

The ROW crosses over 1200 ft of our land. It passes through our 10 acre hayfield and beyond that, in an easterly direction, it passes through a wetland (identified as DF31 by Normandeau Associates) on our property and the parcels of two of our neighbors. This wetland is approximately 25 acres. A stream on the southerly side is a connection to another wetland which outlets to the Lamprey River. The wetland area within the ROW is 5.3 acres.

Wetlands perform essential natural services to sustain flora, fauna and wildlife habitat. This wetland is a gem and Normandeau Associates describes it as a "high quality wetland*." It is unique as it contains flat, shallow areas of open water with a wide variety of dense shrub and emergent vegetation throughout. The principal function of this particular wetland is to support wildlife habitat and is suitable for all other wetland functions excepting recreation according to Normandeau. This wetland is classified under the NH Fish and Game Wildlife Action Plan as being in the category of "Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat in NH". (*Normandeau Associates Inc. "Wetlands, Rivers, Streams, and Vernal Pools Resource Report and Impact Analysis", Northern Pass Transmission Project).

Wetland DF31 supports a wide variety of wildlife within it and throughout the surrounding uplands and forests. Wetland species include: Blanding's turtles (Endangered), Eastern painted turtles, beaver, northern water snakes, many varieties of frogs and many others. Upland species that depend on the wetland include: deer, many varieties of birds, weasel, coyote, red fox, wild turkey and many others.

If the Northern Pass transmission line is built as originally proposed, this wetland and the flora and fauna it supports will be destroyed or severely degraded from its status as a high quality wetland. The plan calls for the G146 transmission line to be shifted to the north in the ROW to allow the Northern Pass transmission line to be erected along the southern edge of the ROW. The shifting of the G146 transmission line will require the removal of that line and its supports and rebuilding it north of the NPT line. Major disruptions will occur to the wetland and its inhabitants from the erection of three poles for the new G146 transmission line, the erection of three towers for the NPT and the removal of three poles from the relocated G146 line along the ROW. It is obvious that any problems occurring in the ROW portion of the wetland will also affect the wetlands downstream and the Lamprey River.

Hayfield

The ROW cuts diagonally across this hay field which is on the peak of a hill. Today there are two transmission lines in this ROW. Both transmission lines were rebuilt during the last 12 years. The G146 kV line project occurred in 2003 and the D118 kV line project in 2014. This hayfield was severely damaged during each project by the constant traffic of heavy construction vehicles traveling across the ROW and on areas adjacent to the ROW. This heavy traffic also caused loss of use of the hayfield and reduced hay yield. The Northern Pass project is immense and its impact will be more significant than any previous line building project. I am very surprised that the project plans for the project do not specify matting for the entire length of the ROW above the wetland and across the hay field to preserve the hayfield.

Lessons Learned

We have grave concerns about the Northern Pass project because of a significant transmission line problem that occurred in 2003. There was a major failure during the G146 rebuild project in 2003. A new transmission pole installed in the wetland was pulled down. Panic ensued. Tracked vehicles were driven in and across the wetland to get to the downed pole. This was a significant event because management personnel were flown in by helicopter to address the problem. This resulted in major damage to the wetland as workers drove bull dozers over the wetland to get to the downed pole.

(See 4 photo sheet attachments)

Impact on Aesthetics

Views

The views of our fields, forest and wetland today are minimally impacted by the two transmission lines on the PSNH ROW. Just the tops of two 80/85 ft poles are visible from our house in the summer. Leaf-off conditions will bring the transmission lines between the poles into clear view.

We will suffer major negative impacts to the aesthetics of our views if Northern Pass is constructed as proposed. Viewing our land behind our house in the direction of the ROW will reveal the upper lengths of the two 125 foot tall NPT poles erected in our hayfield. Three NPT towers of similar height will be erected in the wetland and they will impact our view. At this time it is unclear what the extent of the aesthetic impact of these towers will be when viewed from our property and from Nottingham Rd. Visibility of the transmission lines between the towers in the wetland will be an issue in leaf-off conditions.

We enjoy frequent walks through our fields and forest and visiting our wetland. Our property is open to neighbors and friends to enjoy as well. One special walk is to the hayfield in the back which is crossed by the ROW. The view from the hayfield to the wetland is particularly pleasing even with the two 115 kV transmission lines currently in place. The poles are weathered wood and are not prominent in the scene. They have been there for so long they do not interfere or

diminish the view of the wetlands and the wildlife that we frequently observe there. If Northern Pass is constructed this view will be dominated by the three tall industrial towers, forever destroying the joys of this outlook.

Impact on Property Values

We are very concerned about the loss of value to our home and farm that will result from this project. The real estate studies presented during the technical sessions claimed that real estate values would be minimally impacted by Northern Pass, if at all. We question the validity of these claims and do not accept them. We have heard of many instances where potential real estate buyers abruptly lost interest in properties after learning that the Northern Pass transmission line would be in the vicinity of the property.

Q What effect will this project have on your town, Deerfield, NH?

A Deerfield offers all the advantages of rural New England life, balanced by a diverse and progressive community. Here you will find quaint farmhouses and rambling stone walls reminiscent of our rich agricultural past, as well as perfectly appointed modern homesteads. The Town is a confluence of past, present, and future generations. It offers quiet and safe neighborhoods, a highly rated elementary school system P-8, plenty of open space, and many recreational activities. Situated in interior Rockingham County, Deerfield spans an area of approximately 52.3 square miles. Deerfield celebrated its 250th year as an incorporated town in 2016.

Impact on Historical District

The Deerfield Center Historic District is the central “downtown” part of Deerfield. Seventeen historic resources are located along Church St and are within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the Zone of Visual Impact (ZVI). This district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. This district includes the Deerfield Town Hall which was previously recognized and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

The Northern Pass transmission line crosses Church St approximately 100 feet beyond the Deerfield Community Church building at end of this district. The Sherburne Woods independent senior living center is adjacent to the church and within a few hundred feet of the transmission line.

That the Northern Pass transmission line is very close to the Deerfield Center Historic District and Sherburne Woods is a major concern. There is some visibility of the transmission line from both locations and this will adversely impact the aesthetics. Additionally, there is a strong concern that the tall buffer trees between the church and the ROW may need to be removed to protect the transmission line. Thirdly, residents of Sherburne Woods have expressed health concerns about their exposure to EMF from the transmission line

Impact on Wetland

DF 17 (identified by Normandeau Associates) is a large wetland community located west of the Deerfield Substation. According to Normandeau Associates the project area encompasses 9.6 acres of this wetland. It is described as a "high quality wetland*." Its principal function is providing wildlife habitat and DF17 is also suitable for all other functions and values. (*Normandeau Associates Inc. "Wetlands, Rivers, Streams, and Vernal Pools Resource Report and Impact Analysis", Northern Pass Transmission Project).

The Northern Pass project impacts on the DF17 wetland will be similar to those described above for DF31. As DF17 is larger and more extensive than DF31, the impact of the Northern Pass project will be greater than the project impacts on DF31.

Impact on Aesthetics

Although it is not a declared "scenic road," Nottingham Road is very popular with travelers for its scenic views of Pawtuckaway Mountains and the surrounding open spaces heading east. It is regularly visited by walkers, bicyclists, motorcyclists and automobiles. The lower part of Nottingham Rd is a designated scenic byway. The ROW for Northern Pass is visible from many points along Nottingham Rd from the lower portion to the vicinity of wetland DF17. Today the view of the ROW is not intrusive and does not dominate what is seen. The Northern Pass project with its taller towers and transmission lines will industrialize the view of the ROW and diminish the beauty of this popular road tour.

The Northern Pass transmission line will cross three of Deerfield's high traffic roadways. These are Nottingham Road, Rte 107/43 and Mt Delight Road. The adverse visual impact on these roads is excessive each day. The assessment experts focus their observations and visual impact assessments on scenic and historic vistas, ignoring visual impacts of industrial towers on road travelers. The vast majority of people not living on or near the ROW corridor will experience the visual impact of NPT not from a scenic viewpoint but from driving underneath or next to the towers and lines. In Deerfield thousands of people pass under these lines everyday on the three roadways. This is significant and should be included in assessing this project.

Deerfield Votes "NO" on Northern Pass as proposed.

In 2013 two articles regarding the Northern Pass project were put forth on the Town Warrant for voters to consider:

- One asked if the Town would state its opposition to the Northern Pass Transmission project as proposed.
- The second asked if the Town would state its opposition to any new overhead development of AC and DC high voltage transmission lines and manifest the Town's strong preference for the burial of such lines.

Both articles passed in the affirmative with 2 to 1 margins.

Q What is your recommendation to the SEC regarding the Northern Pass project?

We strongly urge the SEC to **not approve** this project as it was initially proposed. Here is our reasoning:

1. **New Hampshire is NOT for sale.** Tax revenues will not offset the damage the NP mega-towers and widened ROWs do to New Hampshire's scenic vistas, its historic New England character, and its economic vitality. We believe that industrialized landscapes means depressed home values and the diminishment of our personal assets.
2. **NP is NOT necessary.** It is not a reliability project. NP is a **for-profit** economic project. The major objective of NP is to generate profits for stockholders, executives and employees of Eversource Energy Corp.
3. **NP will NOT lower energy costs in New Hampshire.** Nearly all (95%) of the electricity delivered via NP will not remain in New Hampshire but would instead be distributed into the region-wide electricity market.
4. **NP is NOT "green."** Under current law, Hydro-Quebec doesn't meet the standards necessary to conform to New Hampshire's renewable-energy mandate, according to Yankee Magazine. NP would transmit "brown" (not "green") hydro power from massive environmentally damaging impoundment dams in northern Quebec to southern New England.
5. **NP is NOT safe.** Studies show that living near high-voltage power lines has serious health effects. Some experts say that the data is inconclusive. But why should New Hampshire residents have to take the risk.
6. **NP does NOT mean jobs for New Hampshire.** At best, "job impacts from the project would be about half of Northern Pass estimates and would be temporary" according to New Hampshire Business Review, October 26, 2012.
7. **NP is a RAW DEAL for New Hampshire.** HQ wins, NP wins, and PSNH wins. – **New Hampshire LOSES.** NP is a private, for-profit partnership between Hydro-Quebec, NSTAR and Eversource Energy. It is estimated that the project will generate over \$1 billion in annual revenue over 40 years

Q Does this conclude your pre-filed testimony?

A Yes

We reserve the right to file additional testimony as allowed under SEC rules and future changes to the SEC schedule.

Kathleen A. Berglund 11/15/16
Erick B. Berglund Jr. 11/15/16







