

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

DOCKET NO. 2015-06

APPLICATION OF NORTHERN PASS TRANSMISSION LLC
AND PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
D/B/A EVERSOURCE ENERGY
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF SITE AND FACILITY

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF DEAN WILBER REGARDING HIS PROPERTY AT
OAK HILL ROAD, CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS

NOVEMBER 15, 2016

1 **Q. Please state your name and address.**

2 A. My name is Dean Wilber and my residential address is 99 Oak Hill Road,
3 East Concord, New Hampshire 03301. The address of my maple sugaring business,
4 Mapletree Farm, LLC, which is owned by me and my wife, Meg Wilber, is 105 Oak Hill
5 Road.

6 **Q: In addition to your maple sugar business, what is your professional**
7 **background?**

8 A: 1964–1968: I taught industrial education in junior and senior high schools in
9 Bow and Goffstown. 1967–1985: I owned a successful power equipment business—Dean
10 Wilber’s, Inc.—on Manchester Street in Concord where Harley Davidson is now. I built the
11 main building and had approximately 14 employees. 1984–1987: Education Director at the
12 New Hampshire Safety Council. 1987–2012: Safety Consultant for clients such as General
13 Electric, writing procedures and performing OSHA compliance inspections.

14 **Q: Please describe your experience with maple operations and your business,**
15 **Mapletree Farm, LLC.**

16 A: I have been around maple operations and making maple syrup since 1947. At age
17 seven I was hooked on maple syrup. In 1973 I was attracted to the land I purchased here on Oak
18 Hill Road because of the sugar maples that frequented this land. I started making maple syrup
19 here in 1975 and continue that neighborhood tradition to this day. I am a member of the
20 American Tree Farm System. (Exhibit 1.)

21 In 1981 and 1982 I purchased 200 super sweet maple trees (pencil size whips) from the
22 Vermont Forest Nursery. I planted those whips in the fields above my sugarhouse and adjacent to
23 the PSNH (now Eversource) ROW. Some of those maple whips grew to tappable size in 27

1 years. I am currently tapping approximately 150 of the original 200 trees. I have nurtured,
2 pruned, fertilized those trees, and mowed the brush in those two planted orchards.

3 When the PSNH cleared the ROW to its maximum width (255') in 2007 there were three
4 obvious results: 1) My maples were subjected to wind burn and sun scald; 2) Storm damage to
5 those trees nearest the ROW became more severe, especially the Thanksgiving Day storm in
6 2014; and 3) lightning strikes to all of the trees in my tree farm became more frequent. Not only
7 are my maple trees affected by the widened ROW but so are the rest of those in my tree farm and
8 wildlife refuge area due to increased risk of lightning strikes and storm damage.

9 During the maple production season my family hosts hundreds of visitors from all over
10 the world. (Exhibits 2–5.) We set up an educational tour through the maple orchards and tree
11 farm during our annual Open House and sugaring-off party. Storm damage and lighting strikes
12 are pointed out and included as part of the education tour. Many visitors, who take the tour and
13 come back to discuss their dismay in seeing the large trees that were toppled by the wind tunnel
14 created within the power line easement. Since 2007 I have planted 300 fast growing red pines to
15 replace the windscreen for my maple orchard that was cut by PSNH. It will take years for those
16 trees to become as effective screens as were the large tall pines cut by PSNH.

17 The construction of NP towers will further degrade the enjoyment of my property. The
18 towers will be an eyesore every time my family, my friends, and our maple visitors drive up our
19 driveway. Currently, the existing 85' foot poles are visible from the driveway.

20 There is concern also about the value of our land being decreased by visual impact. The impact
21 on our land within the ROW will be severe due to the size of the equipment required to complete
22 the NP project.

1 I was told by an Eversource employee that a gravel road will have to be built on the
2 ROW on our land to support NP construction equipment. The road will provide a highway
3 between Oak Hill Road and Shaker Road for those with off-road vehicles to use. That road will
4 forever destroy the soil ecology and will further degrade the beauty of the wild blueberry field
5 that I maintain in the ROW.

6 **Q: Do you have a well within the ROW?**

7 A: Eversource refuses to honor the protective radius of an ancient dug well located
8 within the ROW long before the ROW easement was in place. The previous property owners and
9 tenants used the potable water from this well. I used this well to water livestock and a large
10 garden in the mid-1970's. I prevented a PSNH contractor from spraying herbicides within the
11 protective well radius during that time.

12 I have corresponded frequently with Eversource for over two years and they continue to
13 evade recognition of the protective radius. This could be because NP wants to place their tower
14 within 20-25 feet of this ancient well. Obviously doing so would contaminate this water
15 resource.

16 I used this well in the 1970s and then covered it for safety reasons, intending to use it
17 again in the future. I intend to use this well as a potable water source for my maple syrup
18 operation in the immediate future. Eversource will not accept responsibility if they or NP
19 contaminates my well. Contamination of my water source and the need to relocate this source
20 would place a considerable hardship on me.

21 **Q: What are your future plans for your property?**

1 A: My wife and I plan to sell the four-acre parcel that includes the home and
2 downsize into a home that we have been working on since 1999. I intend to retain ownership of
3 the forty-plus acres used for the maple sugar business and the ROW area.

4 I wish to continue my maple and certified tree farm in my retirement years. I would like
5 to direct my energies towards those farm ventures and not in defending my land. Over the years I
6 have picked up hundreds if not thousands of pounds of debris left by PSNH from maintenance
7 and construction projects. This debris includes: removed poles, pole stubs, cross arms, cable,
8 wire, insulators (many broken), and miscellaneous metal. I have brush hogged or field mowed
9 the ROW to enhance wild blueberry growth in the ROW.

10 **Q: Do you have any additional testimony with regard to your experience with**
11 **PSNH and Eversource?**

12 A: Dealing with PSNH, now Eversource, and in the future Northern Pass makes my
13 life as a maple producer, tree farmer and landowner much more difficult. My experience, to
14 date, with Northern Pass representatives is that they lie, evade or withhold the truth whenever
15 possible. This goes back to 2007 when I asked the question about a 345Kv line passing through
16 my property of PSNH officials. A PSNH contractor had told me that year that line expansion
17 included the 345Kv line in the center of the ROW. He was referring to the Northern Pass. PSNH
18 officials denied that fact until 2010. My opinion is to distrust anything they say as they will say
19 whatever it takes to make the project move forward.

20 My feelings about the Northern Pass are very strong after dealing with PSNH and its
21 contractors driving over ancient, beautiful stone walls; leaving huge ruts from equipment on my
22 property; leaving materials and debris on my property, and being insulted by PSNH employees
23 (called “a difficult landowner” by one and told “when it comes to my job or your trees, you

1 know which comes first” by another). This problem has been ongoing since I purchased the
2 property in 1973.

3 **Q: What activities have you participated in regarding the Northern Pass**
4 **project?**

5 A: I have been to numerous meeting here in Concord since the project was
6 announced. This includes meetings scheduled by Northern Pass and Concord City Councils sub-
7 committee meetings. In addition a number of neighbors here in East Concord have had frequent
8 email communication and in-person conversations with me.









