

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

**Docket No. 2015-06**

**Joint 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**

**PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JUSTINE M. COURTEMANCHE ON BEHALF  
OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR THE TOWN OF PEMBROKE**

**November 15, 2016**

**Background and Qualifications**

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

A. My name is Justine M. Courtemanche. My address is 183 Main Street, Pembroke, NH 03275.

**Q. Please describe your official capacity in the Town of Pembroke?**

A. I have been a member of the Board of Selectmen since 2008 and Chairman of the Board of Selectmen since 2014.

**Q. What is your professional background and experience?**

A. I am retired from my position as Office Manager at a New Hampshire Office Supplies Store. I've served on the Capital Improvements Committee and the Budget Committee for the Town of Pembroke as well as Vice Chair on the Board of Selectmen, prior to my current position as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, for the Town of Pembroke.

**Purpose of Testimony**

**Q. What is the purpose of this prefiled direct testimony?**

A. My testimony is being presented on behalf of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Pembroke.

**Q. Is the Board of Selectmen concerned that the Northern Pass Project will unduly interfere with the orderly development of the Town of Pembroke?**

A. Yes. The Board of Selectmen has concerns about this project's impact on the rural character of areas in town, as well as its impacts to the residential and commercial properties that are adjacent to the proposed project. As currently proposed, the project will have

1 an undue interference with orderly development of the Town of Pembroke, and any public  
2 benefits are outweighed by the negative impacts that the project will have on the Town of  
3 Pembroke. For further information, please see my attached report.

4 **Other Impacts**

5 **Q. Are there other concerns that the Board of Selectmen for the Town of**  
6 **Pembroke has about the impacts of the Northern Pass Project?**

7 A. Yes. The Board of Selectmen for the Town of Pembroke has concerns about  
8 other issues, which includes impacts to natural resources, historic sites, aesthetics and the public  
9 interest. The Board of Selectmen for the Town of Pembroke also does not believe that the local  
10 economic benefits of the project are sufficient to make this project in the public interest. It is  
11 anticipated that further testimony on these additional issues will be provided by the deadline of  
12 December 30, 2016.

13 **Q. Does this end your testimony?**

14 A. Yes.



**TOWN OF PEMBROKE  
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE  
311 Pembroke Street, Pembroke, NH 03275  
Tel: 603-485-4747 Fax: 603-485-3967**

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November 14, 2016

Steven Whitley, Esq.  
Mitchell Municipal Group, PA  
25 Beacon Street East  
Laconia, NH 03246

Dear Attorney Whitley,

The Pembroke Board of Selectmen have sat through numerous meetings with representatives from Eversource with regards to the Northern Pass Project. You can imagine that these meetings have drawn quite a crowd. We have been told at these meetings that the Town of Pembroke would receive a substantial amount of revenue from this project through the property taxes paid by Eversource. When questioned in greater detail, it became unclear to us exactly how the Town would benefit from this in overall taxation.

Studies have shown that property values drop in areas where obnoxious or unsightly items are placed or enlarged. Though we have not performed a detail study of this, this is the information that we are receiving from our Assessors who have dealt with many "VIEW" cases here in New Hampshire.

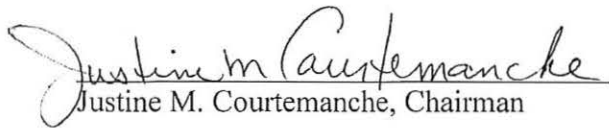
Currently the Town is in litigation with Eversource over their tax values. This case has been going on for years and has currently cost the Town over \$13,000 in legal fees. What if the numbers we are hearing result in more abatements and the property values drop? This then becomes a negative tax impact on the community.

What has been clear and evident to us is that those in the area of Northern Pass are either selling off their properties to an organization aligned with Eversource called Renewable Properties or they are selling and moving off before this project hits.

Pembroke is a bedroom community with a lot of pristine undeveloped land where this would hit. We heard at the meetings that they wanted to preserve the North by burying the lines. When that was asked here, we heard that it was too costly. What is the difference between here and up north? Is our land here in Pembroke less attractive than in northern New Hampshire? I would say no but the reality is in order for this to happen they need the Northern points and the only way they will receive that permission is to bury the lines.

I would like to also note that by a vote of the 2014 Town Meeting, the residents of Pembroke expressed their opposition to any new overhead high voltage transmission lines and support for burial of the line within the Town. Consistent with the will of the voters, we echo the opposition to new overhead lines and call for the burial within Town.

On behalf of the Pembroke Selectmen

  
Justine M. Courtemanche, Chairman

There being no one in attendance wishing to vote on Article #4 and the polls for voting had been open for the mandatory one hour, Moderator Petit closes the polls at 11:29 a.m.

The ballots are counted and the results are as follows:

115 ballots cast

YES 111 NO 4

ARTICLE #4 ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 15** - To see if the Town of Pembroke shall state its opposition to any new overhead development of alternating current and direct current high voltage transmission lines within its borders; and in turn manifest the Town's strong preference for the burial of such lines, in a manner consistent with state and federal requirements, under rights of way and power line corridors now existing or to be established. Although burial in all instances is preferred, this statement of opposition shall not apply to distribution lines carrying electrical power and other utility lines, such as telephone and cable television, for Town residential or commercial use.

**MOVED:** Tina Courtemanche      **SECONDED:** Vincent Greco

Marie Straiton spoke in support of this article stating that the project now is intending to use the existing right-of-way erecting 59 new towers of over 135 feet in height. This will affect 40 properties in the Town of Pembroke. She urged the voters to join 33 other communities and demand the burial of the electric transmission lines.

Charles Schmidt stated that there is a bill in the house that is addressing the idea of burying the lines in the states transportation corridors. He also stated that other states have in fact demanded the burial of the transmission lines, not as long as it would be in NH, but they have done it.

Wayne Burt spoke about how the wind farms have scarred the beauty of NH and this would look even worse.

**VOTE: YES**

**ARTICLE #15 ADOPTED**

**ARTICLE 5** - To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Board of Selectmen and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 998 regarding Public Works Employees; which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2014	\$ 8,729
2015	\$11,393
2016	\$13,295

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,729 for the current fiscal year, such sum