

**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 LISE MORAN
ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN OF WHITEFIELD**

November 15, 2016

Background and Qualifications

Q. Please state your name and address.

A. My name is Lise Moran.

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

A. I am the President of the Whitefield Historical Society.

Purpose of Testimony

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

A. My testimony is being presented on behalf of the Town of Whitefield, and the Whitefield Historical Society. My testimony is for the purpose of providing an overview of the historic and cultural resources in the Town of Whitefield, and explaining how, in the opinion of the Whitefield Historical Society and the Town of Whitefield, the Northern Pass Project would unduly interfere with the orderly development of the Town of Whitefield because it would impact historic sites and tourism.

It is anticipated that further testimony on additional issues such as natural resources, historic sites, aesthetics and the public interest will be provided by the current deadline of December 30, 2016.

Concerns of the Town of Whitefield

Q. What documents have you reviewed regarding the Northern Pass Project?

A. The Forward//NH Plan and the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources area form for the Town of Whitefield.

1 **Q. Has the Town submitted any previous information and concerns regarding**
2 **impacts of the Project on historical resources to the State of New Hampshire?**

3 A. I submitted a letter on behalf of the Whitefield Historical Society to Mr. Timothy
4 W. Drew, Administrator, Public Information and Permitting Unit, New Hampshire Department
5 of Environmental Services. See Appendix A to my testimony. The letter explains that the
6 proposed overhead transmission line would have an adverse effect on the tourism economy and
7 historic character of the area, and asks that the entire Project be buried.

8 **Q. How does historic character relate to the tourism economy of Whitefield?**

9 A. Whitefield has more than 200 years of rich history in the North Country of New
10 Hampshire. In our town, tourism and history go hand-in-hand. Visitors to the area have been
11 making Whitefield their destination since the mid-1800s when the Mountain View House first
12 opened its doors. Tourists now come in greater numbers than ever to experience the grand
13 history and scenic beauty of what is now called Mountain View Grand Resort. The majority of
14 these travelers must pass through our historic village on their way to Mountain View Grand,
15 where our town boasts a beautiful and quaint Town Common. In the center of town, our
16 treasured bandstand signifies our historic commitment to community and history, while our
17 historic buildings surrounding the green give our town its character. Visitors traveling through
18 Whitefield take in some of the most beautiful scenic vistas in the area as they pass, including
19 views of the Presidential Range, Mountain Washington itself, and Burns Lake.

20 **Q. Would the Northern Pass Project affect historic character, and thus the**
21 **tourism economy of Whitefield?**

1 A. Yes. With Northern Pass proposing to erect above-ground high tension power
2 lines through 10.4 miles of the Town of Whitefield, this project would be a scar on the history of
3 our town. Where striking scenery, both natural and man-made, now stands as a symbol of
4 historic pride, massive high tension power lines would distract from the beauty which has
5 defined our character for centuries. With this power line proposed to pass directly overhead
6 above Routes 3, 142 and 116, each within close proximity to our historic village, and with these
7 high tension lines cutting through our most scenic vistas, tourists and residents alike will not be
8 able to enter or exit our town without gazing upon these enormous structures. These towers
9 would greatly detract from our carefully preserved historic town and our awe-inspiring views,
10 which existed far before this small town was formed.

11 **Q. Are there particular historic resources in the Town of Whitefield that would**
12 **be adversely affected by the Project?**

13 A. Yes. One of the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places is
14 how the particular setting helps to convey the significance of an historic building. How the
15 setting and its architectural and historic qualities contribute to the integrity of a building is also
16 equally important. Having reviewed the Forward//NH Plan and the New Hampshire Division of
17 Historical Resources area form for Whitefield, several historic buildings will be impacted
18 visually due to their proximity to the Northern Pass transmission lines. The proposed 10.4 miles
19 of overhead direct current lines would negatively impact the setting of the following properties:
20 the James/Joudin/Moran farm complex, the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa, the

1 downtown area of Whitefield comprising the Kings Square Historic District, and the Major
2 David Burns homestead and farm.

3 **Q. How would the Project affect the James/Joudin/Moran farm complex?**

4 A. In East Whitefield, the transmission line enters at the top of Nutting Road/Rt. 116,
5 descends down the hill on the current right-of-way and then intersects a portion of the 90+ acres
6 of the Moran property. This complex consists of a 100-plus year old farmhouse, a re-constructed
7 barn of 1930, and a four-bay garage, once a thriving dairy farm in the 1930s. Today, as vehicles
8 approach north on Route 116, people can see this highly visible farm complex against the
9 spectacular backdrop of the Northern Presidential Range of the White Mountains and the
10 Kilkenny/Pliny Range of Jefferson, NH. Many artists set up their easels at the side of the road to
11 paint this scene. Many photographers as well have taken pictures of this charming spot looking
12 north and eastward.

13 **Q. How would the Project affect the Mountain View Grand Resort?**

14 The Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa is a member of Historic Hotels of America
15 (National Trust for Historic Preservation). This property was continually operated by the Dodge
16 family from 1866 until 1986. The hotel's large porch has an extremely impressive, majestic
17 view of Cherry Mountain, Twin Mountain, the Franconia Range, the Presidential Range, and
18 Dalton Mountain. Approximately a mile out from the porch, a portion of the proposed higher
19 towers will be visible from the front porch. It is common for hotel guests to have weddings
20 outside in the little gazebo facing this viewpoint, to read in the Adirondack chairs looking off to
21 this view, and to play a variety of outdoor recreational sports in this iconic setting. As noted in

1 an early brochure, “the location of the Mountain View House (as it was once known) is
2 incomparably grand and beautiful, situated on a beautiful slope, 1.300 feet above sea level, and
3 encircled by an unbroken chain of mountains. As you sit upon the broad piazza, before you rises
4 the lofty and graceful crest of Lafayette, noblest of the Franconia Range, with Profile Mountain
5 on the right.”

6 **Q. How would the Project affect the downtown area?**

7 A. In Whitefield, the traditional business center is built around a town common with
8 its historic bandstand in the center. Buildings surround Kings Square on the tree-lined common.
9 Many towns in Coos County have traditional Main Streets with buildings lining either side of the
10 street, but Whitefield is one of the few towns with a common. An ordinance has not yet been
11 established but this historic area has been identified, and would comprise the heart of Kings
12 Square Historic District. The Allard Building with its distinctive Victorian style tower, the
13 Ammonoosuc Health Services built in the Second Empire Style, and many other ca. 1880
14 Victorian houses found on Jefferson Road, Park Street, Maple Street and Terrace Street would
15 contribute to the District once the lines for the district are eventually drawn. The transmission
16 lines that would cross Route 3 are very close to the center of Whitefield and would negatively
17 impact the setting of this “downtown” area.

18 **Q. How would the Project affect the Burns homestead and farm?**

19 A. The Major David Burns historic farmstead is one of the earliest properties in
20 Whitefield. The Burns were original grantees and settlers of the Town of Whitefield in 1802.
21 This property has parcels on both sides of Route 3 with a gorgeous view of Burns Lake. The

1 proposed towers running in a line above the west side of Burns Lake would compromise this
2 spectacular view shed. The Burns family have traditionally farmed these lands and currently run
3 a maple sugar operation on the eastern parcel of their property.

4 **Q. What else would you like the Site Evaluation Committee to know regarding**
5 **the negative impacts of the Project?**

6 A. Whitefield has a rich historic fabric made up of the historic hill farms of East
7 Whitefield and the beautiful homes built during the time when Whitefield businesses really
8 flourished at the turn of the last century. Wealth from the Brown Lumber Co., the Bobbin Mill,
9 Snow and Baker, and the Creamery can be seen by the styles and sizes of the houses in
10 Whitefield. Through the years, the Town has been proud of its industries, resort hotels and inns,
11 and its beautiful view sheds. Large steel monopoles with overhead transmission lines would not
12 be an asset to the hill farms, the Mountain View Grand Resort, or the historic town common
13 area. The towers will be an eyesore and greatly cheapen the beauty that has traditionally drawn
14 people northward since the advent of the Civil War to the the arrival of the railroads to the North
15 County, and to the present day.

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

17 A. Yes.



The Whitefield Historical Society
P.O. BOX 21
WHITEFIELD, N.H. 03598

September 24, 2015

Mr. Timothy W. Drew, Administrator
Public Information and Permitting Unit
P.O. Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095

Dear Mr. Drew,

The Whitefield Historical Society was formed in 1981 to bring together people interested in history, and especially the history of Whitefield.

A major part of the history of Whitefield revolves around tourism. Beginning in the mid-1860's with the opening of the Mountain View House, people have come to Whitefield to enjoy the mountain scenery. These views have brought people to Whitefield ever since. Today, the Mountain View Grand, successor to the Mountain View House, attracts numerous visitors throughout the year.

The Northern Pass project as proposed would place steel lattice towers at a height of about 100 feet across the Town. Transmission towers now in the Town are at a height of 45 to 55 feet high, which is lower than the trees on the edges of the right-of-way. The towers for the proposed line would rise above the tree line. The views from the Mountain View Grand could be compromised by the line of towers for Northern Pass.

Presently the lines cross Routes US 3 and NH 116. Under the proposed plan the poles for this transmission line will be replaced by higher poles, and the 100 foot steel lattice towers for Northern Pass will be added. This will provide a congested view at the Route 3 crossing to the many people travelling this part of the highway.

The steel lattice towers will be highly visible in the areas just West of Burns Lake and Forest Lake, important tourist areas in the Town.

The Town of Whitefield has been experiencing difficult economic times with the loss of businesses. The one bright spot has been the renovation of the Mountain View Grand and the number of people who visit there. We do not need anything to impede the visits there.

We ask that you consider the burial of the Northern Pass along the entire route. We would like to have everyone along the route of the Northern Pass be treated in the same manner by burying this line.

Sincerely,

Lise Moran

Lise Moran, President