

Chairman Honigberg,
Members of the Committee,

In April 2011 the Town of New Hampton put before the residents a resolution objecting to Northern Pass as proposed. In a near unanimous vote (only 5 votes in favor of the project were recorded) the Town adopted the resolution, and in the intervening 5½ years we as a community have submitted written and verbal testimony to the Dept. of Energy, the Site Evaluation Committee and our State and Federal elected officials. We, like many other affected communities, have recognized that there existed a middle ground whereby the project could be constructed while recognizing the many concerns of New Hampshire residents; and therefore have consistently advocated for the complete burial of the project.

The makeup of New Hampton's Board of Selectman has changed multiple times since 2011 but it has consistently held that the Northern Pass project, as currently proposed, would significantly alter the character of the Town, and result in disrupting the orderly development as described in the Town's Master Plan, first adopted in 1985 and Planning documents.

The Master Plan, which has been updated on multiple occasions, has remained consistent in the goal to "preserve the rural working landscape and protect prime agricultural lands" while working to "ensure that the town retains the unique and historic rural character", "preserving important wildlife habitat, scenic views, ridgelines, wetlands and water resources". High Voltage Transmission Lines (HVTL) would violate all 3 of these stated guiding principles for development within the Town of New Hampton.

One only has to look at the summer traffic counts for NH Route 104 to understand the economic reality of tourism in the Lakes Region. The industrialization of the landscape with the proposed HVTL would deter many visitors with a corresponding decline in revenues in the businesses that have been established to provide goods and services to our valued visitors. The short-term economic benefit from a construction project would not make up for the long-term impact to the Lakes Region tourism industry. However, a buried line would provide all of the construction period benefits without the decimation of the established economy.

Our assessment of impact on the tax base continues, however it is our belief that there will be a significant impact on residential tax assessments, influenced in part by the paper written by Dr. James A. Chalmers in 2012 in which he discusses the impact of HVTL on Rural Real Estate Values. We do not believe that tax revenue from the project will offset the revenues lost, it is our position that Northern Pass, as proposed, would be a net loss for the Town. The resulting decline in property values along the 15.8 miles of the route in New Hampton would require either a significant increase in the tax rate to maintain the current level of services within our community, or a reduction in services and postponement or delay to infrastructure projects.

Based upon the above stated positions, together with previously submitted testimony, we respectfully request that the Committee require the project be buried in its entirety if granted a permit to be sited in New Hampshire.