

**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 GAIL MATSON AND CANDACE BOUCHARD  
ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF CONCORD CITY COUNCIL**

**December 30, 2016**

**Purpose of Testimony**

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

A. This testimony is being presented on behalf of the City of Concord's City Council to address additional issues such as aesthetics, historic sites and natural resources.

**Q. What are the City Council's recommendations in this proceeding?**

A. The City Council's recommendation continues to be that the Northern Pass project should not be approved as it is currently proposed.

**Aesthetic and Historic Site Concerns**

**Q. Please describe the City of Concord's concerns relative to aesthetics.**

A. The City of Concord is the capital city of New Hampshire, and it is an important economic, political and cultural region of the State of New Hampshire. According to the 2010 United States census, Concord has a population of 42,695, which equates to 36% of the entire population along the proposed route, making it the most populated municipality along the proposed route. The proposed Northern Pass project travels through rural and scenic residential portions of Concord, as well as other more urban sections of Concord that have heavily populated neighborhoods. The proposed Northern Pass project also travels through the Gateway Performance District which is an important commercial zone. The City of Concord opposes the Northern Pass project as it is currently proposed because of the heights of the proposed overhead lines and wires, as well as the removal of tree buffers in certain areas, which will have a negative visual impact on our community.

1           The City of Concord received a petition requesting burial of the proposed Northern Pass  
2 Project through Concord. By way of clarification of the pre-filed testimony submitted on  
3 November 15, 2016, the petition actually had **1102** signatures. The petition was provided to the  
4 City of Concord on January 27, 2016, and is available on the City's website at  
5 <http://www.concordnh.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/2599>. A letter from Ellen Schaffer  
6 explaining the process of obtaining the petition is attached as Exhibit A. In our opinion, this  
7 petition helps to demonstrate the extent of opposition to the proposed Northern Pass project  
8 within the City of Concord due to the adverse visual impacts. The petition seeks to have the  
9 proposed Northern Pass transmission lines buried through Concord where they will be in close  
10 proximity to many homes.

11           As discussed in our pre-filed testimony submitted on November 15, 2016, the most  
12 frequent and visceral concern raised by the public in testimony and correspondence at the City of  
13 Concord's Northern Pass Committee hearings related to the overhead lines and supporting  
14 structures. Residents that testified or submitted correspondence expressed significant worry  
15 about the visual impact of this project. The City Council is similarly concerned about the  
16 negative visual impacts of the proposed overhead lines and supporting structures.

17           **Q.     With respect to aesthetics, are there any impacts to residential properties in**  
18 **Concord that you would like to bring to the attention of the Site Evaluation Commission**  
19 **that concern you?**

20           A.     Yes. There are a large number of residential properties that will have increased  
21 views of the transmission lines due to the proposed removal of tree buffers and/or the increase in

1 the height, relocation and amount of structures. A list of these properties was prepared by the  
2 Assistant City Planner, Beth Fenstermacher. There are also a number of photographs of these  
3 properties included in the City of Concord's Appendix 1.

4 Some examples of the visual impacts to residential properties that raise concerns are as  
5 follows:

6 • Brookwood Drive Development: There are several single family residential properties at  
7 Brookwood Drive and Fox Run that will be negatively impacted by the proposed Northern Pass  
8 project. These properties are immediately adjacent to the utility corridor. The visibility of the  
9 structures along the corridor will be intensified due to the increase in the height and relocation of  
10 the structures closer to the homes, as well as the proposed removal of vegetative buffers.

11 • 41 Hoit Road: The construction pads and proposed transmission wires will be within feet  
12 of this house. There is also a concern about the proposed access roads and clearing of vegetative  
13 buffers on this property. The proposed plans show that a portion of the property's vegetative  
14 buffer along Mountain Road would need to be removed.

15 • 56, 61 and 67 Sanborn Road: With respect to 56 Sanborn Road, there is a new access  
16 driveway off of the public road and through the fenced horse farm, which will impact the fence,  
17 the view of the horse farm and its operation. There are also two new houses at 61 and 67  
18 Sanborn Road that are very close to the proposed Northern Pass route and are not shown on the  
19 construction maps. These homes will be visually impacted due to the increased height and  
20 amount of structures and wires along the corridor.

1       • 183 Shaker Road – The property at 183 Shaker Road is eligible for the National Historic  
2 Register. The increased in the height and amount of structures and wires will have a negative  
3 impact on the aesthetics of this area, as well as the scenic landscape along Shaker road.

4       • 86 and 87 Oak Hill Road – These properties are located near Turtle Pond. There is a  
5 proposed 120 foot structure (P145-134) that will be located on 87 Oak Hill Road, and that  
6 structure will also be very close and visible to the road. The property at 86 Oak Hill Road will  
7 also be impacted by the proposed clearing of buffers and the increased height and amount of  
8 structures, including the construction of a new 105 foot structure (3132-113) and 101.5 foot  
9 structure (P145-133) that will be visible near the home.

10       • Jennifer Drive Properties: There are several condex properties located at Jennifer Drive  
11 that have views of Turtle Pond in their backyards. The visibility of the structures along the  
12 corridor will be increased due to the increase in the height and relocation of the structures closer  
13 to the homes, as well as the proposed removal of vegetative buffers.

14       • Appleton Street: There is a home that was constructed at 83 Appleton Street which is not  
15 shown on the maps submitted by Northern Pass. This property appears to have views of Turtle  
16 Pond, and there is a concern that the property will be visually impacted in a negative manner due  
17 to the increase in the height, amount and relocation of the structures at Turtle Pond. The farm at  
18 89 Appleton Street will also have increased views of the structures.

19       • Portsmouth Street: There are a number of homes on Portsmouth Street that will be  
20 impacted by the proposed Northern Pass project. These properties are adjacent to the utility  
21 corridor. The visibility of the structures along the corridor will be intensified due to the increase

1 in the height and relocation of the structures closer to the homes, as well as the proposed removal  
2 of vegetative buffers. By way of example, the home at 254 Portsmouth Street will have visibility  
3 of a 119.5 foot structure (P145-101). The home at 253 Portsmouth Street currently has a tree  
4 buffer that the City of Concord has taken measures to protect, and the proposed plans indicate  
5 that some of the buffer will be removed.

6 • Alton Woods Apartments: There is a large residential apartment complex at Alton  
7 Woods that is adjacent to the corridor. Alton Woods uses the area for parking and recreation.  
8 The height and amount of structures along the corridor are proposed to be increased, and they are  
9 also going to be moved in closer proximity to the apartment buildings, all which will have a  
10 negative visual impact.

11 • Old Loudon Road: The house at 5-7 Old Loudon Road will be impacted by the proposed  
12 Northern Pass project. This home is immediately adjacent to the utility corridor. The visibility  
13 of the structures along the corridor will be increased due to the increase in the height and  
14 relocation of the structures closer to the home, as well as the proposed removal of vegetative  
15 buffers. One of the structures is proposed to be as high as 125 feet. There is also a tree in the  
16 home's front yard that is proposed to be removed.

17 • McKenna's Purchase Condominiums: There is a large condominium development at  
18 McKenna's Purchase that has taken measures to reduce the visibility of the corridor, as well as  
19 noise and visual impacts from other commercial buildings in the area (for example, Home  
20 Depot), by constructing a berm and planting trees in the corridor. Many of the condominiums  
21 are immediately adjacent to the utility corridor. The height and amount of structures along the

corridor are proposed to be increased under the proposed Northern Pass project, and some of the structures are proposed to be relocated closer to the condominiums. There is also a proposal to remove some of the tree buffer. McKenna's Purchase has been vocal about its opposition to the project.

- 149 Pembroke Road: The house at 149 Pembroke Road will be impacted by the proposed Northern Pass project. This home is immediately adjacent to the utility corridor. The visibility of the structures along the corridor will be increased due to the increase in the height and the amount of structures near the home. One of the structures near the home is proposed to be 110 feet (P145-88).

**Q. With respect to aesthetics, are there any specific concerns that you have about the impacts to scenic roads and other scenic areas in the City of Concord that you would like to bring to the attention of the Site Evaluation Commission that concern you?**

A. Yes. The City of Concord has taken measures to conserve the Whispering Heights/Broken Ground area, which will be impacted by the proposed Northern Pass project. The project also proposes the construction and relocation of structures at Turtle Pond that the Department of Energy has stated will have an aesthetic/visual impact which increases current conditions from "moderate" to "strong." There are also hiking trails along Oak Hill Road from which the proposed project will be seen.

There are other scenic areas in Concord that will be negatively impacted. For example, the views along Hoit Road, Shaker Road and Oak Hill Road will be impacted by the proposed Northern Pass project. These are scenic roads that are used by cars, motorcycles and bicyclists.

1 One of the proposed structures in close proximity to Oak Hill road that will be near the entrance  
2 of Turtle Pond is 120 feet tall (P145-134). There are several other structures that are proposed to  
3 be over 100 feet tall along Oak Hill Road.

4 **Q. With respect to aesthetics, are there any concerns about the Gateway**  
5 **Performance District in Concord that you would like to bring to the attention of the Site**  
6 **Evaluation Commission that concern you?**

7 A. Yes. Two of the proposed structures will be 125 feet, and are located near  
8 Loudon Road which is Concord's Gateway Performance District that provides an entrance into  
9 the easterly portion of Concord. There is a traffic signal at the intersection of D'Amante Drive  
10 and Loudon Road, and pedestrians and vehicles stopped at the intersection will be looking at  
11 these high structures and wires. The Department of Energy has stated that the proposed  
12 structures at this location will have an aesthetic/visual impact which increases current conditions  
13 in this area from "moderate" to "severe" which means that "the visual change would be very  
14 large, and in sensitive settings is likely considered unreasonably adverse by a casual observer."  
15 This severe impact conflicts with the goals of Concord's Zoning Ordinance. The Gateway  
16 Performance District was established to provide for well designed, large scale commercial  
17 developments that "are expected to adhere to high standards for appearance in order to ensure  
18 that the gateways to the City are attractive and functional. Buffering and screening for adjacent  
19 neighborhoods are of concern for development at the edges of this District." The Gateway  
20 Performance District is a growth corridor that is actively developed, and has some of Concord's  
21 highest valued properties due to its desirable location.



1           **Q.     With respect to aesthetics, what measures have the City of Concord's City**  
2           **Council taken in other areas of Concord with respect to the burial of utility lines?**

3           A.     The City of Concord's City Council has undertaken projects in the last few years  
4           to reduce the amount of utility lines in Concord. For example, in the village of Penacook, in  
5           2013, the City appropriated approximately \$1.5 million to bury power lines in the downtown  
6           Penacook village areas to beautify the area and attract more business and development to the  
7           village. More recently, the City of Concord appropriated approximately \$2 million to bury  
8           utility lines on South Main Street, and the City of Concord may consider the appropriation of  
9           approximately \$1 million in the future for the burial of utility lines for another block near the  
10          Capitol Center for the Arts. The City also invested funds to bury lines in the early 2000s to have  
11          the utility lines buried near Horseshoe Pond.

12          **Q.     The City of Concord recently redeveloped downtown Concord in order to**  
13          **make it more attractive for residents and visitors. What concerns do you have about the**  
14          **proposed Northern Pass project on the City Council's efforts to make Concord a more**  
15          **attractive place for residents and visitors?**

16          A.     The Concord City Council spent a lot of effort to ensure that the downtown  
17          renovation project would be attractive, and it was highly involved in the decision-making process  
18          of aesthetic details such choosing the lamp posts, landscaping and lighting of trees. The City of  
19          Concord frequently takes measures to ensure that the City of Concord is developed in an  
20          attractive manner.

1           We are concerned because there are 8.1 miles of overhead lines proposed for Concord.  
2           According to the proposed Northern Pass project plans, the most common height of the existing  
3           structures in the right of way in Concord are 43 feet. The average height of the relocated  
4           structures will be 88 feet, or twice the existing average height. Moreover, the application shows  
5           120 structures over 90 feet in Concord, and 60 of those structures are proposed to be between  
6           100-125 feet. As discussed above, the Concord route runs through rural, residential and  
7           commercial areas.

8           It should be noted that a 100-125 foot utility structure and accompanying wires will be  
9           very high. These structures will be much higher than the average height of buildings and trees in  
10          Concord. As such, the impacts to Concord's viewshed are concerning based on the fact that  
11          many of the structures will be over 100 feet.

12          **Industrial Zone Concerns**

13               **Q.     With respect to the industrial zone, are there any impacts to industrial**  
14               **properties in Concord that you would like to bring to the attention of the Site Evaluation**  
15               **Commission that concern you?**

16               A.     Yes, we have concerns about the impacts of construction to the property owned  
17               by Sabbow in the industrial zone. It appears from the maps that there will be construction pads  
18               and access roads that may interfere with the operations of the company.

1 **Natural Resource Concerns**

2 **Q. Please describe the City of Concord's concerns relative to natural resources.**

3 A. One of the major concerns about natural resources relates to the Karner Blue  
4 butterflies. The proposed route bisects a lot in Concord that is believed to provide a habitat for  
5 the Karner Blue butterfly, which is listed as a federally endangered species and has been  
6 reintroduced in Concord through the release of captive reared butterflies in the Pine Barrens.

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

8 A. Yes.

# EXHIBIT A

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ellen Schaffer <ellen726@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 23, 2016 5:51 AM  
**To:** Matson, Gail  
**Subject:** Northern Pass

Gail,  
As you know Sue Woodard and I started a petition in Concord supporting the burial of the NP lines in the entire state but especially thru Concord. The reason this started was because Bill Quinlan was quoted as saying they hadn't heard much opposition to the line from people in central and southern NH. I had already sent letters to the SEC and I knew Sue had a stop Northern Pass sign in her yard so I thought she would want to get involved. When we spoke we thought a petition was the way to go because we could also inform people who were not aware of NP about what was going on. We both live near Turtle Pond which will be impacted by this line. As we started canvassing the neighborhoods in East Concord we grew to a group of about 9 people who also went door to door, stood downtown, went to sporting events and the farmers market gathering signatures on the petition. We also left the petition at Quality Cash Market for people to sign. The petition reads as follows:

We support burying the Northern Pass transmission lines thru the entire state but especially thru Concord where they will be in close proximity to many homes.

The petition had exactly 1102 signatures when I presented it to the SEC at the meeting in the Grappone Center. Sue and I also gathered people to speak at the Northern Pass committee meetings and worked with people in Canterbury and Pembroke to get this on agendas in their towns so their citizens knew what was going on.

Please let me know if there is anything else we can do.

Thanks Ellen Schaffer

work # [REDACTED]

home # [REDACTED]