

**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 NICHOLAS COATES ON BEHALF OF THE
TOWN OF BRISTOL**

April 17, 2017

1 **Supplemental Testimony**

2 **Q. Does the Town of Bristol rely on natural resources for its tourism-based**
3 **industry?**

4 A. Yes, the Town of Bristol relies on many natural resources for its tourism-based
5 industry and the towers will be visible from many of the scenic locations.

6 The towers will be visible from the Pemigewasset (“Pemi”) River. The river is used for
7 swimming, fishing, boating and other water activities. The Pemi River trail will also include a
8 view of the towers.

9 Newfound Lake is a draw for many tourists. The lake has a beautiful shoreline and pristine
10 waters. Visitors are drawn from near and far to swim, camp, go boating and fishing and other
11 lake activities.

12 Inspiration Point is a very popular hiking spot. It is believed that the towers would be visible
13 from the top of the mountain where Inspiration Point crests. Beautiful views of multiple towns
14 can be seen from this location. Slim Baker Lodge is a non-profit located near Inspiration Point,
15 which is used for weddings, various types of functions and summer camp for the Tapply-
16 Thompson Community Center.

17 Peaked Hill Road is the road closest to the proposed towers and it is a listed as an approved
18 Scenic Road since 1975. It is a rural road with beautiful views, which we anticipate will be
19 impacted by the much larger towers the Applicants propose installing.

1 There are other natural resources in proximity to the towers that are located in other surrounding
2 towns—such as Cardigan Mountain in Alexandria. Impacts to these natural resources will impact
3 Bristol’s tourism-based industry.

4 Appendix D shows the 2015 Highest-ranked Wildlife Habitat by Ecological Condition and
5 Appendix E shows 2015 Wildlife Habitat Land Cover. Wildlife is important to our area and it
6 the towers are planned for a location that could have a detrimental effect on the environment.
7 Appendix F shows statistics regarding tourism in Bristol. Tourism will be impacted by having
8 the towers because it impacts the scenery.

9 **Q. Are Bristol business owners concerned about the project?**

10 A. Yes. See Appendix G, letters and emails from some Bristol business owners.

11 **Q. Would the Northern Pass Project be consistent with Bristol’s Zoning
12 Ordinance?**

13 A. No. The Project would be inconsistent with several provisions of the Town’s
14 zoning ordinance. See Appendix B to my original pre-filed testimony. As proposed, the Project
15 would cause adverse impacts to the Town’s wetlands, result in the widening of the current utility
16 corridor/powerline clear cut, and have a negative visual impact on the viewsheds and rural nature
17 of the Town.

18 Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates view corridors, vistas and viewsheds as they apply
19 to cell towers. While the proposed Project towers are not cell towers, at 70-100 feet in height
20 they would be as tall as, or taller, than many cell towers, and will detract from the Town’s
21 viewsheds and its rural nature. This goes against the spirit and intent of the Town’s zoning.

1 Article 3(H) of the Zoning Ordinance defines the Pemigewasset Overlay District, and regulates
2 construction within 500 feet of the river's ordinary high water mark (the reference line). This
3 section prohibits structures on slopes which exceed 15 percent. However, as proposed, the
4 Project would conflict with these provisions.

5 Article 9 of the Zoning Ordinance defines the Wetlands Conservation Overlay District. While it
6 permits certain low-impact uses in the district, it would not allow for construction in a wetland.
7 In particular, the erection of utility towers and the access roads that accompany them would not
8 be permitted under this provision except by Special Use Permit from the Planning Board. The
9 Board may grant such a permit after input from the Conservation Commission and only after a
10 public hearing – but it is not required to issue the permit in any case. However, as proposed, the
11 Project would be in conflict with this section.

12 Finally, Article 4 of the Zoning Ordinance limits the heights of all buildings and structures to 35
13 feet, which is well below the proposed heights of the towers for this Project.

14 **Q. Would the Project, as proposed with its overhead transmission lines, unduly**
15 **interfere with the orderly development of the region?**

16 A. Yes, for all the reasons explained in my previous testimony.

17 **Q. Has the Board of Selectmen communicated its concerns to any governmental**
18 **agency other than the Site Evaluation Committee?**

19 A. Yes. The Board of Selectmen sent a letter dated October 3, 2013 to Brian Mills,
20 Senior Planning Advisor in the Office of Electricity and Energy Reliability at the US Department
21 of Energy. See Appendix C to my original pre-filed testimony. The Board expressed its

1 concerns with the potential visual, environmental and economic impacts with regard to the
2 Project.

3 **Q. Have the changes in the proposed Project configuration since 2013 affected**
4 **those concerns?**

5 A. No.

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

7 A. Yes.