

**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**

**SUPPLEMENTAL PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CASSNDRA LALEME ON  
BEHALF OF THE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**

**April 17, 2017**

1 **Supplemental Testimony**

2 **Q. Do you have any concerns about the location of Substation #5?**

3 A. The 5/16/2016 Department of Environmental Services (DES) progress report  
4 stated that alternate sites for Substation #5 should be sought as there was a 16,378 square foot  
5 impact on wetlands. On their final report of March 1, 2017, this is no longer a consideration  
6 although there is no documentation that the impact is less. They noted in that final report that a  
7 permanent impact on wetlands of 112,576 square feet will result from the project noted under  
8 The Findings section #10 and #11. There is no suggestion that substation #5 be moved. This is a  
9 direct contradiction as noted in the progress report of 5/16/2016. It is unclear why DES changed  
10 its mind on this issue. This final March 1, 2017 report has 56 Project Conditions and 20  
11 Mitigation Conditions which are conditional on payments of \$3.37 million dollars. Apparently,  
12 the 16,378 square feet in Bethlehem are of little consequence to DES. The DES final report  
13 states that the Ammonoosuc River and Miller's Pond will have shoreland impacts of 33,254 and  
14 45,226 square feet respectively and 127 square feet of imperious surface at the Ammonoosuc and  
15 19,892 square feet at Miller's Pond further impact these two areas. All of these impacts occur in  
16 Bethlehem. The impact for Bethlehem is 4.6 miles and therefore, this seems an unusually high  
17 amount of wetland/shoreline impact.

18 **Q. Would this project violate Town ordinances?**

19 A. Yes. The people in our Town value the wetlands and water quality of the  
20 environment, as shown by the adoption of an Aquifer Protection Ordinance. *See Appendix D.*

1 This Ordinance focuses on Groundwater Protection Performance Standards and addresses  
2 impervious surfaces, discharges of chemicals or substances potentially harmful to the  
3 environment, outdoor storage areas and spill protection. Given the large quantity of equipment  
4 that will be required, this Project has the potential to violate this Ordinance.

5 The Town has also authorized a Personal Wireless Service Facilities (PWSF) Ordinance. *See*  
6 Appendix D, attached to my original Pre-filed Testimony. This ordinances pertaining to these  
7 towers restrict height and promote aesthetics. This is another example of loss of local control  
8 and disregard for local care of our environment.

9 We also have a Dark Skies Ordinance that restricts light from projecting upward. This is another  
10 example of the Town protecting our environment.

11 In addition, under our General Provisions (Appendix D), there are also limits on the amount of  
12 building area permitted on a lot and requirements for green buffers to minimize impervious  
13 surfaces.

14 **Q. Do you have any concerns about any effects on tourism in Bethlehem if this**  
15 **project proceeds as planned?**

16 A. Yes. The Nichols Report submitted by the Applicant suggests that there is no  
17 impact projected on tourism but this is a speculative and subjective report. The Carsey Report,  
18 Issue Brief No. 33, Summer 2013 is based on surveys that have specific questions and  
19 parameters for conducting the survey. The findings show that clean water, scenic views, and  
20 recreation are the top three priorities in New Hampshire. This is an accurate portrayal of

1 Bethlehem. The people of Bethlehem have substantiated this report by enacting our “cell” tower  
2 and Aquifer Ordinances. We are a Bed and Breakfast community as you will not find any box  
3 stores or large factories in Bethlehem. The Applicants note in their report “Northern Pass  
4 Transmission Line Visual Impact Assessment of 10/14/2015 by Terrance J. DeWan and  
5 Associates” that the Substation #5 location in Bethlehem will have a medium impact on visual  
6 effect. They state that visibility will be about 14 seconds at 50 mph. The speed limit in that  
7 area, however, is 40 mph. It has come to the attention of the Planning Board and Selectboard  
8 that several citizens want to petition to the State of New Hampshire to decrease the speed limit to  
9 30 mph. At these lower speeds, the Project will be visible for a longer period of time. The  
10 report also states that uses of Baker Pond are unknown, but DeWan and Associates could have  
11 learned much about these uses if they had asked the Town. There are currently efforts underway  
12 to rebuild the Baker Brook development. Past and current uses of Baker Pond are fishing and  
13 some small boating. The Pond is directly across from the substation, so visual impact will be  
14 more than “medium”. The report talks of vegetation as reducing visual impact. In reality, any  
15 vegetation is ground cover and will do nothing to screen 100 foot plus metal towers. If new trees  
16 are planted, it can take several years to reach full growth. This means no screening for several  
17 years.

18 **Q. Do you have any concerns about animals and vegetation in the region if this**  
19 **project proceeds as planned?**

1           A.     The final DES report also documents that 25.6 acres of Deer Wintering Areas will  
2     be cleared (Finding #15) and that there will be high impact to several species (Finding #16). This  
3     confirms destruction not only of plant or vegetation, but also an animal life sustaining area.

4           **Q.     Do you believe the Applicants are justified in proposing a plan that comes**  
5     **with so many adverse impacts?**

6           A.     In the Carsey Report on New Hampshire's Electricity Futures it makes the case  
7     that there is no rush to secure large energy projects as the grid is reasonably secure. In addition,  
8     they document that we, as rate payers, are already paying for the majority pollution control  
9     equipment at the Merrimack Station because which is costing the taxpayer millions. As there is  
10    now a question on funding for the line through New Hampshire, it seems rash to plough ahead  
11    with the very real possibility of taxpayers being tapped again. All that, in addition to having  
12    taxpayers paying for legal representation to protect our interests in a process that leaves us with  
13    little to no control. The question becomes one of why the taxpayer has to subsidize corporate  
14    interests with no profit sharing on a project that is destructive to our environments and homes.  
15    The second question is why the taxpayer needs legal representation against its own governing  
16    bodies/committees.

17          **Q.     What concerns do you have about emergency and school access during**  
18    **construction?**

19          A.     Route 302 is the primary route of travel from Bethlehem to eastern destinations,  
20    including our high school on Route 118 and Littleton Hospital via I-93. Even if construction is

1 done in summer months, we have a Summer School Program and students are required to travel  
2 to and from the High School. The underground portion from Substation #5 goes east on Route  
3 302 and then onto Route 118. Our alternate route of travel would be Route 142 to Franconia and  
4 east on their Main Street, which, if under construction, will impede our travel. The only other  
5 route east would be Route 142 to Route 116 and then south to Littleton. If allowed to proceed as  
6 planned, construction will impact health and safety for Bethlehem residents and visitors traveling  
7 to necessary services and could result in negative impacts on the well-being of our citizens.

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

9 **A. Yes.**