

**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 ERIC METH ON BEHALF
OF THE FRANCONIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

April 17, 2017

1 **Supplemental Testimony**

2 **Q. Do you have concerns about Northern Pass's Route Selection in Franconia?**

3 A. Yes. The selected route passes Franconia's main bridge over the Gale River (the
4 "Gale River Crossing"). This crossing abuts a key intersection of the proposed Northern Pass
5 Transmission Project (NPT) route. The intersection and bridge are a confluence of three major
6 highways involving Interstate 93 (accessed by both on and off ramps), NH Route 18 (Main
7 Street), and NH Route 116 (Church Street/Easton Road) and has traditionally accommodated a
8 high volume of regional, community, and local traffic. The Main intersection also lies in the
9 center of Franconia. As proposed, the NPT route will adversely impact all of the Town's normal
10 activities. Restricting or preventing access at this intersection will prevent the Town from
11 providing vital municipal services in a timely manner and could result in irreparable harm.
12 Pedestrian and vehicular access to the U.S. Post Office, the Lafayette Elementary School,
13 children and senior centers, grocery stores, gas stations, and other businesses and offices will
14 certainly be disrupted.

15 The Lafayette Brook Bridge over the Lafayette Brook, posted E-2, abuts on the
16 intersection of NH Route 18 and NH Route 141(south of the proposed route) and would be
17 subject to traffic volumes that may exceed weight restrictions if construction of the proposed
18 Northern Pass Transmission Project (NPT) is approved as proposed. We understand that this
19 bridge has structural issues, is on the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's "red list",
20 and is due to be replaced or repaired.

1 A third bridge in Town abuts on the intersection of NH Route 117 and NH Route 18. It
2 also has size and weight restrictions. The historic “Besaw Stone Iron Furnace” abuts on this
3 bridge west of Route 18, while the Lafayette Elementary School and the Lafayette Senior Center
4 abuts on the east of the proposed HVDC line. This bridge crosses over the Gale River
5 downstream from the main intersection.

6 If the Project is approved as proposed, it is likely to cause detours and delays at the Gale
7 River Crossing, with detoured traffic rerouted over two other bridges with size and weight
8 restrictions incompatible with high traffic volumes and large vehicles. The Applicants have not
9 adequately explained how they will address this problem.

10 Additionally, activities and events scheduled for Franconia’s main venue, “The Dow
11 Field” (abutting the proposed route) would be disrupted or cancelled. Other numerous activities
12 and events which utilize playgrounds, church grounds and other venues throughout the town
13 would have to be cancelled, rescheduled or interrupted.

14 Businesses will suffer losses. Property values will be adversely impacted. Construction
15 through Town will restrict access for large vehicles such as trucks with heavy loads, tractor-
16 trailers, school buses and emergency vehicles. All emergency medical transportation providers
17 will face lengthy detours over E-2 posted bridges, and over narrow, winding roads. Volunteer
18 firemen will face delays in getting to Franconia’s Safety Services Building, which houses the
19 Fire Department (in addition to the Police Department and Life Squad) on Route 18 and then
20 arriving at the scene of the fire.

1 The Town's main streets and highways, under which the proposed HVDC lines would be
2 buried, are also used by pedestrians and bicycle riders. This growing volume of recreational
3 traffic includes regional and local bicycles races, (running) races, triathlons, motorcycle visits
4 and seasonal visitors and tourists during the summer and fall months. Much of this activity will
5 be restricted or prohibited during construction; a period anticipated to last months at a time.
6 There are also several E-2 class bridges that feed local roads into Route 116 and provide
7 residents and visitors access to Town. These smaller structures may not be able to accommodate
8 large emergency vehicles or heavy construction equipment. These E-2 class bridges crossing the
9 Ham Branch River are adjacent to Rt. 116. One is located at the intersection of Bickford Hill
10 Road and Route 116 (Easton Road). Another is located near the intersection of Lafayette Road
11 and Route 116 (Easton Road).

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

13 **A. Yes.**