



FAX

TO: Mr. Brian Mills	FROM: Richard Went
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DATE: 4/4/2011	# OF PAGES: 24

Message:

Mr. Mills,

Please read.

Richard Went
RIACD - President



The Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts

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April 4, 2011

Mr. Brian Mills
Senior Planning Advisor
Office of Electricity and Energy Reliability
U.S. Dept. of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Mills,

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts which, would like to go on record of opposing the Northern Pass HVDC transmission line on the basis that it would be detrimental to our national responsibility to create our own renewable energy and would send important jobs and money to another nation when our economy could certainly use it. It would also be detrimental to land and water conservation that all conservation districts have a responsibility steward.

We do not take lightly our support for our New Hampshire partners by supporting their opposition for this project. If we are truly a nation that wishes to support energy conservation as well as other conservation, we must make our stand and begin our renewed independence.

- * The Northern Pass HVDC transmission line would cross or lie contiguous to thousands of acres of protected conservation lands, having a detrimental impact on these scenic landscapes conserved for the enjoyment of the people and future generations. The line would also impede the ability to expand contiguous conserved land to achieve maximum conservation benefit on our land.
- * Hundreds of farms in our conservation districts would also be adversely impacted, degraded, and devalued. A great number of these have been family farms worked for generations and form part of the cultural history of the state and the identity of its people.
- Hydro-electric power coming from Hydro-Quebec in Canada does not qualify for inclusion towards realizing our committed Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) goal. In New Hampshire, the RPS plan was crafted in 2002 to support the development of indigenous renewable energy sources such as biomass and

solar which create local jobs and stimulate instate economic activity. Hydro-Quebec will not be contributing to obtaining 25% of our electricity from renewable energy resources by the year 2025 and will discourage our reaching those goals with local renewable sources

- Approval of this project would only continue Hydro-Quebec's dominance as a bidder to supply short and long-term power to the New England. With its extremely low variable costs, Hydro-Quebec will drive producers of green, renewable energy out of business and make it nearly impossible for developers of new facilities to obtain the required financing. The green, job creating, New Hampshire and New England power generators impacted by this competitor include bio fueled combined heat and power plants, solar generators, wind farms, new small hydro plants, and facilities recycling waste heat from industry.
- The northeast being the most forested region in the country, we have an obligation to promote a thriving forest products industry in New Hampshire. Our Conservation Districts, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, are active in implementing best practices for landowners which create a market for low grade wood that comes from timber stand improvement and successional wildlife habitat work. Our local renewable wood energy markets will be jeopardized by massive infusions of electrical power from Quebec.
- Becoming more and more dependent on foreign energy sources will adversely impact our national balance of payments. At current New England power costs of \$150 per megawatt-hour, New England residents could send \$800 million per year to the Northern Pass suppliers in Quebec. We could, and should, instead pursue initiatives to generate \$800 million worth of local sustainable electricity, which would create 1,500 full-time jobs here that are permanent and keep the money at home.
- Another 'line of dependence' from Quebec will impact our ability to protect the Northeastern electric grids from terrorist attacks launched simultaneously against each border crossing transmission line from locations deep in the Canadian wilderness and far from the U.S. zone of protection.
- The hydro-electric power coming from Quebec cannot be considered 'green.' As defined by our Environmental Protection Agency, green power "represents those renewable resources---solar, wind, biogas, biomass, **low-impact hydro** --- that provide the highest environmental benefit." [emphasis added] We cannot ignore what goes on at the source, though it is across our international border. By signing on to this source of power, we continue the deforestation of millions of Canadian acres, the draining of rivers, and inundating thousands of miles of biologically productive and diverse shoreline habitat, supporting a number of species such as the ptarmigan, rabbits, birds, beaver, muskrat, and moose. The impact of creating such large areas of reservoirs on the water regime and the

land is tremendous, as is the profound impact on the native Cree community. The deforested areas will never again absorb carbon and decaying wood and debris will emit carbon, resulting in net emissions of global greenhouse gases.

- The Northern Pass project, as proposed, will pass through thousands of acres of the highest ranked wildlife habitat in New Hampshire, as determined by the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan. These designated areas are critical habitats for numerous threatened species of wildlife as well as breeding grounds for the highest concentration of neotropical birds in the country and cannot sustain favorably such an impact. Long corridors of right-of-way will fragment the forest and expose vulnerable species to predation. The maintenance of these ROW's ---whether chemically defoliated or mowing---leave no transition area, contribute little to diversity, and may harm nesting species and damage wetland areas they depend on.

Any of these issues alone should stand this project up to close scrutiny, but taken all together, the conclusion we reach is that the greater public benefit---health and welfare, economy, and environment---for New Hampshire and New England can be realized by not building the Northern Pass. We do not need this power and we do not want this power at such a heavy cost to our environment, to our communities, and to the development of our own renewable energy potential.

Respectfully yours,

Richard T Went, President
The RI Association of
Conservation Districts