

# Northern Pass EIS Website Comment Receipt

Refers to Comment placed on Oct 22, 2013

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As a member of the Sugar Hill, NH Conservation Commission I am concerned that there are serious negative environmental impacts associated with the proposed NP Transmission line, which would pass through our community. Our town presently has 7 miles of existing ROW with a single row of towers carrying AC lines. This ROW is projected to be widened from its current cut width of 150 feet to a minimum width of 225 feet with the new HVDC towers added. The EIS should consider the points below in order to provide our town the fullest protection possible from the EIS phase of the permitting process. The EIS should follow the recommendations contained in the NH Office of Energy and Planning Technical Bulletin #10 -PRESERVATION OF SCENIC AREAS AND VIEWSHEDS and it is highly recommend that they do so. Sugar Hill developed a series of maps in 2012/13 that show the town's most valued natural resources as determined by Sugar Hill residents. The Sugar Hill Conservation Commission has examined the proposed Northern Pass route against our natural resource maps and believes that the following factors should be addressed in the Department of Energy environmental impact study. It is important that the EIS consider the inherent physical changes brought by towers, lines and clearing of the right of way, the deleterious effects towers will have on scenic areas and viewsheds the electromagnetic field generated by the proposed power line as well as the noise. 1. Conservation Land – The Northern Pass proposed ROW impacts 6 conservation land easements, including the Sugar Hill Town Forest, which constitutes about half the conserved acreage in Sugar Hill. The town of Sugar Hill is too small to absorb this impact. The EIS study should evaluate habitat fragmentation and specifically the impact of the power line on wildlife corridors, bird nesting environments, and mammal reproduction on these conserved lands. NP also cuts through 2 large un-fragmented land parcels that are shared with the town of Lisbon (Streeter Pond and Gale River areas) as well as the towns of Easton and Landaff (the Coal Hill area). The DOE should consider the intent of conserved land, that is, to preserve land in its natural state and address the question of whether the presence of industrial infrastructure negatively impacts its conservation value. 2. Water Resources - The proposed power line would impact half the length of the Salmon Hole Brook and it would cross the Gale River. The Right of Way would cross or abut large areas of hydric soils and wetlands. It could negatively impact amphibians and vernal pools and migratory waterfowl on the Gale River and Streeter Pond. It would impact the riparian zones in the northern and western sections of town. The EIS should address all of these features of wetlands impacts. 3. Forest - The NP Power Line would impact a significant portion of Sugar Hill forest land, fragmenting tracts, disrupting wildlife, altering communities, and reducing the many benefits our town derives from un-fragmented forest. The EIS should evaluate the total effect on forest land. 4. Recreation – The EIS should also evaluate the impact of the proposed line on our recreational trails, lands and waterways that are currently used by school groups, the historical museum, the library, 4-H, the tri-town recreation program, hikers, skiers, fishermen and year round tourists. Recreation land is one of the major facets of our economy. So we

specifically ask that you assess the visual and the auditory impact of these proposed lines. 5. Farmland - The power line will reduce farm development in Sugar Hill. The proposed line crosses areas of prime agricultural soil and existing farms. It would reduce the potential for new farms by fragmenting parcels and cause concern for the health and wellbeing of livestock. These factors should be addressed by the EIS. 6. PRESERVATION OF SCENIC AREAS AND VIEWSHEDS - Undeveloped ridgelines, hilltops, and other scenic views provide the scenic forest back drop that contributes to the rural character of our Sugar Hill community and the value of our properties. Conservation and local management of these prominent high elevation landscapes spares Sugar Hill and surrounding communities the damaging impact of ridgeline development. Protection of our scenic vistas is clearly the best use for this land, providing scenic backdrops, pristine views and preserved areas for recreation and wildlife habitat and impact on our Scenic Areas and Viewsheds must be evaluated by the EIS. The US Department of Energy must carefully look at these issues and consider all of the alternatives to the Northern Pass. The EIS should evaluate all the following alternatives including requiring development of electrical generating capability in the United States proximate to where it is needed, requiring all electrical transmission lines to be buried along disrupted corridors and denying the Presidential Permit that would allow transmission of electric to the United States from a foreign country and therefore be subject to foreign intervention of electric supply to the US. The DOE should determine, based on public input, that the public interest will not be served by granting a Presidential Permit for this project as proposed and reject the application and cease any further work on the EIS. If the DOE does decide to issue a Presidential Permit even after all the input showing the project is not in the public interest the EIS should require a full study of buried alternatives along state-owned roads or rail beds and require Northern Pass to use modern transmission technology.