

Deerfield Selectboard: Northern Pass Initiatives

NPOG Presentation – Jeanne Menard, Erick Berglund, Tom Foulkes, Lisa Wolford – January 12, 2015 (reformatted for Town website publication)

**The Northern Pass Transmission Line Project
Environmental Impact Statement
(DOE/EIS-0463)**

Scoping Report

March 12, 2014

**United States Department of Energy
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
1000 Independence Avenue – SW
Washington, DC 20585**

**Table 3:
Summary of Substantive Comments**

Comment Category	Report Section	Number of Comments	Percent of Total
Alternatives	0	805	17.1
Economy	0	489	10.4
Purpose and Need	0	369	7.8
Health and Safety	0	362	7.7
Tourism	0	313	6.6
Private Property/Land Use	0	305	6.5
NEPA Process	0	284	6.0
Viewshed/Scenery	0	273	5.8
Cumulative Effects	0	243	5.1
Wildlife	0	229	4.8
Taxes	0	164	3.5
National Forest and Conserved Lands	0	143	3.0
Vegetation	0	122	2.6
Water/Wetlands	0	115	2.4
Recreation	0	87	1.8
Historic/Cultural	0	86	1.8
National Security	0	71	1.5
Design Criteria/Mitigation Measures	0	70	1.5
Air Quality	0	40	0.8
Other	0	34	0.7
Noise	0	29	0.6
Environmental Justice	3.22	29	0.6
Soils	0	24	0.5
Quality of Life	0	21	0.4
Traffic/Transportation	0	11	0.2
TOTAL		4,718	100



3.2 Alternatives

The majority of the comments associated with alternatives suggested other ways to construct the proposed transmission line with potentially fewer impacts to the residents of NH. Of these, most pertained to burying the line, such as within existing infrastructure or transportation right-of-way (ROW). Commenters strongly expressed their desire to understand why this would be cost-prohibitive and gave examples of where this alternative has been employed.

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**Scoping Report
Alternatives Addendum**

May 2014

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1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585**

Overview of SEC Timeline

- Applicant holds public meeting in each county, 30 days prior to filing of application (RSA 162-H:10, I)
- Application to N.H. Site Evaluation Committee (SEC). Copies of the application will be sent to the governing body of each affected town and to state agencies with jurisdiction. (RSA 162:H:7, V(f))
- SEC decision on completeness of application: within 60 days of filing. (RSA 162-H:7, VI)
- Joint public county meetings: within 45 days after acceptance of application (RSA 162-H:10, I-a)

Overview of SEC Timeline, Continued

- County meeting with SEC & state agencies: within 90 days after application acceptance (RSA 162-H:10, I-c)
- SEC holds adjudicative hearing to consider and weigh evidence. Expert witnesses testify under oath.
- State agencies report progress of their review to SEC.
- 240 days: state agencies submit final decision to SEC.
- Within 365 days of the acceptance of an application, SEC shall issue or deny a certificate for an energy facility. (RSA 162-H:7, VI-d.)

Participation in SEC Process by Selectboards & Planning Boards

- NP must solicit the input of governing bodies and include this in its SEC application. Site 301.03(c)(6)
- Copies of the application will be sent to the governing body of each affected town. RSA 162-H:7, V(f)
- Governing bodies may intervene. RSA 162-H:2, IX; Site 202.11.
- The applicant shall hold informational meetings upon request of local governing bodies. RSA 162-H:15; Site 201.02.
- SEC must take into consideration “the views of municipal ... planning commissions and municipal governing bodies.” RSA 162-H:16, IV(b).

N.H. SEC:

Declaration of Purpose

- RSA 162-H:1– The legislature recognizes that the selection of sites for energy facilities may have significant impacts on and benefits to the following: **the welfare of the population, private property, the location and growth of industry, the overall economic growth of the state, the environment of the state, historic sites, aesthetics, air and water quality, the use of natural resources, and public health and safety.** Accordingly, the legislature finds that it is in the public interest to maintain a balance among those potential significant impacts and benefits in decisions about the siting, construction, and operation of energy facilities in New Hampshire; that undue delay in the construction of new energy facilities be avoided; that full and timely consideration of environmental consequences be provided; that all entities planning to construct facilities in the state be required to provide full and complete disclosure to the public of such plans; and that **the state ensure that the construction and operation of energy facilities is treated as a significant aspect of land-use planning** in which all environmental, economic, and technical issues are resolved in an integrated fashion....

N.H. SEC: Criteria

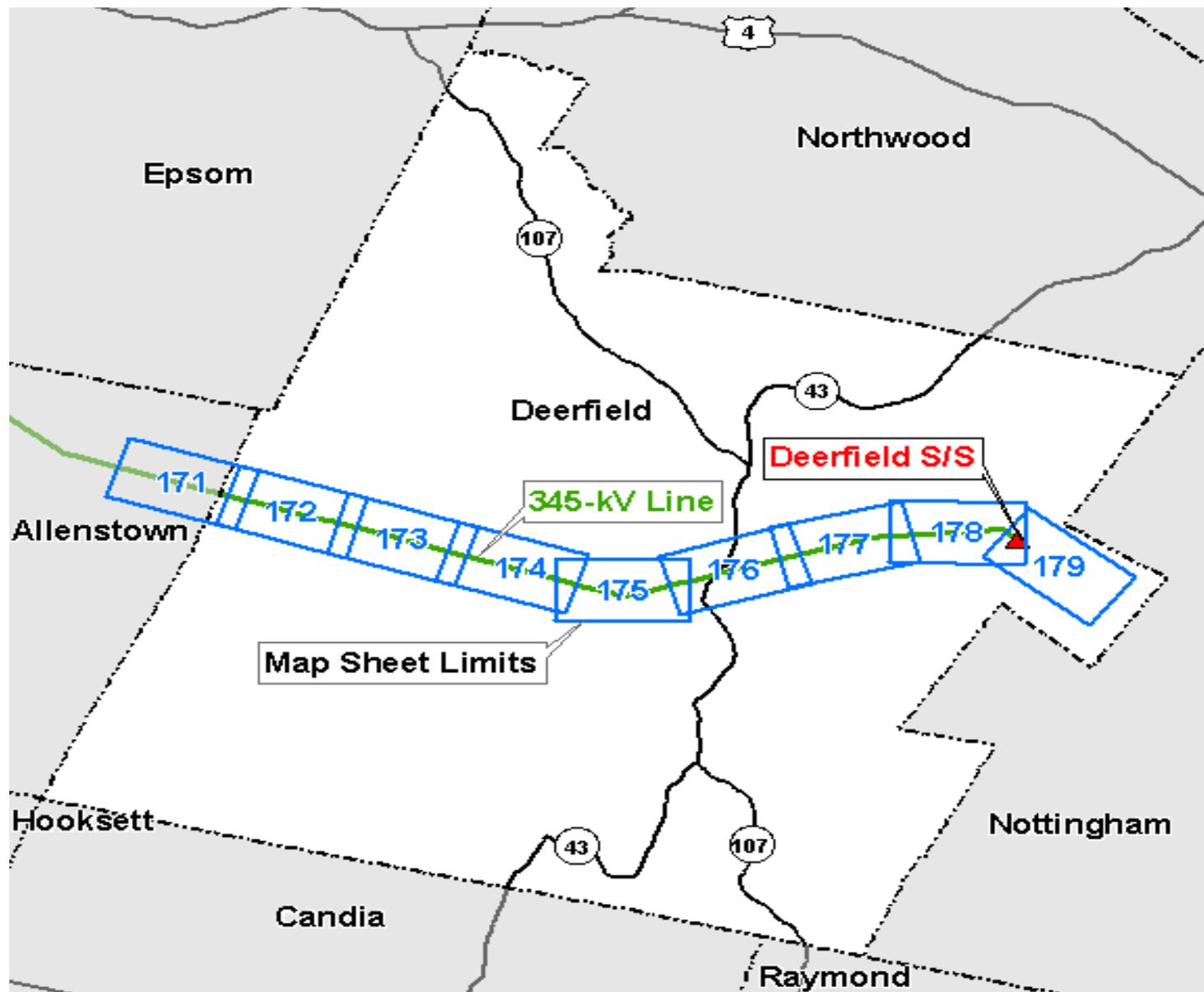
RSA 162-H:16, IV. After due consideration of all relevant information regarding the potential siting or routes of a proposed energy facility, including potential significant impacts and benefits, the site evaluation committee shall determine if issuance of a certificate will serve the objectives of this chapter. In order to issue a certificate, the committee shall find that:

- (a) The applicant has adequate financial, technical, and managerial capability to assure construction and operation of the facility in continuing compliance with the terms and conditions of the certificate.
- (b) The site and facility will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration having been given to the views of municipal and regional planning commissions and municipal governing bodies.
- (c) The site and facility will not have an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics, historic sites, air and water quality, the natural environment, and public health and safety.
- (e) Issuance of a certificate will serve the public interest.
- VI. A certificate of site and facility may contain such reasonable terms and conditions as the committee deems necessary and may provide for such reasonable monitoring procedures as may be necessary. Such certificates, when issued, shall be final and subject only to judicial review.

Deerfield Impacts: Tower Construction

- 7.3 miles from west end of town to east.
- Number of towers: approximately 100; approximately 16 towers to be constructed near substation.
- Tower heights: **80 feet to 145 feet**; most common tower height = 125 feet. Current heights are 32 to 102 feet tall; most common = 66 feet. (Most common structure height refers to the structure height occurring with the greatest frequency.)
- Tower corridor abuts Deerfield's Historic Town Center.

Source: <http://northernpass.us/deerfield-nh.htm>



PROPOSED
345-kV

EXISTING
115-kV

RELOCATED
115-kV

EXISTING
115-kV

EXISTING EDGE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY

EXISTING EDGE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY

SEE TABLE

SEE TABLE

75'
(TYP.)

50'

100'

50'

35'

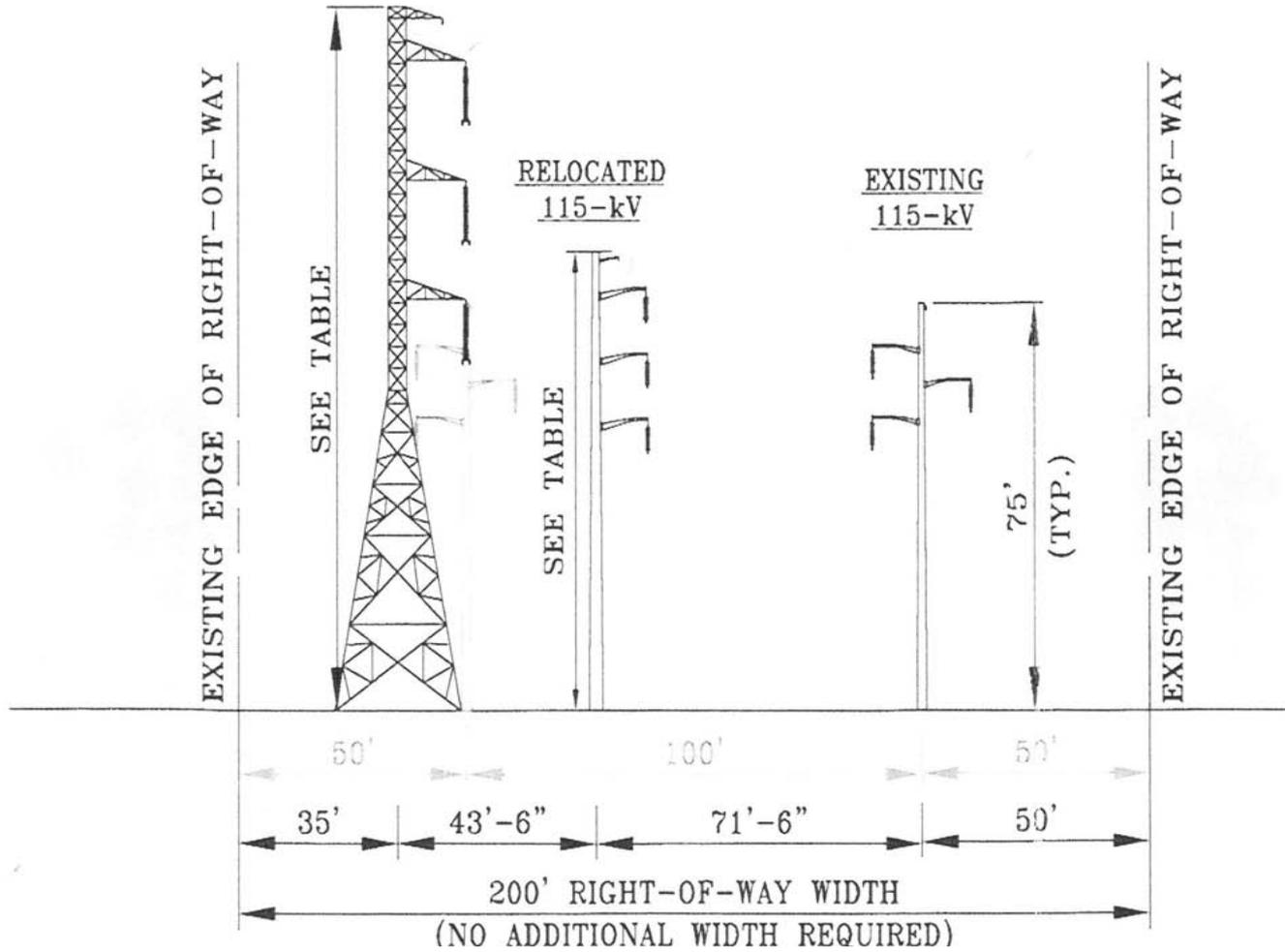
43'-6"

71'-6"

50'

200' RIGHT-OF-WAY WIDTH

(NO ADDITIONAL WIDTH REQUIRED)



Deerfield Impacts: Revenue

History:

Taxes “paid under protest” every year

1981- 1989 collected \$1,578,183

Tax abatements: The \$925,000 return in 1990, 60% returned

Estimated tax revenue, not accounting for depreciation and abatements:

In January 2011, NP estimated that it would invest \$96.2 million in Deerfield.

In August 2011, that number was downsized to \$35.3 million.

As of January 12, 2015, the number on the NP website has risen to \$56.9 million.

Source: NP website and information from NP included in Oct. 3, 2011 NPAC report

Alternative route impacts:

Many of NP’s alternative routes also impact Deerfield. In one scenario, for example, NP proposes locating its converter station in Deerfield.

Warrant Article #18 (2013)

The Town of Deerfield “state[s] its opposition to the Northern Pass Transmission project as currently proposed, which, as currently proposed, will cause the significant expansion of existing power line rights-of-way; the installation of steel towers of heights up to 135 feet, well above tree height, resulting in the further impairment of Deerfield’s rural, small town character and the further degradation of Deerfield’s scenic vistas and natural scenic beauty; the development of the Town in a manner inconsistent with the Deerfield Master Plan; the diminishment of the value of private property and assets for residents in proximity to the towers; the corresponding loss of property tax revenue for the Town; and the strong possibility of negative health impacts.”

March 12, 2013 vote result: 796 YES; 443 no

Warrant Article #17 (2013)

*The Town of Deerfield “state[s] its opposition to any new overhead development of alternating current and direct current high voltage transmission lines within its borders; and in turn manifest the Town’s **strong preference for the burial of such lines**, in a manner consistent with state and federal requirements, under rights of way and power line corridors now existing or to be established. Although **burial in all instances is preferred**, this statement of opposition shall not apply to distribution lines carrying electrical power and other utility lines, such as telephone and cable television, for Town residential or commercial use.”*

March 12, 2013 vote result: 799 YES; 427 no

2015 Petitioned Articles

#1: To see if the Town will vote to create a Town-funded trust fund pursuant to RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Northern Pass Defense Fund, for the purpose of financing legal expenses and other costs incurred by the Town in advocating the Town's position regarding the Northern Pass project, to appoint the Select Board as agents to spend this fund, and to raise and appropriate the sum of ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in this fund.

#2: To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to accept donations, grants or gifts, in any amount, to be utilized for the same purposes as the Northern Pass Defense Fund as set forth in the preceding article presented in this warrant to create the Northern Pass Defense Fund, to be held and invested in accordance with RSA 31:19-a, paragraph IV.

Deerfield Selectboard Action Plan

1. Be prepared to respond to NP's pre-application solicitation of input, *see* Site 301.03(c)(6); to understand the application once filed, *see* RSA 162-H:7, V(f); and to intervene in the adjudicative proceedings, *see* RSA 162-H:2, IX; Site 202.11.
2. Determine whether town counsel has expertise to represent Deerfield at SEC; consult with qualified counsel about a strategy for participation in the SEC process, including the possibility of hiring experts.
3. Designate a Town staff member as point person for receiving and disseminating NP information, coordinating the Board's participation in the SEC process, and ensuring that deadlines are met.
4. As Deerfield is the terminus for this project and its alternatives, request information and impacts of future substation development and distribution of electricity out of Deerfield.

Deerfield Selectboard Action Plan, Continued

5. Support the two petitioned warrant articles.
6. Advocate Deerfield's position that if any portion of NP is buried, then it must also be buried in Deerfield. The SEC should not pick and choose which communities should be favored vs. disfavored.
7. Work collaboratively with other towns affected by NP to share information, ideas, and strategies for best advocating Deerfield's position. More than 30 other towns (almost all) oppose NP as proposed.
8. Review the Draft EIS Statement when it is issued and be prepared to have expert representation to ensure that Deerfield's concerns are addressed in the SEC process.