

## Federal Decisions

### Presidential Permit

The US Department of Energy (DOE) must grant a “Presidential Permit” for any electric transmission project that crosses an international boundary. This permit is to assure that the proposed project serves the public interest and to assure that there is system compatibility for the energy being delivered to the U.S. side of the border. Before issuing a Presidential Permit, the DOE must complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In March 2011 the DOE held seven public hearings in New Hampshire to receive suggestions on how DOE should establish the scope of the EIS. Over 2,500 people attended, over 300 spoke and the overwhelming majority of those attending and speaking opposed Northern Pass as proposed. Because Northern Pass remains unclear about how they would bring the power through the northern 40 miles of New Hampshire, the public comment period on the scoping of the EIS remains open “indefinitely.” To make comments to DOE (or to read the comments others have already submitted) go to the DOE website at [www.northernpasseis.us](http://www.northernpasseis.us). You can also send comments to DOE at: Mr. Brian Mills, Office of Electricity Delivery & Energy Reliability (OE-20), US Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20585.

### White Mountain National Forest Special Use Permit

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) must grant a “Special Use Permit” for the power line to pass through the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). The US Forest Service, which owns and manages all national forests, is a part of the USDA. A Special Use Permit is used to assure that any proposed use of these public lands is consistent with the purposes and uses for which these public lands are owned and managed in the public interest. Northern Pass proposes to go through 10 miles of the WMNF over land in the towns of Easton, Woodstock, and Lincoln. The USDA will be a participant in the DOE process as a cooperating federal agency, making its own decision on a new Special Use Permit for Northern Pass based on the DOE EIS. If you have concerns about the use of the WMNF for Northern Pass, you should send comments to the DOE: Mr. Brian Mills, Office of Electricity Delivery & Energy Reliability (OE-20), US Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20585.

## State Decisions

### Site Evaluation Committee

The State of New Hampshire has the final say on all siting issues of the proposed Northern Pass power line on the NH landscape. NH law established a Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) made up of designated state agency leaders to review all energy project siting proposals (like Northern Pass) and to decide whether to issue a certificate of approval for the project as proposed, to issue a certificate for the project with additional conditions, or to deny the certificate. For more details on the SEC, its legal jurisdiction, and its members go to [www.nhsec.nh.gov](http://www.nhsec.nh.gov). Northern Pass says that it plans to formally apply for its SEC certificate after the DOE publishes a draft Environmental Impact Statement. There will be public hearings held by the SEC at which members of the public can submit oral and/or written comments.

### Governor Lynch and the State Legislature

The New Hampshire legislature is considering legislation (HB 648) that would make clear that eminent domain is not available to transmission projects like Northern Pass. Let your state senator and Governor Lynch know your view of HB 648. Visit [www.gencourt.state.nh.us](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us) to find out who your state senator is and how to contact him or her. A personal letter to the Governor should be directed to: The Honorable John Lynch, Office of the Governor, State House, Concord, NH 03301.

### Additional Resources

For background information on the National Environmental Policy Act process, see A Citizens Guide to NEPA at: [ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/Citizens\\_Guide\\_Deco7.pdf](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/Citizens_Guide_Deco7.pdf)

For more information on the Northern Pass EIS process, go to: [www.northernpasseis.us](http://www.northernpasseis.us)

For more information about the Northern Pass project as proposed go to: [www.northernpass.us](http://www.northernpass.us)

To link with opponents of the Northern Pass, go to: [www.forestsociety.org/np](http://www.forestsociety.org/np), [www.livefreeorfry.org](http://www.livefreeorfry.org) or [www.nonorthernpass.org](http://www.nonorthernpass.org)

To subscribe to blogs opposing Northern Pass go to: [www.burynorthernpass.blogspot.com](http://www.burynorthernpass.blogspot.com) or [www.nonorthernpassnh.blogspot.com](http://www.nonorthernpassnh.blogspot.com)

## Why the Forest Society Opposes Northern Pass

When the Northern Pass project was presented to the public in October 2010, the Forest Society listened to its proponents and carefully considered their arguments. As an organization that has modeled the use of renewable energy systems at our headquarters in Concord and advocated energy conservation and sustainable energy policies, we are aware of the benefits of the use of renewable hydropower. We have supported policies to promote the use of New Hampshire’s own renewable energy sources, especially those that use sustainable forestry to generate energy from biomass.

However, we concluded that the downsides of Northern Pass for New Hampshire far outweigh any potential positives. We strongly oppose Northern Pass as proposed:

- Northern Pass would be detrimental to the scenic landscapes that not only attract millions of tourists to our state every year, but also make tourism our second largest industry providing tens of thousands of jobs.
- We have an ethical and legal obligation to defend conserved lands, held in public trust, from commercial development and degradation. The Northern Pass proposal would directly impact more than two dozen tracts of conserved land in 17 communities, with indirect impacts on another 150 conservation parcels.
- The Northern Pass proposal is a private commercial development geared toward fulfilling the strategic positioning and profit motives of its private partners, Northeast Utilities, NSTAR and Hydro-Quebec. The electricity Hydro-Quebec seeks to transmit to the New England market is not needed in order to “keep the lights on,” nor is it destined for New Hampshire consumers. Nonetheless, Northern Pass has threatened to use the government’s eminent domain authority to take land and rights from unwilling landowners.
- The Northern Pass power line corridor with more than 1,110 towers would permanently alter the lands they cross, fragmenting forests, disrupting wildlife habitat, disfiguring communities and lowering property values.

- Importing power from Quebec could jeopardize local renewable wood energy markets, reduce the incentives for us to develop home-grown renewable energy projects and threaten valuable jobs in the forest products industry.
- There is no clear long-term public benefit to New Hampshire from the Northern Pass project. New Hampshire consumers would see no discernable decrease in electric rates. No existing fossil fuel plant is slated for elimination as the result of Northern Pass, so our air quality would not significantly improve. We would host a 180-mile scar on the landscape and reap few real benefits.

We are not alone in our opposition. One would think that a project touting renewable energy would have some support among people and groups concerned with the environment. However, Northern Pass faces opposition by the Appalachian Mountain Club, Conservation New Hampshire, The Nature Conservancy, NH Timberland Owner’s Association, Ammonusuc Conservation Trust, and Conservation Law Foundation. Thirty towns have voted to oppose the project. Clearly there are serious problems with the Northern Pass proposal.

There may be an appropriate way to transmit renewable energy from Canada to southern New England. Northern Pass should withdraw its current plan and go back to the drawing board.

To receive updates about the opposition to Northern Pass, visit: [www.forestsociety.org/np](http://www.forestsociety.org/np)

