

Date: Thu, 22 Dec 2011 15:02:34 -0500
From: "Brian Tilton" <brian@briantilton.com>
To: anthony.blenkinsop@doj.nh.gov
Subject: Balsams-Forest Society

Dear Mr. Blenkinsop,

I am writing in response to Attorney Bisbee's letter to you dated December 20, 2011 regarding their request that your office reject the sale of the Balsams conservation easement to the Society for Protection of NH Forests (Forest Society).

As a private citizen from North Sutton and also as a semi-public figure in capacity as a radio talk show host, I would like to offer my perspectives on why Attorney Bisbee's request should be rejected instead.

Over the past few years, I have been able to enjoy the fine amenities and land of the Balsams Grand Resort as both a guest of the hotel and a visitor passing through via snowmobile. In recent months I have been following the on again/off again sale agreements of the Tillotson Corporation and prospective buyers. There are some tragedies resulting from the ensuing mayhem- most notably the year-long loss of 300 jobs because of the closure of the hotel.

But the larger issue at hand is what I understand to be the reason why the Forest Society was chosen over Northern Pass. As you may already know or are likely to find out upon further review of the Tillotson Trust, any sale or giveaway of the Trust's assets are to be for the benefit of the people of the North Country.

Attorney Bisbee wants you to think that their \$2.2 million offer is superior to the Forest Society's because of the dollar amount. Just like the Tillotson Trustees had selected potential Balsams Hotel buyers based not on money alone, they had to consider who would be best suited to care for the property and provide jobs for the people of the North Country.

The Trustees were faced with the same situation. Since this property never had a conservation easement on it (because the old owners could trust themselves with proper usage of the land), the Trustees apparently felt it was necessary to protect the natural environment surrounding the hotel for if or when the property should ever be sold again.

This is not about dollars or the perception of unfair negotiations against Northern Pass. The Tillotson Trustees' fiduciary responsibility is to entertain all reasonable offers and make their final decision according to the direction of the Trust.

It is my firm belief that Neil Tillotson didn't care as much about money as Northern Pass seems to. Neil Tillotson ran a rubber factory on the site of the Balsams. There are not many rubber factories north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Mr. Tillotson went out of his way and spent a lot of extra money on

transporting the raw product from the tropics to NH via heated trucks and other adjusted equipment that no other business would do. Neil didn't care about cost; he did it so people in the North Country could be employed.

Apparently, the Tillotson Trust felt that selling the conservation easement to the Forest Society has more benefit to the North Country than selling for almost 3x the amount to Northern Pass. I'd like to give you my perspective as to why:

- The Forest Society easement allows not just people from the North Country, but all of NH and its visitors to enjoy the beauty and many recreational activities on the conserved land for many generations to come.
- The Forest Society easement will ensure that jobs continue to be created on site via responsible forestry management (logging).
- The Forest Society easement will help ensure that the area's natural beauty will be undisturbed.

Northern Pass on the other hand is not at all for the benefit for the people of the North Country.

- Nobody wants the Northern Pass to pass through their town. Every town that has had a vote on Town Meeting Day or subsequent special meetings saw the prospect of Northern Pass rejected by nearly unanimous votes in every town.
- Nobody in the area will get any of the power from Northern Pass.
- Northern Pass could drive down property values and cause the tax base to decline as towers ruin the view shed.
- Northern Pass transmission towers would hurt tourism, the only industry left in the North Country (and consequently the Balsams would be adversely affected which is the region's largest employer).

It is my belief that the Tillotson Trustees considered all of these factors; after all, the trust was set up for the common good. Northern Pass does next to nothing for the common good. The Forest Society has a long, distinctive history of conserving NH's landscape while at the same time allowing for reasonable and prudent uses of the land which has contributed to NH's economic and environmental health.

I am not a member of the Forest Society and I do not know any of the Tillotson Trustees. But I am one who had memorable visits to the Balsams (and my radio station had an advertising relationship with the Balsams) and I also enjoyed snowshoeing and snowmobiling in part of their vast wilderness. It is a place that I want to continue to take my family to, and as my children grow older, help them have a deep appreciation for the natural beauty of one of NH's crown jewels. Northern Pass doesn't provide

any of those kinds of opportunities nor would it produce such fond memories of an earlier time in history.

Please do not allow the threat of litigation contained in Attorney Bisbee's letter cloud your ability to weigh all of the responses I am sure you are receiving. Nor should those threats have any bearing on your decision. Did the Trustees receive correspondence in the weeks leading up to their decision; I do not doubt that for a minute. Was anything improper in those communications to the Trustees? I don't know because I haven't seen any of them. But judging by what Attorney Bisbee is eluding to, those people share the same passion for the landscape, heritage, experiences and economy as I am sharing with you right now. It was the trustees' responsibilities to weigh all sides and they did.

Best of luck in your decision, and please feel free to contact me if you should need any additional information.

Very Sincerely,

Brian Tilton
P.O. Box 427
N. Sutton, NH 03260

- "Bulldog" Brian Tilton
Host of Bulldog Live
WTPL 107.7FM "The Pulse" Concord, NH
Weekdays 10am-Noon
www.wtplfm.com
www.briantilton.com
Cell: 603-504-2753
Concord Insider's 2010 Cappie Awards "Best Radio Personality" (3rd place)