

Voices of the Kearsarge-Sunapee Region

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Northern Pass will be the largest land-taking in the history of New Hampshire

To the Editor:

Chances are you have heard a little about the Northern Pass project. It promises to bring 1200 megawatts of power from Hydro-Quebec facilities in Canada entering Pittsburg, New Hampshire and run to Deerfield to feed the New England power grid via 135' tall steel towers through 180 miles of N.H.'s landscape.

You may have recently seen full-page ads by Northern Pass appearing in newspapers around the state promoting potential job creation, increased tax revenues to towns and the state as well as bringing "competitively priced" power to New England and savings to the average N.H. utility user.

There is a lot to be said about their claims. First of all, 90% of this power will be exported out of New Hampshire (admitted by Gary Long, PSNH President & CEO before the House Science, Technology & Energy Committee 2/8/11). The jobs that would be created are temporary (Northern Pass brochures) with no guarantee that most or all would go to N.H. residents. The possible increased tax revenues are called into question due to possible property devaluations (admitted by Lisa Shapiro, PSNH lobbyist and economist before the House Science, Technology & Energy Committee 2/8/11).

Regardless of whether you believe the Northern Pass propaganda or the thousands of people who would be harmed by this project, one fact cannot be ignored: this will require the use of eminent domain. This will be the largest land-taking in N.H. history!

This past Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard HB 648 relative to eminent domain by public utilities. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Larry Rappaport of Colebrook and Sen. Jeanne Forrester of Meredith. This bill would bring the N.H. eminent domain statutes up-to-date and in harmony with Article 12a of the N.H. Constitution.

Article 12a was passed by 87% of N.H. voters in 2006 in the largest margin of victory for any constitutional amendment put before the voters. It was done in direct response to the national outrage over the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court *Kelo v. New London* decision which said it was perfectly okay for government to take private land and give it to a private developer.

In looking at the proposed Northern Pass project, we have seen nearly universal opposition to it from Pittsburg to Deerfield. The U.S. Dept. of Energy held seven public scoping meetings in March and 2,500 people attended. Of them, over 300 spoke in opposition to Northern Pass and only about 15 spoke in favor (most of them were government officials in Franklin where a substation would be built that could significantly boost tax revenues). Land must be taken along the first 40 miles of proposed route and then follow along "existing rights-of-way" which would need to be

widened in many spots, therefore requiring more land to be taken.

We are facing the largest eminent domain battle in NH history! It is critical for all of you to stand up for your own property rights and that of our fellow N.H. residents. Many of their lives are at stake. Our state's tourism industry is at stake. Our local power generators' future is at stake. The house already passed it 317-51 (the largest margin of victory for any controversial bill ever). The Senate needs to hear from you. Please contact your state Senators Bob Odell, Andy Sanborn and Matt Houde today to ask them to protect NH property owners.

The lobbyists hired by PSNH are telling senators that if HB 648 passes, there will never be another energy project in NH again. THAT IS NOT TRUE! The wind projects in Lempster, Groton and Millsfield would not or have not been affected. The two competing power projects in Berlin would not be affected. N.H. can still have good, local renewable energy projects in the future.

In defending the possible use of eminent domain, both Gary Long and Hydro-Quebec (who would make over \$1 billion/year on this) are saying that is necessary to provide jobs and increased tax revenue. That is exactly the same argument used in the *Kelo v. New London* case and why HB 648 needs to pass!

Northern Pass is not needed to meet NH's energy needs. We export more power than we produce. No government entity nor the organization that runs New England's power grid has not called for it. Property values have already fallen dramatically

along the proposed routes and property sales have halted. Property tax abatements are already being applied for.

I have been following this issue since January of this year and approached the topic cautiously and as objectively as possible. The more I learn about Northern Pass, the less I like it. The negatives clearly outweigh the touted benefits. Listen for yourself what people are saying about it: www.briantilton.com/Northern-Pass.html.

I have followed eminent domain battles in two states prior to coming to N.H., and I can tell you that they never end well. There is not much time left to defend your N.H. neighbors from Pittsburg to Deerfield. This may be the first and last time the legislature will have any say over anything remotely dealing with Northern Pass. The Northern Pass approval and land-takings will all be decided by unelected bureaucrats in Washington and Concord. HB 648 would set a much higher standard to be met before that could happen. Just imagine Hydro-Quebec and PSNH wanting to run high voltage power lines on 135' tall towers through the center of New London, along Lake Sunapee and through Mount Sunapee State Park.

There are so many other local alternatives available to us to generate power and permanent jobs now and in the future. Sending billions of dollars in profits to Quebec and Connecticut is not the answer. Don't let Hydro-Quebec take N.H. land!

**Brian Tilton
North Sutton**

MISSING: a Sense of Responsibility

To the Editor:

The Executive Finance Committee (EFC) of the Sullivan County Delegation, made up of our State Representatives, is currently working on the county budget for Fiscal Year 2012. On Monday, May 16 I attended one of their meetings in which they were considering funding of county grants. Each year various non-profit organizations that serve residents of Sullivan County apply for grant money from the county. These organizations fill out application forms and supply comprehensive information about their services and their budgets. There were eight representatives from these organizations present, all prepared to provide further information and answer questions.

At the start of the meeting three of the five members of the EFC, including the Representative from my town,

stated that they had not yet seen any of the grant application information – in other words they were totally unprepared for the meeting. Make no mistake about it – they had all been notified several weeks earlier that the information was available at the county office. The notification included an offer to make other arrangements if an individual was unable to come to the office to pick up the packet. They did not bother to go and pick it up nor did they respond to the offer of making other arrangements. They had also been notified earlier about an April County Commissioners meeting for the purpose of hearing from all the grant applicants. They did not bother to attend.

Where is their common courtesy toward the grant applicants? Where is their sense of responsibility to the people of Sullivan County in need of these services? And where is their sense of responsibility to Sullivan County taxpayers?

Remember this when it comes time for the 2012 state elections.

**Anne Nilsen
Sunapee**



across from the gazebo
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New London
603-526-8333



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This initial program is designed to provide families caring for an older loved one basic care giving tips and techniques.

Thursday, June 2nd, 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Family Caregiving 102

This second program on family care giving offers ways to help caregivers cope with the stresses of care giving. It will also provide basic information on the legal issues that caregivers should consider.

Thursday, June 9th, 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Family Caregiving 103

The third program in the series provides information on options that caregivers may consider for assistance in care giving.

Thursday, June 16th, 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

All programs will be held at
SUMMERCREST

169 Summer St. • Newport, NH
Reservations are requested.
Please call 603-863-8181

The Moose is Loose Contest

will return next month