

# PERMITTING UPDATE

New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) hearings on Northern Pass resumed in June, focusing on a wide range of issues related to the project. The SEC also heard comments from the public during two half-days of public hearings, offering residents and business owners another chance to let state officials know their thoughts on the project.

## Construction

The construction panel resumed on May 31 with testimony about the efforts Northern Pass has made to reach out to communities and businesses along the route to address their concerns, such as traffic management and emergency vehicle access. The construction panel concluded on June 2.

## Economic Benefits and Cleaner Air

Julia Frayer, a Managing Director with London Economics, spoke about the benefits Northern Pass is expected to bring to New Hampshire and the region, including 2,600 jobs in New Hampshire at the peak of construction, lowering energy costs in New Hampshire by \$62 million annually, and increasing New Hampshire's gross domestic product (GDP) by \$2.2 billion through 2030.

Frayer also spoke about the project's environmental benefits, particularly the reduction in air pollution and carbon emissions. Hydropower from Northern Pass will help reduce the region's reliance on natural gas and other fossil fuels, which will in turn lower CO2 emissions by an estimated 3.2 million metric tons.

## Environmental Panel

A panel of five environmental experts spoke about their area of study along the Northern Pass route. Topics covered included the project's efforts to reduce and mitigate impacts to wetlands, streams, vernal pools, wildlife, and other natural and cultural resources along the route, as well as the efforts Northern Pass made to work with state and federal agencies on these environmental issues.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR NORTHERN PASS

- **Final hearings will continue throughout the summer**, including discussions on historic sites, tourism and property taxes.
- **The NH Public Utilities Commission approved** a request by Northern Pass to cross public waters and lands on June 20.
- **The U.S. Department of Energy expects to release** the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Northern Pass in August.
- **The SEC announced an additional 15 final hearing dates** in August and September.



Photos by Jill Utrup/USFWS

## Northern Pass Mitigation Plan Expands on Important Habitat

Northern Pass has worked with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to identify land that could be part of the Northern Pass mitigation plan and would also provide additional benefits to other conservation and restoration efforts around the state. One such site is a 7-acre parcel in Concord that will protect a portion of the Soucook River shoreline and establish additional protected habitat for the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

This species can be found in the Upper Midwest and Northeast in sandy scrubland such as pine barrens and oak savannahs. The Karner blue butterfly is New Hampshire's state butterfly, but the only place it is known to live in the state is the pine barrens near the Concord airport. The parcel Northern Pass has allocated for conservation is adjacent to an existing 28-acre conservation easement specifically dedicated to establishing Karner blue butterfly habitat, and will help expand the efforts already underway to preserve this species.

For more information on the Karner blue butterfly conservation easement in Concord and the efforts to protect this species, go to [www.wildlife.state.nh.us/merrimack/karnerblue.html](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/merrimack/karnerblue.html).



## WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ALONG THE ROUTE

Northern Pass reached out to the cities and towns along the proposed route earlier this year to discuss concerns they might have regarding the construction of the project. Northern Pass will begin construction of the overhead and underground portions of the line soon after all state and federal approvals have been obtained, including from the SEC.

Some concerns that have already been raised by communities include the project's hours of operation during construction, impact to traffic and the condition of local roads, as well as maintaining emergency vehicle access. Northern Pass has agreed to work with cities and towns to address their individual concerns, from avoiding work during special town events to taking care to restore roads to their original condition or better.

From these discussions, Northern Pass has executed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with two communities — Franklin and Lancaster — and is currently in talks with a number of other communities about designing their own MOUs. The project hopes to continue discussions as the permitting phase moves forward and to learn more about the needs and concerns of each community along the route.

## LOOKING NEXT DOOR:

### WHAT A PROJECT IN MAINE CAN TELL US ABOUT NORTHERN PASS

The SEC's review of the Northern Pass includes discussions about the jobs the project will bring to the state. Northern Pass conducted a study that shows 2,600 jobs will be created and we have pledged to hire New Hampshire workers first whenever possible. There will also be a wider economic boost from the project, from workers buying gas and food from businesses along the route to the project relying on local suppliers to provide some of the materials for the project.

To see how a transmission line project can positively impact the local economy, the Maine Power Reliability Program (MPRP), completed in 2015, is a good example. The \$1.4 billion project included power line and substation upgrades in 75 communities, and represents a host of economic benefits.

A wide variety of local businesses benefited from MPRP, beyond those that directly supplied the project. Convenience stores, gas stations, motor inns and hotels, and diners and restaurants saw an increase in business as well. Similarly in New Hampshire, Northern Pass has already hired New Hampshire companies and workers during the permitting stages, will continue to create jobs during construction, and will provide millions of dollars in revenue to local communities along the route.

MPRP also shed some light on how the tourism industry reacts to transmission line projects. According to the Maine Office of Tourism, revenue from tourism has increased in that state every year since 2012, both during and after the construction of MPRP. In fact, Maine set a tourism record in 2015 and again in 2016, with increases in restaurant and lodging revenue seen both on the coast and inland.

You can find the story about Maine's record-setting tourism years below.

**2016:** <http://www.pressherald.com/2017/03/27/maine-hospitality-industry-finished-2016-at-record-3-6-billion/>

**2015:** <http://www.pressherald.com/2016/03/22/tourism-spending-in-2015-topped-5-6-billion/>

#### ABOUT NORTHERN PASS

Northern Pass is a 192-mile electric transmission line project that will provide New Hampshire and New England up to 1,090 megawatts of clean hydropower. This reliable and competitively-priced power will also bring a range of benefits to New Hampshire, including hundreds of millions of dollars in energy cost savings, additional tax revenue, and thousands of jobs during construction and beyond. To learn more about Northern Pass, go to [www.northernpass.us](http://www.northernpass.us). You can also email questions to [info@northernpass.us](mailto:info@northernpass.us) or call **1-800-286-7305**.

#### MAINE POWER RELIABILITY PROGRAM (MPRP) ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- **More than 3,300 workers on the project**
- **Of the 391 suppliers, contractors and subcontractors, 269 are headquartered or have offices in Maine**

The project was also expected to:

- **Increase the Maine Gross Domestic Product by \$284 million**
- **Provide \$242 million in wages and salaries**
- **Generate \$25 million in income and sales tax revenue for the State**
- **Generate \$25 million per year in new property taxes**