

Our “Precarious” Energy Situation

The head of the regional electric grid urged elected officials to find solutions to New England’s energy challenges at a recent forum on New England’s power system. The event, hosted at St. Anselm College’s New Hampshire Institute of Politics, highlighted the region’s need for additional energy sources and infrastructure.

The New England power grid is operated by the independent organization, ISO New England. This group is charged with overseeing the flow of electricity throughout the region, as well as monitoring the markets and day to day operations of the grid. President and CEO of ISO New England, Gordon van Welie, told the audience of roughly 150 people that a number of power plants have closed or have announced retirement since 2013, representing 4,200 megawatts of generation capacity, or enough energy to power roughly 4 million homes. There are additional power plants that ISO New England believes are at risk of closing in the coming years (see chart on right), which would further reduce New England’s overall power supply. Van Welie said that ISO New England could conceivably prevent these coal and oil plants from retiring, but keeping them online will not bring the region closer to its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Van Welie also spoke about the lack of winter capacity available on the region’s natural gas pipelines. A lack of fuel for the region’s natural gas-fired plants on the coldest days of winter has been an issue for the past few years. Van Welie said this problem will need to be addressed, especially since so many of the proposals to replace the power plants New England is losing are run on natural gas.

“All of the resources coming online are gas-fired generation and we know we have a problem with supplying natural gas generation,” said van Welie. Renewable sources like wind and solar are being added in small amounts, said van Welie, but “renewable sources cannot be controlled, and we can’t depend on the weather to keep the lights on.”

Northern Pass provides New England with a viable option, providing clean, affordable energy that is available 24-7. The power purchase agreement (PPA) guarantees a set amount of energy is delivered to New Hampshire customers, which can be used to provide back-up energy for new wind and solar projects, or off-set fossil fuel generation. The reliance on natural gas and retirement of existing power plants is putting New England in a “precarious” situation, said van Welie. We believe Northern Pass is one way the region can begin to solve this problem.



SOURCE: ISO New England's 2016 Regional Energy Outlook Report

Diversifying Our Workforce

Jeff Clark spoke to us about the importance of creating new jobs here in New Hampshire beyond the tourism industry.



“We’re a tourist state, so when these types of opportunities come along I think we need to jump on them because it diversifies our workforce,” he said.

Clark says Northern Pass is a way to bring a variety of jobs to the state that will benefit a number of local businesses, creating more of the work force diversity he says is needed here in New Hampshire. To hear more of what Clark said, go to www.northernpass.us/multimedia.



STATE PERMITTING PROCESS CONTINUES



As part of the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee's (SEC) continued review of the Northern Pass transmission project, the SEC has been conducting a series of Technical Sessions in Concord in September and October.

The Technical Sessions provide an informal opportunity for the parties involved in the Northern Pass state review process to obtain information from the project's experts. Subjects being covered include:

- **Electric Transmission System Stability and Reliability**
- **Public Health and Safety** (Sound & EMF)
- **Financial Capability**
- **Construction**
(Design, Process, Impact Avoidance, Community Relations)
- **Historical Resources** (Archeological and Above Ground)
- **Economics and Market Benefits**
(Jobs, Electricity Price Benefits, Economic Growth)
- **Orderly Development**
(Tax Benefits, Tourism, Land Use, Property Values)
- **Environmental**
(Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Wetlands, Wildlife)
- **Project Route Selection, Forward NH Plan, NH-Specific Benefits, Clean Energy RFP, etc.**
- **Aesthetics**

For more information about the Technical Sessions and the subjects covered, you can go to the Northern Pass docket on the SEC website, or visit the Northern Pass Project Journal at blog.northernpass.us.

Emergency Radio Equipment for the North Country

A new emergency radio transmissions antenna that recently went into service is greatly enhancing radio communications to Whitefield, Dalton, Jefferson, Lancaster, Northumberland, Stark, and Stratford as well as Lunenburg, Vermont. This improvement to public safety infrastructure makes it possible for first responders to use portable radios at the scene of an incident in areas where service had been previously limited.

"We appreciate the enhanced radio service that is possible thanks to funding from Northern Pass," said Gerry Marcou, Coös County Sheriff. "The new technology facilitates our deputies' work to protect the citizens of Coös County, making our police force more efficient and our community safer."

Across the North Country, there are areas where first responders were previously unable to communicate with each other at all during emergencies.

"If we are responding to an emergency inside a home and something changes drastically, we are able to immediately call for back-up," said Steven Jones, Assistant Fire Chief of Lancaster. "With this system, we have seen a significant improvement in the efficiency of our communications."

Additionally, the new equipment is making it easier for communities to call for and provide mutual aid during major emergency events.

"The majority of our firefighters are volunteers," Jones said. "Prior to the installation of the radio equipment, if a volunteer firefighter lived in a dead zone, they wouldn't get the call. Thanks to this emergency radio equipment, we are able to direct our personnel to an emergency more quickly and efficiently."

The Northern Pass Transmission Project, as part of its Forward NH Plan, funded the installation of the public safety service antenna on the Morse Mountain cell tower in Groveton, and will continue to pay the associated annual rental expense. This new emergency radio equipment will build upon the success in filling gaps in the region's broadband and cellular coverage achieved with the construction of the Morse Mountain Cell tower, which was also funded in part by the Northern Pass project.

The project is one of a limited number of advanced commitments of the Forward New Hampshire Plan. The Forward New Hampshire Fund will be officially established when the Northern Pass project enters into operation.

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. You can also email questions to info@northernpass.us or call **1-800-286-7305**.