



THE NORTHERN PASS PROJECT UPDATE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE UPCOMING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is expected to release a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Northern Pass transmission line proposal this summer. This document, which will be available to the public, is the result of extensive analysis and research conducted by the DOE, and is a necessary step in obtaining a Presidential Permit, which will allow the transmission of electricity over the U.S.-Canada border. The EIS will include a detailed summary of possible environmental impacts of the project along the proposed route and a number of alternative routes.

Full environmental review

For more than 40 years, federal agencies have been required to consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions under a law called the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In the case of Northern Pass, the DOE and other federal agencies were required to gather data on wildlife, waterways, and natural habitats along the route, as well as document historical sites and other sensitive areas as it considers whether to issue a Presidential Permit. The DOE also consulted with state agencies and considered public input gathered from a series of public scoping meetings. The EIS is a summary of those findings, which will be available for public review and comment.

Public review

Because of the comprehensive nature of the draft EIS, it will likely be a lengthy report. It will be posted on the DOE NEPA website and the Northern Pass EIS website (see links below). Paper copies or CDs will also be made available to those who have requested them from the DOE.

The draft EIS is not a definitive permitting decision. Its purpose is to analyze and compare the potential environmental impacts of different project alternatives, including the effects of the current proposal and the effects of taking “no action” — in other words, what would happen if Northern Pass was not built.

The public will have 60 days to comment on the draft EIS, either online, by mail, or in person at one of the DOE’s public scoping meetings to be scheduled soon after its release. Online comments can be made on the EIS website listed below.

What happens next?

Once the draft EIS comment period is closed, the DOE will consider the comments it received, revise the EIS as appropriate to reflect those comments, and issue it in final form. At least 30 days after issuance of the final EIS, the DOE will release its Record of Decision, which will indicate whether the Presidential Permit will be issued. The Record of Decision will also include reasons for the DOE decision and potentially impose conditions, including impact mitigation measures and changes to the project. If the DOE decides to issue the Presidential Permit, that typically occurs shortly after the Record of Decision is published.

The U.S. Forest Service will issue a draft Record of Decision at the time DOE issues the final EIS. The Forest Service is a cooperating agency in the EIS process because Northern Pass has requested a Special Use Permit in connection with the portion of the proposed route located on an existing utility right-of-way within the White Mountain National Forest. The Forest Service will provide another opportunity for public comment before it issues its final Record of Decision and also provides for an appeal process within the Forest Service.

There will be substantial opportunity for the public to submit comments for the official record. We encourage those who live along the proposed route and other stakeholders to participate. We will continue to provide updates on key dates and public opportunities to comment as the process moves forward.

If you have any questions about the DOE’s draft EIS or the federal permitting process, go to:

The Northern Pass EIS website — <http://www.northernpasseis.us/>

DOE NEPA website — <https://ceq.doe.gov/>

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NH WORKERS

Tiler Eaton is a journeyman lineman from New Hampshire who has worked on transmission projects both here and out-of-state. We spoke with him about the job opportunities projects like Northern Pass can provide to the local workforce, and to those looking to make this kind of electrical work their career.



Tiler Eaton

“They’re not temporary jobs. I’ve been doing this for 30 years,” Eaton said. “It makes sense. It’s good for New Hampshire and it’s good for the environment.”

Hear more of what Eaton had to say on our website, www.northernpass.us/multimedia.



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NH SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE AND NORTHERN PASS

Soon after the U.S. Department of Energy releases its draft Environmental Impact Statement (see previous page), Northern Pass will file an application with New Hampshire's Site Evaluation Committee (SEC).

The SEC serves as the state's review board for larger energy projects, including wind farms, power plants, and transmission line projects like Northern Pass. The SEC conducts its review through a formal adjudicative process — similar to a court hearing — and examines many aspects of the project, including environmental and public safety impact, the financial, technical, and managerial capabilities of the developers, consistency with orderly regional development, and whether the project serves the public interest. The SEC uses this information to determine whether a Certificate of Site and Facility should be issued, which is required before construction can begin.

The SEC requires applicants to hold two sets of public information sessions in each county where the proposed project will be located. For Northern Pass, this includes Coös, Grafton, Merrimack, Belknap, and Rockingham counties. These sessions are held before and after the application is submitted, and include an opportunity for the public to ask questions about the project and provide comments. The SEC will also hold joint public hearings with other state agencies early in 2016 in the five counties. The adjudicative hearings on the Northern Pass application will follow later in the year based on the overall 14-month permitting schedule established by state law.

If you have any questions about the state's permitting process or your opportunities to comment on the project, please call **1-800-286-7305** or email info@northernpass.us.



JOBS INITIATIVE

People across New Hampshire have told us that creating jobs and building a strong economy are among the top priorities in their communities. Residents want to see both new jobs now and worker training for future jobs. A recently announced economic partnership between Eversource Energy, local unions, and transmission companies promises to do just that by hiring and training New Hampshire workers for upcoming transmission line construction and expansion projects.

Officially announced earlier this month, the Eversource Energy Jobs Partnership brings together labor and business in a long-term partnership designed to create many jobs in the state. The agreement also provides advantages for New Hampshire workers, locally-owned businesses, and those seeking job training, including these three main goals:

- **Hire New Hampshire workers first:** Eversource will oversee a New Hampshire Workforce Plan that will give hiring priority to New Hampshire workers. New Hampshire utility workers who have had to travel out-of-state for work now have the chance to work closer to home.
- **Use New Hampshire-based companies and contractors:** Roughly half of the work that goes into major electrical infrastructure projects is non-electrical. New Hampshire-based companies and contractors will have the chance to bid on significant work associated with these projects.
- **Train the next generation of utility workers:** Eversource, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and electrical contractors have come together to offer a first-of-its-kind training program. New Hampshire apprentices will receive classroom and online training, as well as hands-on experience working on Eversource projects, all while earning a paycheck. The first apprentice class is already underway, with future training classes to follow.

The initiative will cover Eversource projects in New Hampshire that are \$10 million or more, including Northern Pass, keeping with the project's pledge to hire New Hampshire workers first.

ABOUT NORTHERN PASS

The Northern Pass is an electric transmission line project that will bring New Hampshire and the rest of New England clean hydropower. This reliable and affordable source of power will also lower energy costs, increase tax revenue in communities along the route, and create many jobs during construction. 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**.