

# Power of the People

**A Guide to Public Decisions Needed by Northern Pass  
and How to Make Your Voice Heard**

The Northern Pass is a proposed 180-mile power line with towers 90 to 135 feet high to be erected through the heart of New Hampshire. It is proposed by Northeast Utilities, the parent owner of Public Service Company of NH, to carry 1200 megawatts of hydro power from Quebec to southern New England. Northern Pass LLC is a shell company registered in New Hampshire to secure the needed authority to build the new power line in New Hampshire. The power line would cross the international border near Pittsburg, NH, and travel south through 31 Granite State municipalities to a distribution center located in Deerfield, NH. A map showing the proposed route—as well as the already existing Canadian hydro power line corridor—is on the back.

In order for the Northern Pass power line to be built as proposed, government agencies will need to make a series of decisions. The government works for us, and there are affirmative actions federal and state decision-makers must take before the private commercial developers of the proposed Northern Pass can start cutting trees and erecting towers. This document summarizes these decisions and how you can participate in the process. The public review process may take three years and would need favorable decisions for the project before the applicant can begin construction.



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## Presidential Permit

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) must grant a “Presidential Permit” for any electric transmission project that crosses an international boundary. This permit is to assure that the proposed project serves the public interest and to assure that there is system compatibility for the energy being delivered to the U.S. side of the border. Before issuing a Presidential Permit, the DOE must complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

On February 11, 2011 the DOE announced the first set of public hearings (called “scoping hearings”) to establish the scope of the environmental impacts the EIS will consider. Any member of the public can speak at these hearings and/or can submit written comments to the DOE by the deadline of April 12, 2011. A copy of the formal notice is available at [edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-3147.pdf](http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-3147.pdf).

These hearings are the public’s opportunity to weigh in on the Northern Pass, and particularly to urge the DOE to study a broader range of alternatives than the applicant has proposed. One of the options that must be considered by law is the “no build” alternative—specifically, what happens if the project as proposed is not built.

## White Mountain National Forest Special Use Permit

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) must grant a “Special Use Permit” for the power line to pass through the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). The US Forest Service, which owns and manages all national forests, is a part of the USDA. A Special Use Permit is used to assure that any proposed use of these public lands is consistent with the purposes and uses for which these public lands are owned and managed in the public interest. Northern Pass proposes to go through 10 miles of the WMNF over land in the towns of Easton, Woodstock, and Lincoln. The USDA will be a participant in the DOE process as a cooperating federal agency, making its own decision on a new Special Use Permit for Northern Pass based on the DOE Environmental Impact Statement. If you have concerns about the use of the WMNF for Northern Pass, the DOE scoping hearings are the right place to voice these concerns.

## HEARING SCHEDULE:

- 1. PEMBROKE, NH**  
Pembroke Academy cafeteria  
209 Academy Road  
Monday, March 14, 6-9 pm
- 2. FRANKLIN, NH**  
Franklin Opera House  
316 Central Street  
Tuesday, March 15, 6-9 pm
- 3. LINCOLN, NH**  
The Mountain Club on Loon  
Hancock Room  
90 Loon Mountain Road  
Wednesday, March 16, 6-9 pm
- 4. WHITEFIELD, NH**  
Mountain View Grand Hotel  
and Resort  
Presidential Room  
101 Mountain View Road  
Thursday, March 17, 6-9 pm
- 5. PLYMOUTH, NH**  
Plymouth Regional  
Senior Center  
8 Depot Street  
Friday, March 18, 6-9 pm
- 6. COLEBROOK, NH**  
Colebrook Elementary School  
27 Dumont Street  
Saturday, March 19, 1-4 pm

When the draft EIS is completed, DOE will host another round of public hearings. More information about the EIS process, including an online comment form, is available at [www.northernpasseis.us](http://www.northernpasseis.us)

# STATE DECISIONS

## Site Evaluation Committee

The State of New Hampshire has the final say on all siting issues of the proposed Northern Pass power line on the NH landscape. NH law establishes a Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) made up of designated state agency leaders to review all energy project siting proposals (like Northern Pass) and to decide whether to issue a certificate of approval for the project as proposed, to issue a certificate for the project with additional conditions, or to deny the certificate. For more details on the SEC, its legal jurisdiction and its members go to [www.nhsec.nh.gov](http://www.nhsec.nh.gov). There will be public hearings held by the SEC at which members of the public can submit oral and/or written comments. Northern Pass plans to formally apply to its SEC certificate after the US DOE publishes a draft Environmental Impact Statement. Under NH law the SEC must make its decision within nine months of receiving a complete application from Northern Pass.

## Public Utilities Commission

The New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (PUC) must approve any use of eminent domain by a public utility (RSA 371:1). The PUC also has the authority to review and approve all long-term power purchase contracts between an electricity generator and a regulated NH utility, including any contracts made between PSNH and Northern Pass for power being transmitted by Northern Pass. If any of the Northern Pass electricity is to be made directly available to NH consumers through such a contract, the public will have the right to speak at the PUC hearings that would precede any PUC approval of such a contract.

## Governor Lynch and the State Legislature

The New Hampshire legislature may be asked to address issues regarding the use of the power of eminent domain by Northern Pass developers, as well as other issues that may influence how, whether, or where the proposed project advances. Anyone interested in the outcome of the Northern Pass proposal can and should make their opinions about the project known to Governor Lynch, their state representatives, state senator, and other elected officials. Visit [www.gencourt.state.nh.us](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us) to find out who they are and how to contact them. A personal letter to the Governor should be directed to: The Honorable John Lynch, Office of the Governor, State House, Concord, NH 03301.

## Additional Resources

For background information on the National Environmental Policy Act process, see A Citizens Guide to NEPA at: [ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/Citizens\\_Guide\\_Deco7.pdf](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/Citizens_Guide_Deco7.pdf)

For more information on the Northern Pass EIS process, go to: [www.northernpasseis.us](http://www.northernpasseis.us)

For more information about the Northern Pass project as proposed go to: [www.northernpass.us](http://www.northernpass.us)

To link with opponents of the Northern Pass, go to: [www.forestssociety.org](http://www.forestssociety.org) or [www.livefreeorfry.org](http://www.livefreeorfry.org)

To subscribe to blogs opposing Northern Pass go to: [www.burynorthernpass.blogspot.com](http://www.burynorthernpass.blogspot.com) or [www.nonorthernpassnh.blogspot.com](http://www.nonorthernpassnh.blogspot.com)





# Current and Proposed HVDC Transmission Lines in New Hampshire

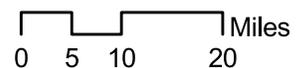
- Existing 2000 MW HVDC Transmission Line
- Proposed 1200 MW HVDC Line Preferred by Northern Pass
- - - Alternate Route Proposed by Northern Pass
- Existing Transmission Right of Way To Be Used or Widened
- Major Water Features (NH)
- Conservation & Public Lands

HVDC = High Voltage Direct Current  
Electric Transmission Line  
MW = Megawatt, or 1 Million Watts of Electrical Energy

#### Data Sources:

Existing transmission lines in NH are taken from utilities data available at the NH GRANIT data library, last revised 1993. Transmission lines in Vermont, Massachusetts and Quebec are derived from publicly-available datasets in respective state and provincial data libraries or other non-governmental data management entities.

Proposed transmission lines (preferred and alternative routes) have been digitized by the Forest Society from electronic maps attached to the Northern Pass Transmission LLC application to the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, October 14, 2010, and February 10, 2011.



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Map Prepared by the Forest Society  
Policy & Land Protection Departments  
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