PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps of Engineers ® New England District 696 Virginia Road Concord, MA 01742-2751 Comment Period Begins: June 14, 2016 Comment Period Ends: July 16, 2016 File Number: NAE 2013-02188 In Reply Refer To: David Keddell Phone: (978) 318-8692 E-mail: david.m.keddell@usace.army.mil

The Department of Energy (DOE) has required an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the most recent proposed route for the Northern Pass presidential permit application. The EIS review covers the entire 192 mile long project. The Corps of Engineers (Corps) is a cooperating agency with the DOE, US Forest Service (USFS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NH Division of Historical Resources (NH DHR) since the March 2011 public scoping hearings. The DOE public scoping comment period for the Northern Pass Project has remained open almost continuously since October 2010.

After the DOE publishes the final EIS and the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (NH SEC) finalizes their review, the Corps will finalize their agency actions within their legal authorities from the information gathered while participating in those processes.

A brief timeline summary for the Northern Pass Project to date:

- October 2010, the DOE receives an application for a presidential permit to cross the international border with Canada
- February 2011 the DOE published a notice of intent (NOI) in the federal register for initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review of the potential impacts of the project. 11 Alternative routes selected by the federal agencies to be analysed by the applicant for the EIS.

Section 106 consultations are initiated by the DOE for the project with the initiation of the EIS

March 2011 Seven locally held public scoping hearings were held concerning the EIS

Field data collection and compilation for the EIS occurs

June 12, 2015 Applicant initiates Section 7 consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service

August 2015 NOI for Draft EIS (DEIS) for the new proposed route by the applicant

September 2015 NOI for extending public comment

October 2015 Northern Pass files New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (NHSEC) application for siting project.

March 2016 DOE conducts four local public scoping meetings concerning the DEIS, two joint with the NHSEC

March 2016 five local public hearings held by the SEC, two joint with the DOE

The contact information for additional public comment concerning northern pass to the SEC and DOE is:

New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator 21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10 Concord, NH 03301-2429 Tel: (603) 271-2435 Fax: (603) 271-3878 Email: Pamela.Monroe@nh.gov TDD Access Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964

Brian Mills Senior Planning Advisor Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE-20) U.S. Department of Energy 1000 Independence Ave. SW Washington, DC 20585 Tel: 202-586-8267 Fax: 202-586-8008 Email: Brian.Mills@hq.doe.gov or info@northernpasseis.us

Applicant to the Corps for this public notice

The District Engineer has received a permit application to conduct work in various wetlands and waters of the United States from Northern Pass Transmission, LLC and Public Service Company of NH, d/b/a Eversource Energy, Energy Park, 780 Commercial Street, Manchester, NH.

Activity

The work involves both direct permanent and temporary discharges of dredged or fill material into various wetlands and waters of the US along the proposed route. The direct permanent discharge is approximately 2.53 acres while the direct temporary discharge is approximately 140 acres. The secondary impacts such as converting forested wetlands to scrub shrub wetlands total approximately 182 acres. Project planning and design have attempted to avoid and minimize impacts to rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, floodplains, and wetlands.

Discharges to, and fills within, waters of the U.S. will typically result from the following types of Project activities:

• the temporary use timber mats for access routes across wetlands and watercourses (in order to complete the required vegetation clearing and removal);

• the improvement of existing access roads and the installation of new temporary access roads across wetlands and watercourses (to provide ingress and egress to transmission line structure sites and other work areas along the ROWs);

• the installation of temporary "work pads" (e.g., crane pads, pulling pads, and guard pads) required to safely support and stage construction equipment needed to remove and relocate existing transmission and distribution

structures, install new transmission structures, install and remove guard structures, and perform conductor stringing and pulling operations;

• the installation of some new and relocated transmission line and distribution structures, including foundations, guy anchors and counterpoise (grounding systems) in wetlands;

• the installation of underground transmission line cables;

• the construction of facilities to transition the new transmission line between overhead and underground configurations;

- the construction of a station to convert between a DC transmission line and an AC transmission line; and
- expansion of existing substation yards to facilitate the interconnection of the new transmission line.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED WORK

This work is proposed in various wetlands and waters of the United States for 192 miles from Pittsburg, NH along a linear line to Deerfield, NH. Various alternative routes are being considered at this time.

Maps of potential project routes are attached. Specific up to date information concerning project plans, alternative routes, historical review for 106 and potential project impacts can be found at:

http://www.northernpasseis.us/library/documents

http://www.northernpass.us/state-filing-documents.htm

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION

The compensatory mitigation proposal under consideration for the project is currently giving consideration to local and regional conservation priorities. These priorities have been identified through the comprehensive public outreach effort for the DEIS thus far. The mitigation package currently includes 1,668 acres of conservation land (not including the proposed ROW or transition stations which are present on some parcels) with wetlands and upland buffers, streams, and wildlife habitats along with potential payments into the NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARM) where conservation may not be practical. Summary potential mitigation tables attached.

CORPS AUTHORITY

Permits are required pursuant to:

- X Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
- X Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
- Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest as discussed in the record of decision in the DEIS. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which may reasonably accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered during the state SEC process, federal EIS and DEIS processes, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural value, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain value, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers will continue reviewing comments during the SEC, and DOE DEIS review from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used by the DOE in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Where the activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States the evaluation of the impact of the activity in the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act, as amended.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

The District Engineer has designated the DOE as lead federal agency for fulfilling their collective responsibilities under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION

The DOE is the lead federal agency for the ongoing Section 7 consultations which are required for this project. These consultations were initiated with the USFWS in 2015. The Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency with the DOE and is reviewing the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, which might occur at the project site.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), requires all federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

This project will indirectly impact approximately 122 acres of historically accessible areas of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for migrating Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar). The main potential impact to fish habitat related to the proposed Northern Pass Transmission Project is vegetation clearing. Loss of this habitat may adversely affect Atlantic salmon. However, the District Engineer has made a preliminary determination that the sitespecific adverse effect will not be substantial. Further consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding EFH conservation recommendations is being conducted and will be concluded prior to the final decision.

Anyone wishing to comment on the information gathered during the DOE and SEC reviews is encouraged to do so. Comments for the Northern Pass project which have not been previously submitted to the DOE or SEC should be submitted through the DOE website or contact person, and or the SEC website or contact person listed above.

The following authorizations have been applied for, or have been, or will be obtained:

- (X) Permit, License or Assent from State.
- () Permit from Local Wetland Agency or Conservation Commission.
- (X) Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

In order to properly evaluate the proposal for work within Corps regulated areas, we are seeking public comment concerning project impacts within Corps jurisdiction. Anyone wishing to comment to the Corps is encouraged to do so. Comments should be submitted in writing by the above date. If you have any questions, please contact (David Keddell) at (978) 318-8692, (800) 343-4789 or (800) 362-4367, if calling from within Massachusetts.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the project impacts which are regulated by the Corps. Requests for a public hearing shall specifically state the reasons for holding a public hearing. The Corps holds public hearings for the purpose of obtaining public comments when that is the best means for understanding a wide variety of concerns from a diverse segment of the public.

The initial determinations made herein will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice. All comments will be considered a matter of public record. Copies of letters of objection will be forwarded to the applicant who will normally be requested to contact objectors directly in an effort to reach an understanding.

THIS NOTICE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.

Tor Frank J. Delgiudice

For Frank J. Delgiudice Chief, Permits and Enforcement Branch C Regulatory Division

If you would prefer not to continue receiving Public Notices by email, please contact Ms. Tina Chaisson at (978) 318-8058 or e-mail her at <u>bettina.m.chaisson@usace.army.mil</u>. You may also check here () and return this portion of the Public Notice to: Bettina Chaisson, Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751.

NAME:		
ADDRESS:	•	
PHONE:		

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Natural Resource	Unavoidable Impact Type and/or Quantity to be Mitigated	Proposed Mitigation Method Notes	
Wetland Resources			
Permanent Wetland/Stream/VP impacts	Fill for structure foundations/sites (2.48 acres)	Compensatory Preservation (15:1 USACE ratio) and/or ARM fund payment	
Secondary—Wetland Conversion	Clearing, Functional Change (11.56 acres)	Compensatory Preservation (15:1 USACE ratio) and/or ARM fund payment	
Secondary—VP and Stream Buffers, organic soils	Clearing, Functional Change (14.98 acres)	Compensatory Preservation (15:1 USACE ratio) and/or ARM fund payment	
Temporary Wetland/Stream Impacts	Grading, clearing for construction (140 acres)	Restoration in place	
Wetland Total	31.14 acres for compensatory mitigation	At 15:1, preservation of 1,668 acres of upland buffer/wetland, and/or ARM fund payment	
Wildlife Resources			
Karner blue butterfly	Direct mortality (take to be determined with NHF&G and USFWS)	Compensatory Preservation in Concord/Pembroke; management funding; and/or ROW mgmt. agreement with NHFGD and USFWS;	
Frosted elfin	Direct mortality and habitat loss (impact to be determined with NHF&G)	Compensatory Preservation in Concord/Pembroke; management funding; and/or ROW mgmt. agreement with NHFGD and USFWS;	
Persius duskywing	Direct mortality and habitat loss (impact to be determined with NHF&G)	Compensatory Preservation in Concord/Pembroke; management funding; and/or ROW mgmt. agreement with NHFGD and USFWS;	
Pine pinion moth	Direct mortality and habitat loss (impact to be determined with NHF&G)	Compensatory Preservation in Concord/Pembroke; management funding; and/or ROW mgmt. agreement with NHFGD and USFWS;	
Forest habitat species*	Forest Clearing (731 acres)	Compensatory Preservation of forest	
Wetland nesting migratory	Wetland permanent impacts (2.5 acres)	Compensatory Preservation (included in wetland mitigation)	

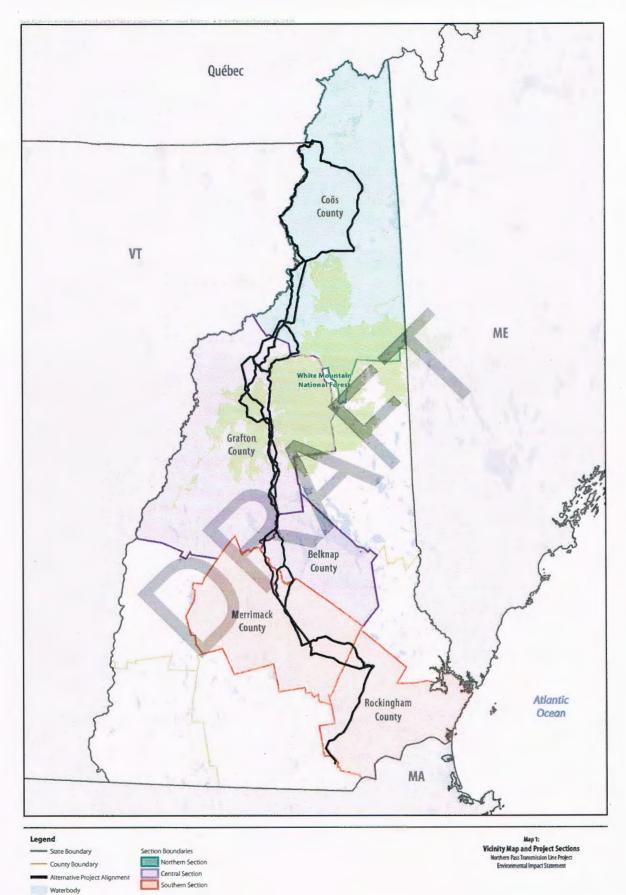
Table 1. Summary of Natural Resource Impacts with Anticipated Mitigation

Natural Resource	Unavoidable Impact Type and/or Quantity to be Mitigated	Proposed Mitigation Method Notes
birds		and/or ARM fund payment
Moose Concentration Areas	Permanent Clearing (about 47 acres)	Compensatory Preservation and/or ARM Fund/Management contribution
Deer Wintering Areas	Permanent Clearing (about 28 acres)	Compensatory Preservation and/or ARM Fund/Management contribution
High Elevation Habitat	Permanent Clearing (10.01 acres)	Compensatory Preservation
RTE Plant Species and Potential Exemplary Natural Communities	Square feet of Permanent Loss of RTE Plant or Community	
Licorice Goldenrod	1,726	TBD
Wild Lupine	1,221	Compensatory Preservation and/or ARM Fund/Management contribution (included in Karner Blue Butterfly mitigation)
Spiked Needle Grass (Aristida longespica var. geniculata)	207	TBD, will likely re-establish
Butterfly Milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa)**	33	None Planned
Northern White Cedar – Balsam Fir Swamp	23,770	Compensatory Preservation and/or ARM Fund/Management contribution
Northern Hardwood Seepage Forest	643,393	Compensatory Preservation and/or ARM Fund/Management contribution

* Forest habitat is assumed to support nesting migratory birds, lynx, marten, northern long-eared bats, and other more common wildlife species. **Probably an introduced garden plant

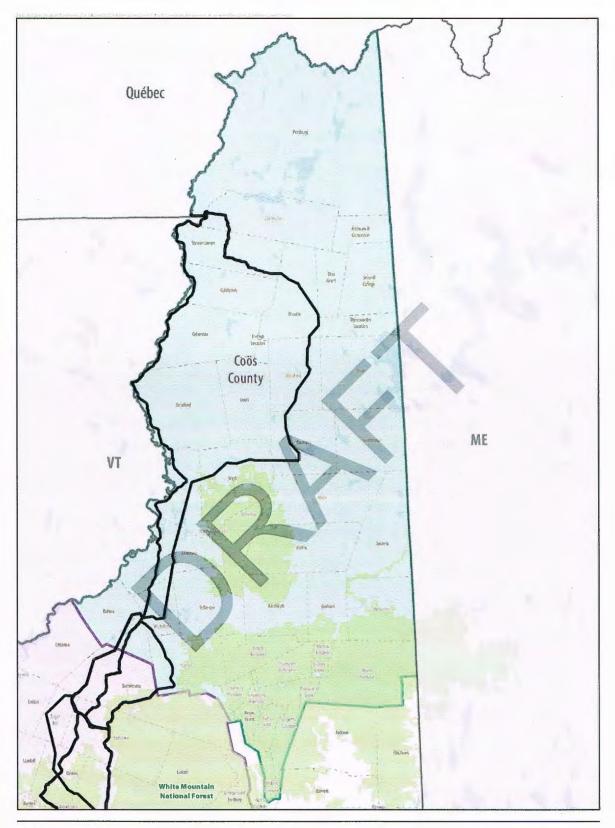
APPENDIX A: MAPS

- Map 1: Vicinity Map and Project Sections
- Map 2: Northern Section
- Map 3: Central Section
- Map 4: Southern Section
- Map 5: Alternative 1 No Action
- Map 6: Alternative 2 Proposed Action
- Map 7: Alternative 3 Underground Transmission Cable in Proposed Action Alignment
- Map 8: Alternative 4a Underground Transmission Cable in Roadway Corridors *I-93 through Franconia Notch*
- Map 9: Alternative 4b Underground Transmission Cable in Roadway Corridors *NH Routes 112* and 116 through WMNF
- Map 10: Alternative 4c Underground Transmission Cable in Roadway Corridors *NH Routes 112* and 116 through WMNF and US Route 3 from North Woodstock to Ashland
- Map 11: Alternative 5a Proposed Action except Underground Transmission Cable in WMNF *I-93 through Franconia Notch*
- Map 12: Alternative 5b Proposed Action except Underground Transmission Cable in WMNF NH Routes 112 and 116 through WMNF
- Map 13: Alternative 5c Proposed Action except Underground Transmission Cable in WMNF NH Routes 18, 112 and 116 through Sugar Hill, Franconia, Easton and WMNF
- Map 14: Alternative 6a Underground Transmission Cable in Roadway Corridors (*I-93 through Franconia Notch*) and Co-located HVAC
- Map 15: Alternative 6b Underground Transmission Cable in Roadway Corridors (*NH Routes 112 and 116 through WMNF*) and Co-located Overhead HVAC





White Mountain National Forest



- ------ State Boundary
- --- Political Boundary
- County Boundary
- Alternative Project Alignment
- Waterbody
- White Mountain National Forest

SOURCE: ESRI 2011; Ecology and Environment 2014.

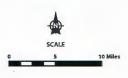
Section Boundaries

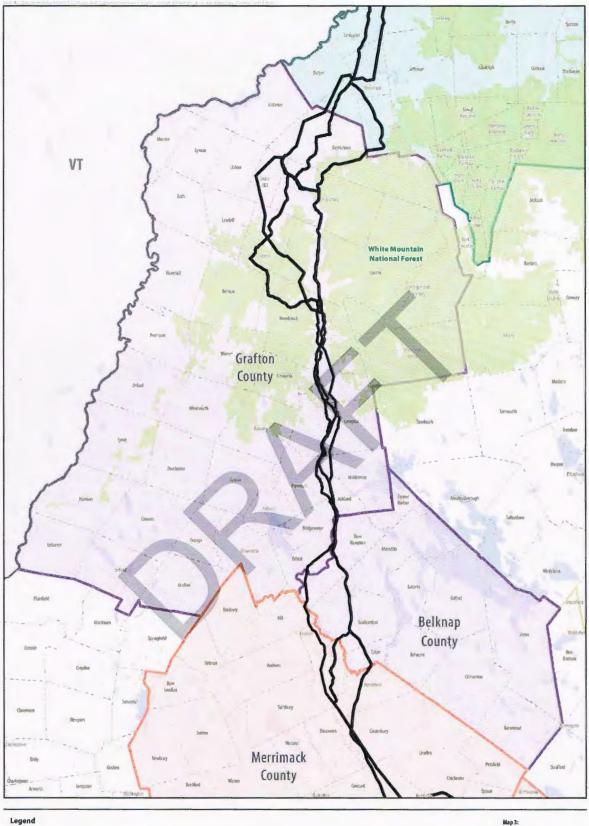
Northern Section

Central Section

Southern Section

Map 2: Northern Section Northern Pass Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement







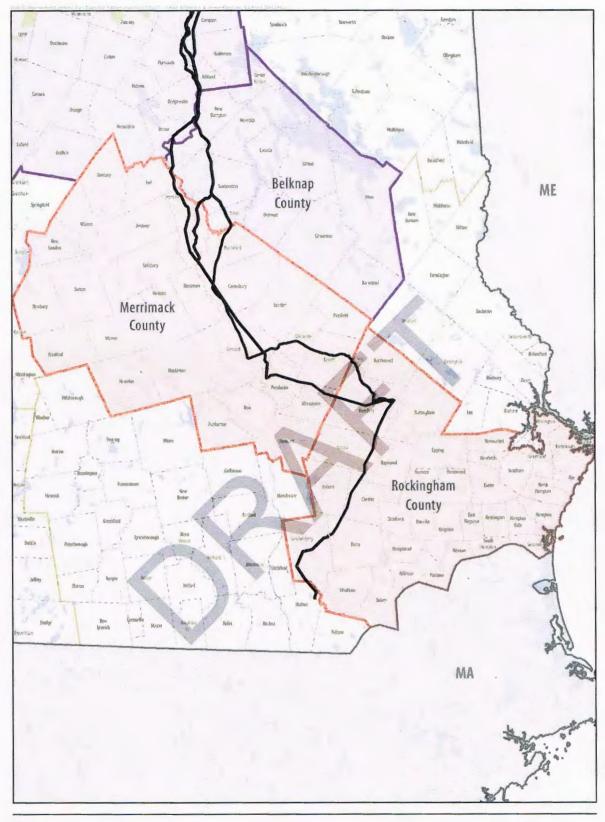
State Boundary Section Boundaries ---- Political Boundary - County Boundary E Alternative Project Alignment Waterbody

Northern Section Central Section Southern Section Map 3: Central Section Northem Pass Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement



SOURCE: ESRI 2011; Ecology and Environment 2014.

White Mountain National Forest



- State Boundary
- ---- Political Boundary

Section Boundaries

E

Northern Section

Central Section

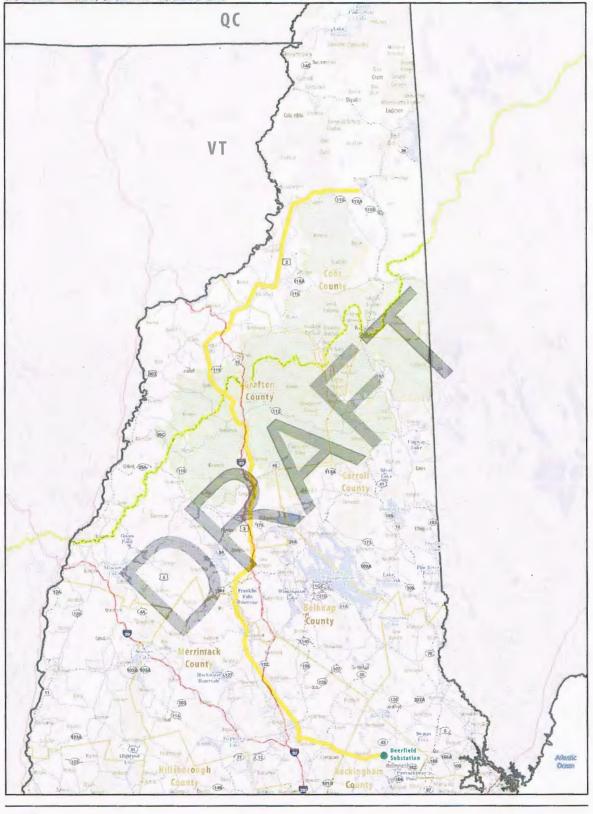
Southern Section

- County Boundary
- Alternative Project Alignment Waterbody
- White Mountain National Forest

SOURCE: ESRI 2011; Ecology and Environment 2014.

Map 4: Southern Section Northern Pass Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement

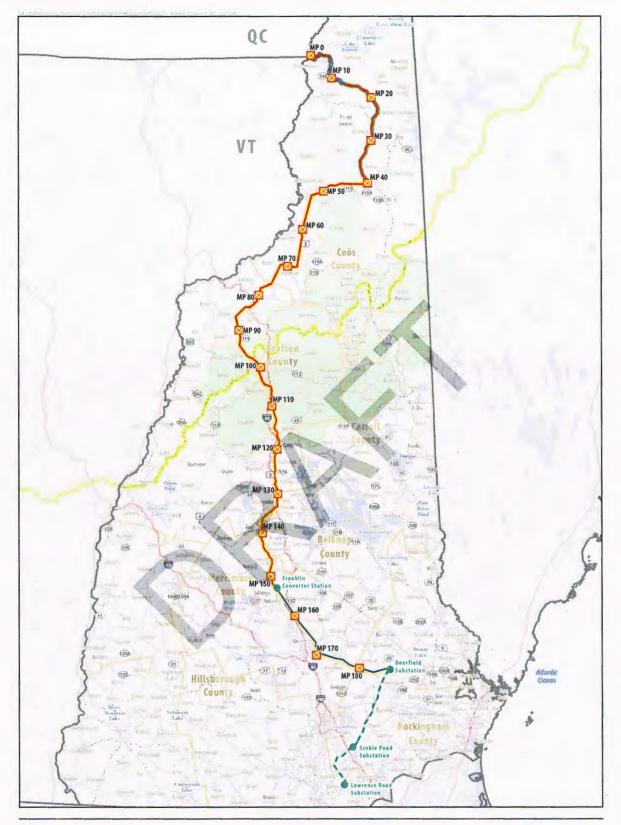






Map 5: Alternative 1 - No Action Northern Pass Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement

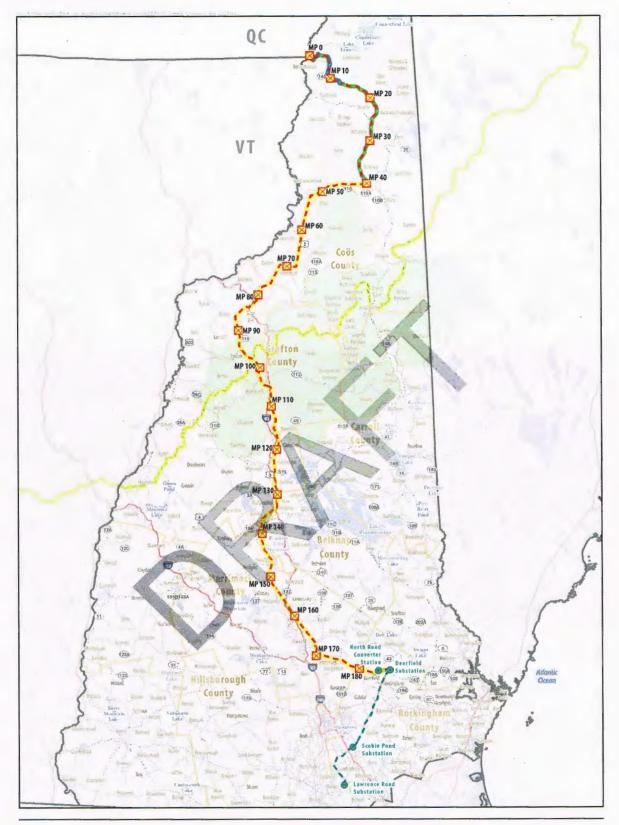






Map 6: Alternative 2 - Proposed Action Northern Pass Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement

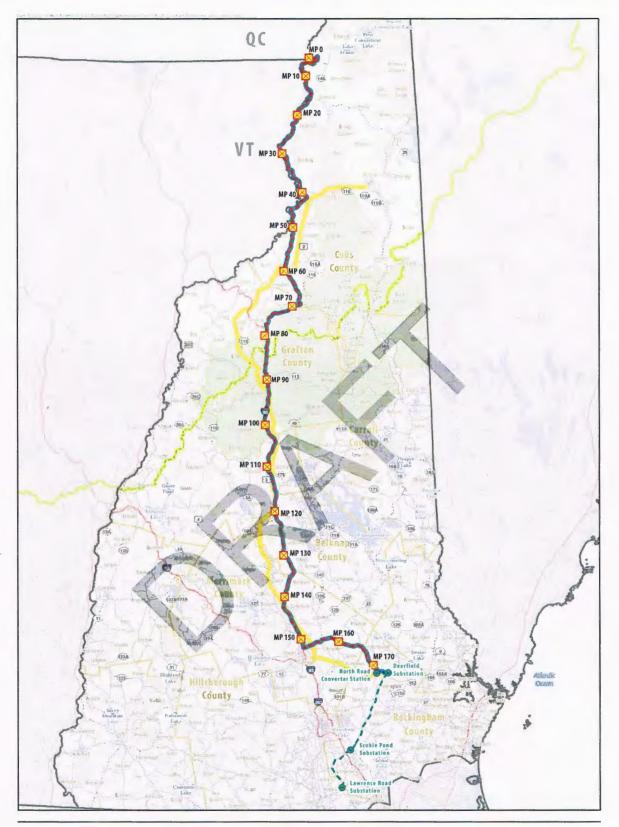
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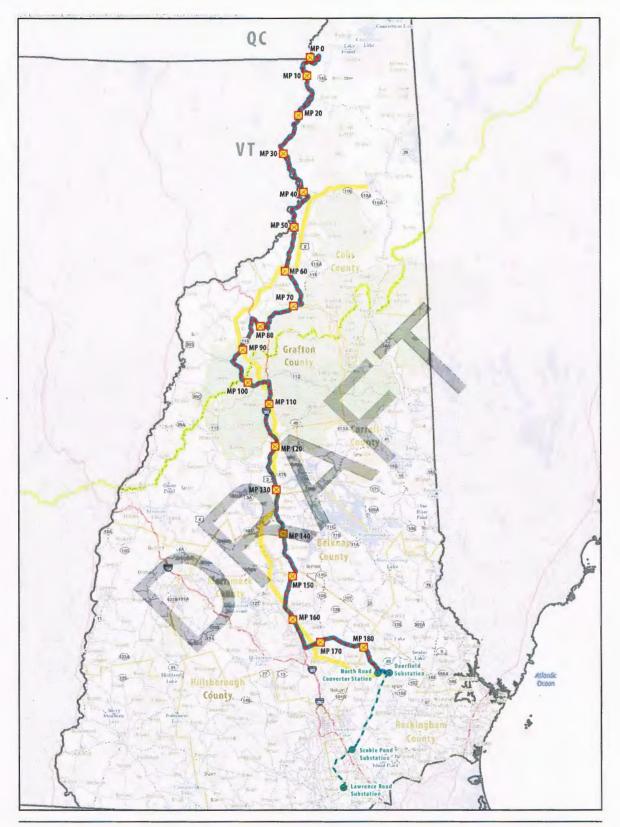
Alternative 3 - Underground Transmission Cable in Proposed Action Alignment Northern Pass Transmission Line Project



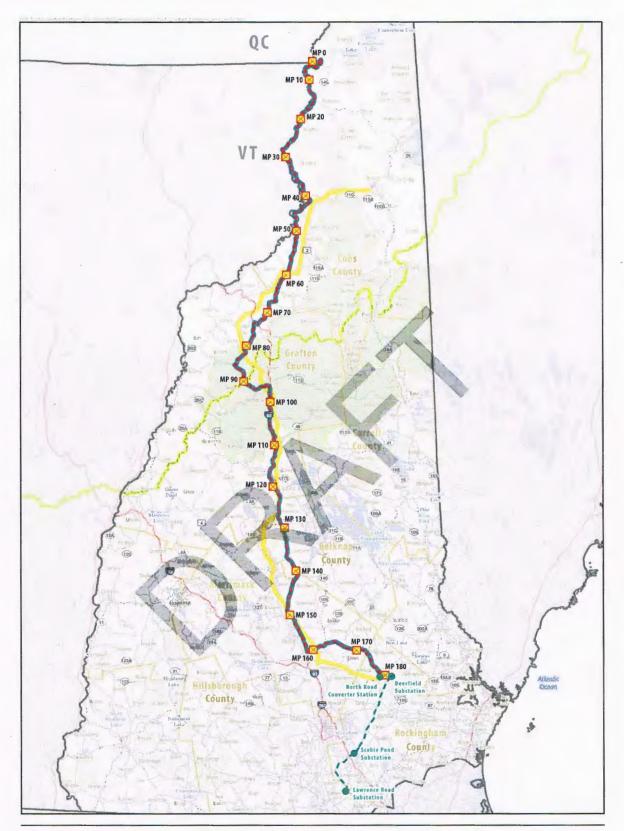




SOURCE: ESRI 2011; GRANIT 2012; Burns and McDonnell 2013; USFS 2012; Ecology and Environment 2013

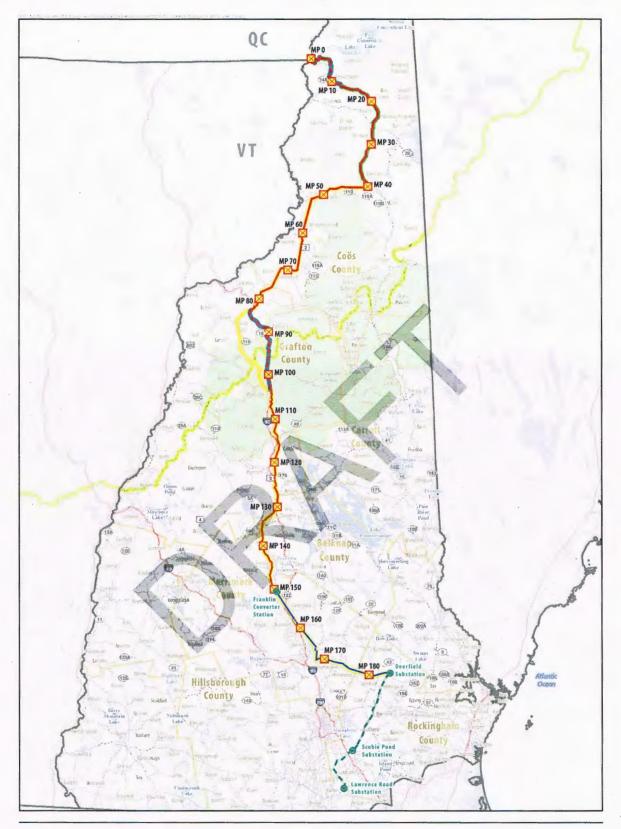




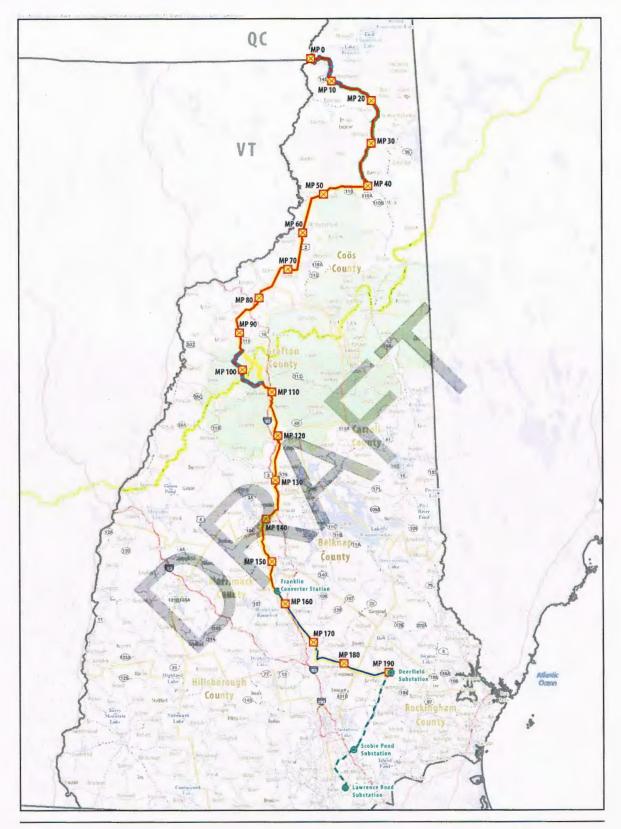




SOURCE: ESRI 2011; GRANIT 2012; Burns and McDonnell 2013; USFS 2012; Ecology and Environment 2013

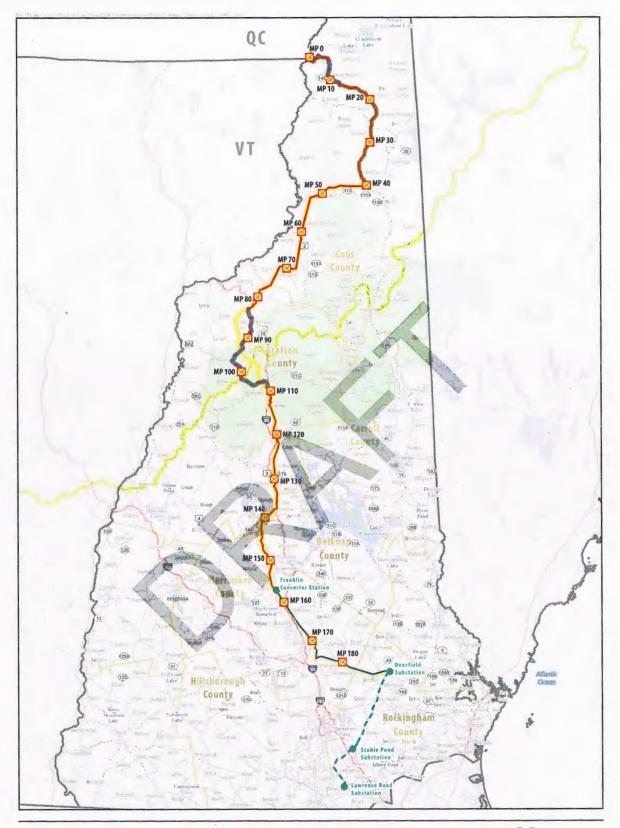




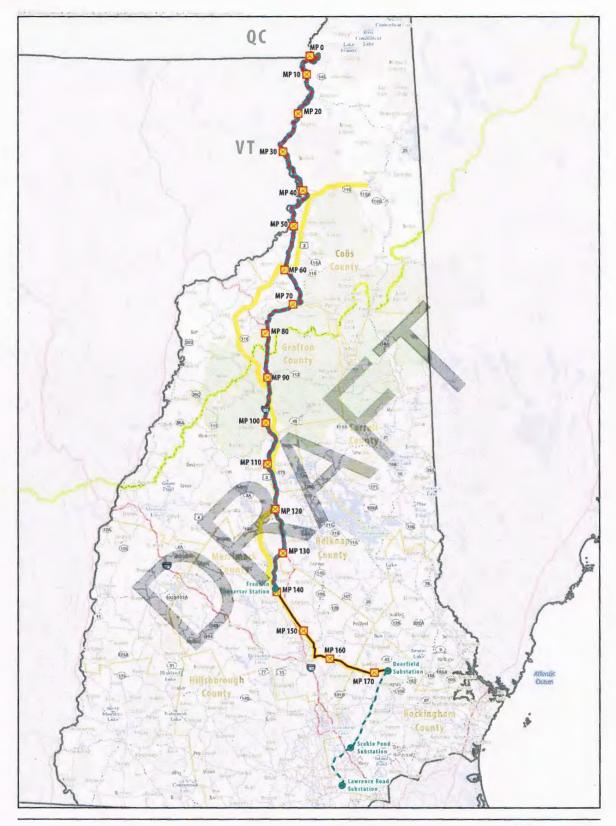




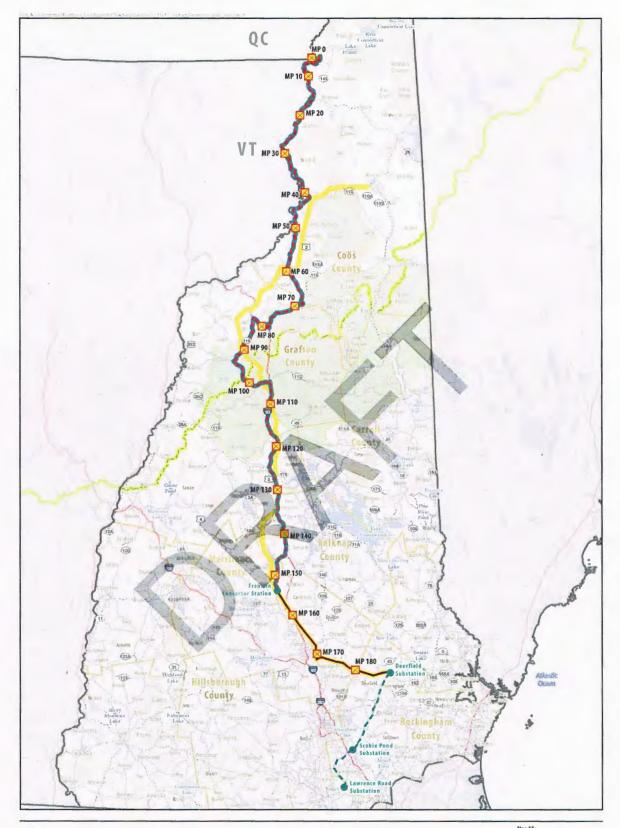
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SOURCE: ESRI 2011; GRANIT 2012; Burns and McDonnell 2013; USFS 2012; Ecology and Environment 2013