

Open Letter to the Town of Newington

April 11, 2016

Dear Chairman and Board Members,

On behalf of my colleagues at Eversource, I would like to thank you for the many meetings and discussions with members of our team, concerning our Seacoast Reliability Project. Reinforcing our infrastructure to ensure an adequate and reliable energy supply is one of the most critical issues facing our state and all of New England. Eversource is making over \$330M in investments in our electric infrastructure across the state, to improve or supplement our existing system, including transmission and distribution system upgrades for the Seacoast area.

As you know, the Seacoast Reliability Project, a new transmission line connecting the Madbury and Portsmouth substations, is a key piece among a number of projects designed to meet the growing needs of the Seacoast economy. These projects are needed to support the reliable delivery of electric power to meet the region's current demand and support the region's future growth.

In late 2013, our project team began meeting with town officials to provide a preliminary introduction to the project that proposed the construction of a new 115kV transmission line from Madbury, through Durham and Newington, and terminating in Portsmouth. Our team then spent the majority of 2014 conducting an in-depth analysis to determine the best overall route. When analyzing routing alternatives, Eversource balances three basic principles:

- Reliability, including timeframe to meet the identified system reliability need
- Cost, including constructability and availability of existing rights-of-way
- Environmental and community impacts

In 2015, we held numerous working group meetings with town officials and several interactive public presentations for the Newington Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and residents to discuss the project scope, design, and the proposed and alternative routes specifically through Newington. As a result of these discussions, public presentations and interactions with residents, as well as the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) Public Information Sessions in April, we obtained significant and valuable feedback from Newington that has allowed us, where feasible, to propose adjustments to the project design.

One adjustment includes relocating the existing distribution line to public roadways in and near the Newington Center Historic District, which allows for lower project structure heights. Additional adjustments that were proposed in collaboration with the Town of Newington and agreed to by Eversource (pending receipt of necessary land rights) include:

- (a) Relocation of the underground line from within the Gundalow Landing roadway to the edge of the roadway in Gundalow Landing, where possible, to avoid reconstruction of the road.
- (b) Relocation of the underground to overhead transition structure from the edge of Little Bay Road to a new easement on the town's Flynn Pit property.

- (c) Revised line design from overhead to underground construction in the Newington Center Historic District area.

Each of these additional adjustments requires property rights that must be granted to Eversource by every property affected by the design change. We've been working with each of the property owners in all three areas to try and secure these additional rights, but unfortunately we have not yet been granted all of the necessary rights that would support the additional adjustments for inclusion in the project's siting Application to the SEC. In addition to securing these rights, additional local, state and federal regulatory approvals associated with an existing conservation easement must also be granted.

Presently, the electric transmission system serving the Seacoast area does not meet certain reliability criteria, which puts the reliability of the system under certain system conditions at risk even at today's electrical demand levels. Due to the immediate need for this project and Eversource's legal obligation to maintain a reliable transmission system, we have decided to proceed with filing our Application to the SEC. Despite our best efforts over the past several months, we have not been able to attain all of the needed land rights from either the Town or the applicable property owners of Newington to support the additional design adjustments. As such, the transmission line proposed in our Application will reflect a design that we currently have the existing land rights to build. The proposed transmission line will be underground from Little Bay through the roadway in Gundalow Landing and overhead throughout the remainder of Newington.

We are committed to continuing our efforts to work with the Town of Newington and the applicable property owners to secure the property rights that would support the additional design adjustments. The underground design changes can only be accomplished, however, if all residents in these areas grant the necessary land rights to Eversource and the necessary approvals required for the conservation easement are granted. We have discussed with the affected property owners, that if the property rights and approvals, if necessary, are granted at any or all of the three locations along the corridor; (1) Historic property and all six adjacent properties, (2) Town's Flynn Pit property, and (3) Gundalow Landing, Eversource is willing to submit an amendment to the project's Application for a Certificate of Site and Facility to reflect the design adjustments. To avoid any additional delay in commencing the construction of this needed project, the rights and approvals would have to be granted in a timely and coordinated manner that allows Eversource to amend its application prior to the commencement of discovery in the proceeding.

We appreciate your time and effort over the past two years to work towards the goal of improving the reliability of our energy supply in the Seacoast area and look forward to our continued discussions.

Sincerely,



William J. Quinlan
President, NH Electric Operations

cc: Todd Selig, Durham Town Administrator
Eric Fiegenbaum, Madbury Selectmen's Administrative Assistant
John Bohenko, Portsmouth City Manager