

October 24, 2012

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL (Brian.Mills@hq.doe.gov)

Mr. Brian Mills
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE-20)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

**Re: Northern Pass Transmission LLC, Presidential Permit Application,
OE Docket No. PP-371
Request to Terminate Current Third-Party Contractor Team**

Dear Mr. Mills:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write to express our deep concerns with U.S. Department of Energy's ("DOE") handling of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") review of the proposed Northern Pass transmission project to date.

According to documents recently obtained by the Conservation Law Foundation ("CLF"), and referenced in CLF's submission to DOE dated October 9, 2012, DOE has abdicated its responsibility to lead a fair and objective environmental review of Northern Pass by allowing the permit applicant, Northern Pass Transmission LLC ("NPT"), to control key aspects of the process, including selection of the third-party contractor team that will prepare the Environmental Impact Statement, setting the terms of the agreements governing the contractor team's activities, and shaping important documents and decisions, such as the "purpose and need" statement, that will restrict the NEPA process in the future. As a result of NPT's influence over the contractor selection process, the current contractor team has a clear conflict of interest, in violation of NEPA regulations.

DOE's actions greatly undermine the public's confidence that DOE's review will be independent, impartial, comprehensive, and consistent with the law. We are also concerned that DOE's actions will discourage meaningful public involvement in the NEPA process, given the perception that the process has been unfairly structured in NPT's favor.

We therefore join CLF's requests that the current contractor team be terminated; that DOE select a new contractor or internal team free of any conflict of interest or potential bias, without assistance or input from NPT; and that DOE recommit to an open, fair, and impartial NEPA review of the Northern Pass project, including additional opportunities for meaningful public participation.

Signatories on Following Page

cc: Erika L. Mark, United States Army Corps of Engineers (Erika.L.Mark@usace.army.mil)
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Organizations

Alliance Against Northern Pass

Appalachian Mountain Club

Conservation New Hampshire

Environment New Hampshire

**The Nature Conservancy
New Hampshire Chapter**

No Northern Pass Coalition

Responsible Energy Action LLC

**Society for the Protection of
New Hampshire Forests**

The Wilderness Society

Individuals

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