

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2013

The Honorable Patricia Hoffman
Assistant Secretary
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Assistant Secretary Hoffman,

We write to request clarification regarding the procedures utilized by the Department of Energy (DOE) for preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As you know, such a statement is required for any application from Northern Pass Transmission, LCC (Northern Pass) to obtain a Presidential Permit to construct and maintain an electric transmission line across the U.S.-Canada border into northern New Hampshire. We are committed to ensuring that DOE provide the necessary safeguards to ensure objectivity, transparency and public confidence in the application process.

Recently, several landowners in Grafton County, NH have contacted our offices to express their concern that DOE contractors are using pre-existing easements held by the Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) to enter their property to conduct EIS activities on behalf of Northern Pass. It is our understanding that affected landowners initially believed the EIS contractors had a right to be on their property based on a DOE "Authorization to Conduct Field Research and Scientific Data Collection" form they received, which was signed by Jon Worthington, Deputy Assistant Secretary within the agency's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.

While PSNH granted such permission to the DOE contractors, our constituents question whether work related to preparing an EIS goes beyond the scope of the easements held by PSNH. It is also unclear whether an assignment of any such property right by PSNH to Northern Pass, a completely different corporate entity, is subject to official approval by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. Our constituents have also inquired about whether conducting research and data collection in support of the project is appropriate at this juncture, given that Northern Pass does not currently have an active Presidential Permit application pending before DOE that identifies the proposed route.

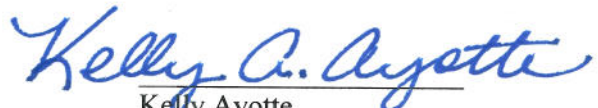
These concerns are raised by New Hampshire stakeholders who would be directly affected by the Northern Pass project. We are sure you will agree that they illustrate the need for DOE to provide clear guidance and reasoning for any actions the agency and its contractors take related to this application process.

We appreciate your attention to these important issues, and look forward to your response. Should you have any questions regarding our request for information, your staff may be in touch with Robert Diznoff (Shaheen) at 202-224-2841 or Emily Lynch (Ayotte) at 202-224-3324.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator