



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

February 3, 2014

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Ayotte:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding Northern Pass Transmission, LLC's (Northern Pass) pending application for a Presidential permit and the Department of Energy's (the Department) environmental review process. I appreciate the opportunity to address the issues you raised in your letter.

Northern Pass submitted an amended Presidential permit application (amended application) to the Department on July 1, 2013. The amended application provided updates to the original application, filed October 14, 2010, including a modified northern route that traverses new and existing rights-of-way (ROW) and slight modifications near the Concord Airport to follow existing ROW. The Department issued a notice of receipt of an amended application in the *Federal Register* on August 19, 2013.

The Department is committed to conducting a thorough environmental review of Northern Pass' amended application in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Department's NEPA implementing regulations.

The Department is currently engaged in preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) in order to ensure that the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project are fully considered before it determines whether to issue a Presidential permit. The Department conducted a second round of scoping meetings pursuant to NEPA on September 23-26, 2013. The scoping period for the Northern Pass EIS closed on November 5, 2013. To date, the Department has received approximately 7,500 scoping comments. The Department is in the process of reviewing the comments and is examining potential EIS alternatives in collaboration with the cooperating agencies (U.S. Forest Service-White Mountain National Forest, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-New England District, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Region 1, and the State of New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning).

As part of the environmental review process, the Department will generate a Scoping Report which will summarize the comments received during the scoping period, including those provided orally at scoping meetings. This Scoping Report will be posted on the EIS website (<http://www.northernpasseis.us>) when completed. The Department currently anticipates completing and posting the Scoping Report in March of this year.



The Department appreciates your request to prepare a preliminary report on alternatives. While the full assessment and analysis of alternatives will be contained in the draft EIS, the Department will prepare an addendum to the Scoping Report subsequent to the issuance of the Scoping Report and in advance of the draft EIS. The addendum will describe the alternatives the Department has preliminarily identified, based on scoping comments and discussion with the cooperating agencies, for analysis in the draft EIS. The addendum will also be posted on the EIS website when completed.

The Department anticipates releasing the draft EIS in late 2014, provided the remaining information needed from the applicant is received in a timely manner and the remaining seasonal field work can be completed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ms. Jaime Shimek, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Senate Affairs, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia A. Hoffman".

Patricia A. Hoffman  
Assistant Secretary  
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability  
U.S. Department of Energy