



Jared Golden
Congress of the United States
2nd District of Maine

July 6, 2020

Colonel William M. Conde
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New England District
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Colonel Conde:

I am writing to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Central Maine Power's New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) project. After hearing from constituents and communities across Maine's Second Congressional District and reviewing the permit applications submitted by Central Maine Power to your agency, it is my belief that given the size, scope, and level of public interest in the project, the NECEC merits a more thorough evaluation that only an EIS can provide.

As you know, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) established a national policy on the environment, authorizing and directing all agencies of the federal government to prepare a detailed statement on the environmental impact of any proposed federal action "significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." As it has been interpreted, federal agency compliance with NEPA involves the preparation of an EIS when the agency responsible for a given action expects it to result in "significant impacts."

The NECEC project consists of a transmission line that is 150 miles long - a third of which would require the placement of new transmission lines through undeveloped forests in Maine's North Woods, fragmenting the largest contiguous temperate forest in North America. According to CMP's Section 404 Clean Water Act application to your agency, the company reports that the construction of new transmission lines will impact an estimated 263 wetlands and 115 streams - hardly an insignificant amount. In fact, CMP makes clear that the project will "unavoidably result in permanent and temporary wetland fill" from the establishment of access road and structure preparation areas, travel lanes for vegetation clearing, conductor puller and tensioner locations, guard structures, and guy anchors. In addition, it is expected that forest in wetlands and vernal pool habitat will be removed to adhere to clearance specifications for overhead transmission lines. The areas in which these activities will occur are in essential wildlife habitat for several endangered species and could adversely impact recreation and tourism benefits to local economies.

I am grateful for your granting of my request to hear directly from my constituents during a public hearing in Lewiston, Maine, where 200 people attended to voice these same concerns and the need to conduct an EIS. Many of my constituents have also emphasized that large-scale energy projects in both New Hampshire and Vermont received a high degree of analysis and scrutiny through an EIS process.

Given the anticipated impacts this new transmission line will have on Maine's forest and wetland ecosystems, as well as on the communities along the route, I believe the NECEC meets the "significantly impacting the quality of the human environment" standard making an EIS necessary and appropriate. It is my hope that you will consider completing an EIS so that all stakeholders can have an objective, comprehensive assessment of how this project will impact our state. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Eric Kanter in my office at Eric.Kanter@mail.house.gov or 202-225-6306.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress

