

## Remarks of Eric Sherman, NRCM's 2020 People's Choice Award winner October 22, 2020

Good evening and thank you all for this prestigious honor. And thank you to NRCM for all you do to keep Maine the beautiful place that it is.

When I first heard of the NECEC, being a raft guide for 35 years, I thought only about it crossing the Kennebec Gorge and destroying the wilderness experience of our guests, my fellow guides, and myself. I've since gotten involved and done a lot of digging, reading, and listening, and I've learned much.

It's WAY more damaging than to just the Kennebec River: "CMP's proposed line includes above-ground transmission lines across 263 wetlands, 115 streams, 12 inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat areas, under the Kennebec River Gorge, over Moxie Stream, and the Appalachian Trail, up over the shoulder of Coburn Mountain, and near Beattie Pond, which is a Class 6 remote pond."

I learned from Steve Kasprzck that the mega-hydropower dams in Canada are blocking silica & other nutrients from reaching the ocean. That's not good.

I learned that the Canadian government and Hydro-Quebec have used and abused the Native-Canadians' land and rights. And that's not right.

I learned a foreign-owned corporation will do anything to force their money-hungry will on the citizens of Maine, including suing Mainers so the citizens' initiative question would be blocked from this November's ballot.

Most importantly, I notice that not enough of our own Maine officials, not enough local leaders, and not enough businesses are concerned for Maine's long-term future because they're too focused on the piddly scraps that CMP/Avangrid/Iberdrola is throwing their way in the short-term.

But there is good news. I have learned that opposition to this corridor is non-partisan. It is not a Democrat issue; it is not a Republican issue; it's a greed issue at the expense of Maine's identity as a wild and untamed wilderness. The corridor has brought people from all walks of life and the political spectrum together in a quest to defeat it. And I'm encouraged, especially in today's political climate, that we can find common ground and work towards a common goal that betters us all.

Our Say NO to NECEC Facebook group is approaching 10,000 members; we collected over 70 thousand signatures to get that first question on the ballot. We are a force to be reckoned with.

I've met some wonderful people who've worked just as hard if not harder than me to put a stop to the corridor: Sandi Howard, last year's winner of this award, is an inspiration to all of us. My fellow intervenors: Matt Wagner, Kim Lyman, Mike Pilsbury, Noah Hale, Carrie Carpenter, Mandy Farrar, Ed Buzzel, and Kathy Barkley. And many members of

the Say No group: Darryl Wood, Linda Lee, Susan & Peter Theberge, Vicki Schimdt, Sheryl Harth, Steve & Monica McCarthy, Liz Caruso, Wendy & Will Hughey, Kerry Hegarty, and Representative Seth Berry, among many others, and any one of whom should also be receiving this award. I want to say a special thanks to Liz Stevens who saw fit to nominate me for this honor.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the very worthy and good work that the other nominees for this award are doing:

- Carol Ervin, Ed Pentaleri, Jeff Philbrick, & Bill Weary for their work to preserve the Sheepscot River.
- The Gulf of Maine ECOARTS project which is educating people about changes in biodiversity in the Gulf of Maine due to climate change and other human activities.
- Kevin McKeon who found a way to save 100 acres of wildland from development and have it added to the Mousam Land Trust.
- And Kiersten Piccininni who has volunteered & worked on several initiatives with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine & the city of Bangor to get people out of their cars to walk and use bicycles to reach their destinations and to reduce their carbon footprints.

The fact that I am receiving this award is because the NECEC corridor is an issue that so many Maine residents oppose. All of the other nominees have the same goal in mind as I do: Keep our corner of Maine as beautiful and wild as possible because once it's gone, it's gone forever.

Thank you!