



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RECEIVED

MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
Governor

APR 24 2015

TOWN OF MERRIMACK
TOWN COUNCIL'S OFFICE

April 21, 2015

Town Council
Town of Merrimack
6 Baboosic Lake Road
Merrimack, NH 03054

Dear Merrimack Town Councilors,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Town of Merrimack's concerns with the proposed Northeast Energy Direct Project (NED Project). I appreciate and understand your concerns, which are shared by many residents and communities along the proposed route – just as many residents and businesses have concerns about the high cost of energy in our state.

Rising energy costs have been a longstanding challenge for our state and region, with recent winter price spikes due in large part to a lack of natural gas pipeline capacity and our increasing reliance on natural gas for electric generation. As we consider debates about new transmission and new natural gas pipelines, I believe that we can pursue new energy projects that will reduce energy costs and provide real benefits to New Hampshire's ratepayers, while also protecting our natural resources, meeting siting requirements, and incorporating the views of communities. As indicated in our State Energy Strategy, access to adequate natural gas supplies is crucial to reducing energy costs for our residents and businesses. But at the same time, our State Energy Strategy also recognizes that we must work to diversify our energy resources, increase our energy efficiency efforts and invest in renewable energy.

Although we understand that our regional natural gas transmission system is constrained, every proposed transmission project must be carefully vetted and considered. It is incumbent on us to protect New Hampshire's natural resources and the safety of our communities to ensure that any proposed projects deliver real benefits to the people of New Hampshire. We will not capitulate to plans that are not right for New Hampshire, but we must approach this important energy issue with a willingness to get to solutions that lead to a stronger, more affordable energy future.

With this said, I have not supported any specific planned or proposed natural gas transmission project. But, I have met with Kinder Morgan officials and I have called on the company to take additional steps to allow for public input and community engagement, and to remain open to changing the project to address local concerns.

In addition, the NED Project still faces a number of regulatory requirements and reviews, including a state environmental review and a federal environmental review, as well as reviews of the potential alternatives and the possible benefits of the proposed project. During the environmental reviews of the project, many of the potential environmental challenges you mentioned in your letter will be examined closely and alternative routes considered. Despite your opposition to the project as proposed, I would encourage you and the Town of Merrimack to continue to engage with Kinder Morgan officials and in both the FERC and SEC processes to highlight your concerns with the route and work to identify possible alternatives.

Thank you again for your letter. Together we can identify the best path forward and get to solutions that work for New Hampshire.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie H". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor