

My name is Jim Gish and I'm from Sudbury. I'm here tonight to discuss an issue that is being faced by towns all over the Commonwealth: Woburn, Winchester, Medford, Somerville, Boston, Everett, Stoneham, Hudson, Wakefield, and others. What we all have in common is an assault by energy companies that is occurring across the state, New England, and in fact the whole country.

They are in the process of siting high-voltage transmission lines through our land without regard to the damage they do to our communities, our natural resources and conservation lands. You might expect that the state would have our backs, but the reality is far from that. The state setup the EFSB, the Energy Facilities Siting Board, that in theory examines all siting applications to carefully balance out cost, reliability and environmental concerns. However, the primary consideration is given to construction costs, with only lip service paid to the environment. Although towns and citizens try to get the energy companies to sometimes consider alternate routes that meet town needs better than the company's preferred routes, in our examination of 25 years of decisions, we have yet to find a case where the EFSB has chosen other than the applicant's preferred route.

In the case of the Sudbury-Hudson transmission line project, Eversource's goal is to put 115kv lines on 100 foot towers, clear cutting an 82-foot swath through our neighborhoods and five different conservation lands, consisting of diverse and rare species, and habitats with many wetlands, brooks and certified vernal pools. Whether the line goes above or below ground along this route, it will do irreparable harm to the environment as well as posing a risk to our drinking water by the use of herbicides that have been declared by the WHO as a probable carcinogen.

This country has worked hard for decades to protect our conservation lands, and our drinking water. We have enacted many environmental laws with the express purpose of preserving these lands that have been set aside for ourselves and future generations. We have had an expectation that the town's, state's and federal laws would enable this protection. However, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has granted the EFSB overarching jurisdictional powers that serve to override all such protections, including, it appears, Article 97 of the state constitution to the detriment of all citizens, present and future. Not only is the

jurisdiction of the EFSB excessive, but the process by which citizens, as groups or municipalities, can intervene excludes all but the most affluent communities who can afford high-priced lawyers and experts. Even those towns, that intervene have very low odds of impacting the decisions made.

The bar is way too high for this process to qualify in any way as one that speaks to fairness or social justice for all. I ask you tonight, to investigate the EFSB and intervene to change this broken, one-sided process, for the ultimate benefit of the citizens, and our environment instead of that of corporate profits.