

Governor Charlie Baker

Massachusetts State House

Office of the Governor

Room 280

Boston, MA 02133

Re: Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Line Project

Dear Governor Baker,

I write to you to ask for your immediate support as Sudbury residents and 3000 friends of Protect Sudbury like me, as well as elected officials, work to stop Eversource from using an MBTA right-of-way (ROW) to run high voltage transmission lines through Sudbury’s neighborhoods and protected conservation lands.

Eversource plans to file their transmission line project with the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) as soon as December. The siting board has a long history of accepting a utility’s “preferred transmission route.” If it does so in this case, it would impose unacceptable social and environmental damage as well as put at risk the sole source of drinking water for the 18,000 residents of Sudbury.

In this light, we ask for your intervention with the EFSB to put the brakes on this project, which is based on a questionable needs assessment and would have unacceptable community and environmental impacts. We ask that you work to set policy with the agencies represented on the EFSB to call for a full re-evaluation of need and of non-transmission alternatives for projects that ISO-NE justified on old data and awarded long before you took office. We urge you to take a strong stance of denying petitions and sending them back to FERC/ISO-NE until the full universe of current solutions is properly studied.

Eversource’s plan in Sudbury calls for an 8.9 mile long, 82 foot wide clear cut swath along a disused MBTA right of way (ROW). Nearly 27,000 trees would be removed to make way for 100 foot tall towers carrying 115kV wires. Follow this up with Eversource’s customary long term toxic herbicide treatment to impede natural plant regrowth and we are faced with an assault on our health and our environment.

The clear cut, the width of the Mass Pike, would slice through Memorial Forest, the federally protected Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, multiple DEP wetland areas, through NHESP identified vernal pools and over the Hop Brook which is listed as a Major Stream and River by the DEP on their Integrated Rivers List. The Mass. Chapter of the Sierra club recently wrote to Eversource CEO Jim Judge: “Any siting of a transmission line – either above or below ground – will have significant and permanent deleterious effects on protected lands, threaten the town water supply and devalue residential neighborhoods and historic districts…”

The proposed lines also threaten local property values, which drive town revenue and school budgets. Hundreds of homes abut the ROW and several hundred more are within 1000 feet. Just the possibility of these transmission lines has already substantially decreased property values in our community as attested to by local real estate agents. Sudbury has one of the highest percentages of revenue coming from property taxes so the ultimate impact on tax revenues would destroy the vitality of our town.

In addition to the egregious community and environmental impacts of the proposed project, we fundamentally reject the “reliability” need this project purports to fulfill. Review of the original ISO-NE 2008 report which prompted this project and analysis of current load conditions and electricity demand indicates that the need that Eversource quotes as the reason for this project has not materialized. Indeed, according to the most recent ISO report of Massachusetts’ net energy load, load has declined to the same level as it was in 2002.

Your commitment to Comprehensive Energy Diversity Legislation and support of the Global Warming Solutions Act requirement includes a commitment to renewables and storage, both of which will support the continued decline in demand and provide peak load solutions that further decrease the need for projects such as this. With your support, the siting board may break its record of rubber-stamping projects and instead appropriately consider current needs assessment as well as environmental and community costs that would result if this unnecessary project went forward.

Together, we can find a solution that addresses electric grid issues without visiting long term harm upon the environment and our community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Respectfully,

Your Name   
Street Address  
Sudbury, MA 01776