

Good evening Commissioners and Staff,

My name is Sandra Howard and I am the co-founder and director of Say NO to NECEC, a grassroots non-profit organization representing thousands of citizens who oppose the CMP corridor. Since 1997, I have worked as an outdoor educator and as a Registered Maine Whitewater and Recreation Guide. I spend every summer living at my family's property in Caratunk.

The majority of Mainers oppose this project according to the recent NRCM state-wide poll and as evidenced by public comments submitted to approval agencies. As a follow up to this testimony, I will submit 11,762 signatures by those who signed the Stop the Corridor petition.

The public is here to demand that the DEP and LUPC prioritize protecting Maine's environment and not this for-profit industrial project.

NECEC will not enhance or protect Maine's environment.

As you are aware, Segment 1 of the proposed corridor has no large-scale infrastructure development and is considered to be one of the last intact, contiguous forests in North America. Throughout CMP's application and public marketing propaganda, they want you to believe the working forests have decimated the entire landscape, however the truth is the State of Maine works carefully with landowners to manage forests, and these areas grow back! A cleared corridor would be incompatible with the existing landscape, result in a devastating habitat fragmentation, and cause a permanent bisection of this wilderness leaving a massive scenic interruption. Industry standard is to *bury* HDVC lines.

This is Maine's brand!

NECEC will not improve wildlife habitat or protect concerned, threatened, or endangered species.

The cleared corridor will not protect Maine Heritage Waters, keep stream temperatures from rising, or support the last stronghold of native brook trout habitat.

It will not improve recreational tourism experiences in western Maine.

Members of the public have many questions –

Why did CMP not use the existing corridor from the Quebec border to The Forks for the expanded, 100-foot tall towers?

Why did CMP not include a buried line for the 53.5 miles beyond the burial under a Class A Kennebec River? Did they prioritize their own profits over minimizing impacts?

Why isn't an independent climate analysis being conducted on this proposal?

Why did CMP quietly court towns and not include the public in these plans two years ago? Were they afraid that the project would not be supported? Well, they were correct, and now not a single town along the new corridor supports the project and additional towns are in conversation about rescinding support.

Another question is why is CMP allowed to provide funds to form a non-profit organization, Western Mountains & Rivers Corporation, and use funds to pay for their legal counsel in Group 7 of these proceedings? It appears that the applicant is trying to stack the deck of supporters! (See WMRC MOU, pg. 1, Background Section, Item #1)

To date, there is no grassroots group that SUPPORTS NECEC. Testimonies in support of the corridor are by those who stand to financially gain if the project is approved. We ask the DEP and LUPC to deny these permits and act as good stewards of Maine's environment, wildlife habitat, waterways, and maintain Maine's wild and scenic brand.

Sandra Howard  
153 Main Street  
Caratunk, Maine  
603-475-4566  
sandrahowardnh@gmail.com