

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

October 24, 2019

The Honorable Rick Perry  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave S.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20314

Dear Secretary Perry and Lieutenant General Semonite:

I write to request clarification on the environmental review process and on the process to acquire permits required from your respective agencies for the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC).

The NECEC project is a proposed 145-mile transmission line that would bring Canadian hydropower onto the New England power grid. Central Maine Power Company (CMP) has applied for a Presidential Permit through the Department of Energy (DOE) to construct, operate, maintain, and connect an electric transmission line across the United States border with Canada. Further, CMP has applied to receive a permit to conduct work in waters of the United States through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

My constituents have raised questions about the differences surrounding implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, specifically as it concerns the NECEC project and the Northern Pass transmission that was proposed to run through New Hampshire. As such, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Please explain the difference in the NEPA review process between the Northern Pass project in New Hampshire and the NECEC project in Maine.
2. What determines which federal agency is designated to lead the NEPA process for a transmission project that crosses the U.S.-Canada border?
3. Please explain the process in which your agencies conduct work with other relevant federal agencies to complete the NEPA process.
4. Are permits and approval from the state of Maine required before the DOE may issue a Presidential Permit? Are permits and approval from the state of Maine required before the U.S. Army Corps may issue a permit surrounding work in waters of the United States?

I appreciate your attention to this important matter and request a response to these questions no later than November 8. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or have your staff contact Kayla McMurphy in my office at 202-224-2523.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan M. Collins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M".

Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator