

From: [Tony Donovan](#)
To: [DEP, NECEC](#)
Subject: Comments in Support of New England Clean Energy Connect (attached and below)
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 3:55:10 PM
Attachments: [MRTC Comments to DEP on NECEC March 2020.pdf](#)

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To: *Jim Beyer, Bureau of Land Resources*
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0017
Email NECEC.DEP@maine.gov
207-287-7688 207- 446-9026

From: *Maine Rail Transit Coalition*
Anthony J. Donovan, Managing Director

Date: *April 6, 2020*

Re: *Comments in Support of **New England Clean Energy Connect Central Maine Power Transmission Line Construction Site Location of Development, Natural Resources Protection Act and Water Quality Certification Applications***
In the Matter of *Central Maine Power Company's New England Clean Energy Connect Project Natural Resources Protection Act and Site Location of Development Act Applications, please consider the following comments in support.*

Position Statement:

My name is Tony Donovan. In August 2019 I ended my affiliation with the Sierra Club after serving 12 years in leadership and for the past 4 years as chairperson of the Sierra Club Maine Chapter executive committee. Although my membership with this most respected organization has ended, I remain a life-long environmentalist and advocate for clean energy. I oppose fossil fuel use, extraction, production and transmission. I support Hydro-Québec and the current proposal for a transmission line for hydropower from Canada to Lewiston Maine. The number One criteria in determining approval of the NECEC, or any energy project, must be its impact on the Climate and Climate Change. Only after a through review of alternatives it is clear we must allow this energy into the New England energy grid.

Please Consider:

During my 12 years in leadership with Sierra Club NY billionaire Michael Bloomberg donated \$50 million to the Club for the purpose of shutting down coal-fired electrical generating plants nationwide. The Sierra Club "Beyond Coal" campaign led to the closure of coal-fired power-generation plants across the country. But a replacement source was needed to fuel electric utility

plants. The environmental community, including the Sierra Club turned to “natural” gas as a “clean” alternative.

The problem is natural gas is anything but clean, and far from natural. Extraction of the gas is now recognized as one of the most serious impacts on the environment ever. The gas is 90% methane, the rest being ethane, propane and/or butane. The stuff that gets to your home “is almost pure **methane**.” Gas is extracted from the earth through hydro-fracking, a method that is polluting the land and water, causing earthquakes everywhere it is employed, with poisonous runoff killing livestock and agriculture. Fracked Methane Gas is transported through pipelines that destroy the natural landscape in their construction. And, the pipes are leaking methane: minor leaks that can be detected on every street in America, and major leaks that cause invisible blooms that are poisoning all the area around them. Or they actually explode, causing property damage and human deaths.

In December 2015 I attended a 3-day retreat with Northeast Chapters of the Sierra Club to learn about pipelines and to plan a strategy for stopping the energy industry initiative to move massive amounts of gas extracted from the Marcellus Shale fracking operations in northeastern Pennsylvania via pipelines into New England. Industry estimates 1.9 trillion cubic feet can be extracted from this Pennsylvania location. The Northeast United States is a prime market for selling this gas for home heating and fueling electric power utility plants. Of the various pipelines in place or planned, two were the targets of this NE group of environmental activists, the **Constitution** and the **Algonquin**.

In comparison to the Hydro-Quebec NECEC Transmission corridor, the Constitution Pipeline alone would require the clearing of 1,872 acres of land, including the destruction of approximately 700,000 trees on 1,034 acres of forest. The pipeline would cross 289 bodies of water, most of them cold-water trout streams, and impact over 95 acres of wetlands, of which 34 acres are irreplaceable forested wetlands. Additionally, over 35 miles of the proposed route are located on steep slopes, and 45.5 miles are over shallow bedrock. The proposed route is located in an area that has experienced the devastation of extreme storms causing extensive flooding. As a result of these extreme weather events, the potential water quality impacts of the pipeline were very real.

Permits were needed from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). In order to receive the FERC permits, the pipeline owners had to show demand as part of the Public Needs Assessment. That demand came in the form of New England power plants that were being built and converted to gas to take advantage of this new “clean” form of fuel for electric energy production. Contracts were signed for the gas between the pipeline owners and the power plant owners. However, the power plant owners and the pipeline owners were most often the same companies, or subsidiaries thereof.

The Constitution Pipeline was the main route for the gas into New England. It was to connect with the Algonquin Pipeline that serves southern New England, through Connecticut to Dracut Massachusetts. In Maine the **Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline**, opened in 1999, exports gas from Sable Island, offshore of New Brunswick CA, through to the US markets. The pipeline can flow bi-directional. Sable Island gas is now in decline; since 2015 this pipeline has been reversed and is primarily an importer of fracked gas from the US to Canada. The reversal mechanism is in Dracut,

Massachusetts.

We learned in our retreat that the real markets for gas from Pennsylvania was Canada. Not only to the distribution system in place in the provinces, but to the country's largest energy corporation and its Liquefied Natural Gas facility in New Brunswick for export through its off-shore Cana Port Terminal.

That was going to be done by connecting the Constitution to the Algonquin at the Dracut Mass switching station, while fueling electric utility plants along the way and reversing the flow of the Maritimes Northeast Pipeline shipping gas back through Maine to Canada.

Sierra Club advocacy was a lead in the denial of permits for the Constitution Pipeline and this plan. Legal challenges caused delays, prices fluctuated, sponsor partners went away, and the political landscaped changed under the Obama administration Clean Power Plan.

So, there you have it. The benefits of fracked methane gas accumulate to the fossil fuel industry, while consumers benefit from lower heating and electric costs. Power plants throughout the Northeast, New England and Massachusetts need the gas for fuel. Problem is that the gas is methane, the number one polluter and cause of global climate change. And the pipelines were stopped.

Without this gas, how is industry in New England going to get its electricity? How are we going to fuel those power plants? How are electric car advocates going to change transportation? How are we going to get electricity into our homes and businesses? How can I keep my phone charged?

In August 2019 the Trump administration overrode the state of NY license denial and gave the go-ahead for the Constitution Pipeline. Fossil fuels to the rescue. Fracked Methane Gas is about to pour into the Northeast.

But there is still a way to stop the gas and the toll it will take on Climate. The State of Massachusetts took the lead and passed laws saying their state needed to be free of fossil fuels by 2040. Massachusetts contracted with the Canadian Hydro-Québec for enough hydropower to power two million homes and businesses. Hydro-Québec in turn offered the state of Maine \$250 million dollars over the life of the contract and a direct power connection from Hydro-Québec to Lewiston Maine, in return for a 300' wide 150-mile transmission corridor through the state.

Opponents to the transmission line corridor are waging a very effective campaign against this plan.

We need to make an energy choice. *A sacrifice needs to be made. Either allow methane gas in pipelines to flow into and through New England to power our needs, destroy our landscape and burn in our air. Or allow existing industrial hydro-dams to generate the power with energy that does not release carbon and burn methane, and in fact is clean energy.*

In a consensus agreement by the Maine Rail Transit Coalition we are in support of the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) based on the fact that hydro power is not a contributor to Climate Change – the biggest threat to earth in history.

- To those who say we must go solar, I respond show me the project, not the idea. The Climate will not wait.*

- *To those who say we must go wind, I say Maine's former governor stopped offshore wind and many Maine residents opposed to a transmission line are also rabidly opposed to windmills.*
- *To those who say we should go small-scale grids with no long-distance transmission lines, I say educate yourself on the nation's power grid. There is not much power that is local. As stated above, show where this can work and when it can be done. The Climate is not waiting.*
- *To those who say Hydro is dirtier than fossil fuels I say the facts are against you.*
- *To those who say Hydro-Québec "might" now sell dirty fuel to other customers, I say well then, you'd best keep a regulatory eye on them. But don't turn down this additional source of alternative energy.*
- *To those who claim indigenous rights are being stolen and lifestyles lost, I sympathize, but 1st Nation leaders came to terms with that issue in treaties, compensation and land 40 years ago, long before I was involved.*
- *To those who claim the transmission corridor is ruining pristine forests, I point you to the alternative of pipelines or mountaintop wind turbines. Or worse yet, if you believe a 150-mile corridor is going to ruin the north woods, wait until you see what burning massive amounts of methane does to all of us.*
- *And to those of you who say we need to change how we live and consume; I am 100% with you. But few if anyone can afford to stop how we live, work and enjoy our liberties.*

I am, Tony Donovan, Former Chairperson Sierra Club Maine

Current Director of the Maine Rail Transit Coalition –

Supporting a clean transportation future and working hard for electric trains.

Anthony J. Donovan

Anthony J. Donovan, Director
Maine Rail Transit Coalition
84 Middle St. Portland, Me. 04101
(207) 329-6732 Mobile
Mailto: MElikesRail@gmail.com

Train Time

End

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT

From: [Matt Manahan](#)
To: [DEP, NECEC](#)
Subject: RE: Comments in Support of New England Clean Energy Connect (attached and below)
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 10:11:25 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Nice. Thanks Jim.

Matthew D. Manahan	
PIERCE ATWOOD LLP	PH 207.791.1189

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From: DEP, NECEC <NECEC.DEP@maine.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 9:30 AM
To: Matt Manahan <mmanahan@pierceatwood.com>
Subject: FW: Comments in Support of New England Clean Energy Connect (attached and below)

*****This message originated outside your organization*****

Matt,
Here is an interesting one

James R. Beyer
Regional Licensing and Compliance Manager
Bureau of Land Resources
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
(207) 446-9026
www.maine.gov/dep

From: Tony Donovan <melikesrail@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2020 3:55 PM
To: DEP, NECEC <NECEC.DEP@maine.gov>
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*Maine **Department of Environmental Protection**
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Current Director of the Maine Rail Transit Coalition –

Supporting a clean transportation future and working hard for electric trains.

Anthony J. Donovan

Anthony J. Donovan, Director
Maine Rail Transit Coalition
84 Middle St. Portland, Me. 04101
(207) 329-6732 Mobile
Mailto: MElikesRail@Gmail.com

Train Time

End

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT

From: [Kelly Dexter](#)
To: [DEP, NECEC](#)
Subject: I FULLY SUPPORT NECEC!
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 6:05:54 PM

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