

Environmental Impact Assessment – Addendum 1

July 28, 2015

In March 2015, the Pipeline Environmental Impact Assessment Committee (Committee) of the Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC) submitted a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) at the request of the Town of Amherst (Town) Board of Selectmen (BOS) regarding the Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline proposed by Kinder Morgan (KM) in December 2014 (original proposal). In subsequent months, representatives of Kinder Morgan and the BOS's Pipeline Task Force (Task Force) discussed alternatives for the alignment through the Town.

In June 2015, KM presented three (3) options for alternative alignments (Attachment 1). Option 1 tracks the same alignment of the original proposal for the first portion of the pipeline through the Town, from the Milford Town Line to Hertzka Lane, then the alignment diverges to the east, adjacent to the Pan Am Railway Right-of-Way (ROW), crossing sixteen (16) properties abutting the railroad to the south. Option 2 diverges from the original proposal in the Town to the west of Rt. 122 in Amherst, traveling northwest back into Milford and the Rt. 101A/Rt. 101 interchange, then northward in the east side of the Rt. 101 Right-of-Way, underneath the Souhegan River (River), crossing Merrimack Road and Rt. 122, then northeastward, crossing Beaver Brook, Corduroy Road, Boston Post Road, Meadow Road, between Ravine Road and Storybrook Lane, then following County Road to the south of the pavement southeastward into the Town of Merrimack, where it would subsequently cross under the River again. Option 3 diverges from the original proposal in Milford west of Federal Hill Road, traveling north to the Rt. 101 Right-of-Way, meeting Option 2 at the Rt. 101A/Rt. 101 interchange for the duration of the alignment in the Town. Based on a variety of parameters including the avoidance of waterways, the Task Force has decided that Option 1 would be preferable to either the original proposal, Option 2, or Option 3.

The Task Force has asked the Committee to provide a preliminary environmental assessment addendum for Option 1. Given that Option 1 does not address issues with properties on the first portion of the alignment (adjacent to Rt. 122), the Task Force has asked that the current assessment include one of three alternative alignments proposed by Alice and Kenneth J. Bury on February 27, 2015 in a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which is attached as Attachment 2. Based on the Bury's "Summary of Pipeline Routing Alternatives", the Committee selected Alternative #2, which diverges from KM's original proposal west of Rt. 122 in Amherst, traveling southeast rather than northeast (as in the original proposal), then eastward parallel to the original proposal by approximately 600 feet to the south, reconnecting with the original proposal at Hertzka Lane.

The combination of the Bury's Alternative #2 and KM's Option 1 constitutes the alignment assessed in this addendum.

The total length of the original proposal is approximately 18,500 linear feet (LF) in the Town; this assessment is reviewing an alignment of approximately 12,500 LF (67%).

The format of this addendum will follow the initial PEA and correspond to the sections therein.

2.1 Land Use

The proposed Alternative #2/Option 1 alignment, by principally paralleling the ROW, crosses or abuts primarily vacant, commercial, and/or industrial land uses along most of its path. Otherwise, only one utility and three residential parcels abut this alignment option. Unlike the original proposal, no school, conservation, or recreational land uses are encountered.

2.2 Water Resources

The Alternative #2/Option 1 alignment does not encounter any surface waters in the Town. This alignment does traverse the highest yielding portion of the underlying aquifer in the properties adjacent to the ROW. The alignment passes adjacent (within 200 feet) to four (4) public water supply wells and over three (3) wellhead protection areas, one of which is for the supply wells of the Merrimack Village Water District, according to the Town of Amherst Environmental Features map prepared by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. Given the local geology, it is not envisioned that blasting would be required to place the pipe in this area, minimizing the disturbance to wells from excavation, although dewatering activities may require lowering localized groundwater elevations. Blasting may still be required to the west along the properties on or adjacent to Federal Hill; impacts to groundwater resources would require significant hydrogeologic investigation.

2.3 Habitat and Species

The Alternative #2/Option 1 alignment is restricted principally to commercial and industrial properties and, consequently, impacts significantly less highly ranked wildlife habitat when compared to the original proposal. Alternative #2/Option 1 traverses only one parcel (a 22-acre parcel abutting the rail ROW along Howe Ave.) that is highly ranked for ecological values, listed as Appalachian oak-pine by the New Hampshire Fish and Game, although it appears that this area has been cleared subsequent to the most recently available aerial photography. Potential impacts to terrestrial and aquatic species and their associated habitats are expected to be significantly less than the original proposal since the Ponemah Bog and Souhegan River environments are avoided.

2.4 Wetlands

The Alternative #2/Option 1 alignment may encounter two small wetlands on Tax Map Parcel 2-26-4, which are listed as 0.32 and 0.44 acres and classified as freshwater forested/shrub wetlands.

2.5 Geology and Soils

The bedrock and surficial geology of the Amherst area remain as described in the original Preliminary Environmental Assessment report. Option 1 traverses Glacial Lake Merrimack deposits (sands and gravels) along its entire length through Amherst. No blasting would likely be required due to the depth to bedrock. There are no agricultural soils along this alignment as compared with the original proposal.

2.6 Visual Resources

Impacts to visual resources are anticipated to be less along Option 1 as the area is already principally developed for commercial and industrial use resulting in fewer existing trees and impacted viewsapes. Visual impacts along the Alternative #2 alignment also would be reduced as the alignment is shifted away from previously developed residential properties and an existing roadway to previously undeveloped areas.

2.7 Recreation

None of the recreational impacts identified along the originally proposed pipeline route are anticipated to occur along Alternative #2/Option 1 since the River and Ponemah Bog are avoided by this alignment.

2.8 Public Health

It is not anticipated that the types of public health impacts from the alignment covered under the assessed alignment would differ significantly from the original proposal; however, since the length of this alignment is 67% of the original proposal, it is anticipated that the quantity of the public health impacts would be less.

One specific area in which it is believed that the impacts would be significantly reduced is in terms of noise from blasting; due to the re-alignment of the western portion of the pipeline to the south of the existing Eversource powerline right-of-way, a bedrock formation upon which the Pennichuck Bon Terrain water tank sits, will be avoided, potentially reducing the amount of blasting required for excavation and installation.

2.9 Hazardous Materials

As the alignment covered under this addendum is passing through additional commercial properties including those adjacent to the ROW, it is anticipated that the excavation of soils may encounter additional unknown materials. Hazardous materials expected in association with railroad rights-of-way include creosote (from railroad ties), diesel hydrocarbons, and any material transported along the ROW. As in the original PEA, the Town should ascertain that KM verify the presence of subsurface materials during their due diligence period and prior to full-scale excavation and pipe installation.

2.10 Air Quality

It is not anticipated that the types of air quality impacts from the alignment covered under the assessed alignment would differ significantly from the original proposal; however, since the length of this alignment is 67% of the original proposal, it is anticipated that the quantity of the air pollution impacts would be less.

Summary

It is anticipated that the overall environmental impacts from the Alternative #2/Option 1 alignment would be lessened as a result of the reduced length of the pipeline. Additionally, the realignment of the pipeline through more commercial and industrial properties adjacent to the ROW and the avoidance of many environmental features such as Ponemah Bog, unnamed wetlands, and the Souhegan River would result in alleviated environmental impacts.

It is possible that excavating soils adjacent to the ROW may disturb additional hazardous materials; however, as these potential contaminants exist in a commercial/industrial area, any remedial actions required would be less disruptive to daily activities and would present less of a health risk due to potential exposure durations during remediation than if it were to occur on residential properties.