

**Vermont Division for Historic Preservation  
Agency of Commerce and Community Development**

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August 11, 2015

Brian Mills  
Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE-20)  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20585

**Re: VT SHPO Comments on the New England Clean Power Link (NECPL) Transmission Line Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Grand Isle, Chittenden, Addison, Rutland, and Windsor Counties, Vermont. U.S. Department of Energy DOE/EIS-0503.**

Dear Mr. Mills:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. The following comments will assist the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in their review responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) is providing the DOE with the following comments pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4, regulations established by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Project review consists of identifying the project's potential impacts to historic buildings, structures, historic districts, historic landscapes and settings, and known or potential archeological resources.

The VDHP generally concurs with cultural resource summaries presented in the NECPL DEIS and subsequent actions referenced to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. By way of this letter, the Vermont SHPO is also formally acknowledging initiation of Section 106 consultation on the NECPL project as indicated in the your letter of February 6, 2015, and continued during a consultation meeting held in Montpelier, Vermont on July 16, 2015 with you, Ms. Kelly Schaeffer from the Kleinschmidt Group, and VDHP staff.

As you know, the VDHP has been working closely with Champlain VT, LLC doing business as TDI-New England (TDI-NE) since December 2013 under Section 248, a state regulatory review process administered by the Vermont Public Service Board. The VDHP has reviewed and concurred with the following cultural resource reports: *Phase IA Archaeological Assessment in Support of the New England Clean Power Link Project-Lake Portion: Grand Isle County, Chittenden County, Addison County, and Rutland County (November 2014)* produced by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum; *Phase IA Archaeological Resource Survey, New England Clean Power Link Project-Overland Portion: Windsor, Rutland, and Grand Isle Counties in Vermont (November 2014)*, and *Historical Reconnaissance Survey, New England Clean Power Link Project-Overland Portion: Windsor, Rutland, and Grand Isle Counties in Vermont (November 2014)*, produced by the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. These reports form the basis of testimony provided to the PSB under the Section 248 process and serve a similar function underpinning the cultural resource sections of the NECPL DEIS.

The VDHP is continuing to work with TDI-NE under the Section 248 process and signed a stipulation between TDI-NE, Vermont Public Service Department, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on July 17, 2011 which will essentially function as an agreement document under any Certificate of Public Good granted by the



PSB. Attachment III of the stipulation contains six general conditions and seven conditions specific to underwater or terrestrial historic resources dictating treatment of known or potential historic properties that could be affected by the NECPL project. The VDHP understands that similar conditions will be developed between the consulting parties for the Section 106 process and presented in the agreement documents such as the Programmatic Agreement (PA) and Cultural Resource Management Plan referenced in the DEIS.

Several minor points regarding the Area of Potential Effect (APE) definition presented in your April 16, 2015 letter and the DEIS, as well as the identification and expected mitigation of adverse effects bear mention. The definition of a 50 ft. corridor centered on the transmission line as the APE for both direct and indirect effects along the terrestrial segment does not seem to be sufficient in all cases. Current engineering documents indicate that laydown/staging areas exceeding this width do occur along the alignment. In addition, the VDHP has asked TDI-NE for a blasting plan so that potential direct/indirect effects to standing historic properties at greater distances from the corridor can be adequately addressed. For the underwater segment, TDI-NE has agreed to provide any additional mapping or remote sensing data derived from engineering and design work along the corridor to its underwater consultant to maximize site identification beyond the currently defined underwater resources. Finally, any direct adverse effects through use, modification, or sale of the National Register eligible Fullam and Mott residential structures under TDI-NE ownership in Alburgh and Ludlow will need to be addressed.

The VDHP notes that DEIS contains multiple references for additional consultation to resolve issues such as the above and present more detailed analysis in the final EIS. We look forward to continued interaction on developing appropriate Section 106 agreement documents with the consulting parties, including comments on the draft PA later this month. Thank you for your cooperation in protecting Vermont's irreplaceable historic and archeological heritage. R. Scott Dillon reviewed this project and prepared this letter. I concur with the findings and conclusions described above.

Sincerely:  
VERMONT DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Laura V. Trieschmann  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Kelly Schaeffer, Kleinschmidt Group

