

## EVERSOURCE X178-2 PROJECT

The following is a summary of anticipated changes to the appearance of the landscape and environmental impacts in the Town of Easton based on the proposed construction of the X178-2 Project. A permanent road bed, removal of existing wooden structures, the construction of new steel structures with upgraded 4X capacity and installation of new communication lines are in the planning stages. The Plans were submitted by GZA Environmental for Eversource Energy on Dec.21, 2023 for public comment.

The 7 mile long project will be conducted and permitted in 2 phases: the Easton private land phase first and the WMNF phase later as permitting allows.

The anticipated environmental impacts both short and long term are what the ECC is looking at here;

The Town of Easton construction project portion is 7 miles in length.

A new permanent gravel road bed is proposed. Using the given maps delineating transmission towers and roadbed specifications the following calculations are summarized below;

- The excavation of existing top soils being removed for the proposed road bed will cover 591,360' square feet based on the 7 mile long by 16' wide road bed.
- This represents 13.575 acres of surface area being disturbed and converted from native top soils into a permanent compacted Vermont quarry stone road bed. This area does not include the passing zones, turn around spurs etc. The staging areas on each section of road for parking excavators, dozers, staging and storing the old transmission line debris would push this up over 15 acres.
- The compaction rate is estimated at a maximum density 95% ( gravel road bed specifications) density of the compacted roadbed. This conversion will alter infiltration rates, water retention, erosion, sedimentation and flooding risks.
- This road building construction project equates to approx. 16,500 cubic yards of 3/4" ledge pack and 3" rip rap stone material requiring 1,100 X 15 cubic yard tri-axle dump truckloads of materials to be used in the 9" deep quarry stone road bed. It will be crushed, loaded and hauled 19 miles (38 mile round trip) from the Bible Hill quarry in Wells River Vt.
- The carbon emissions from diesel trucks traveling over 41,800 miles for loading and trucking deliveries should be calculated into the overall environmental cost of the project.

The air pollution, dust, noise pollution (decibel levels) and increased traffic on 116 in Easton during construction will be considerable.

It is known that fragmentation occurs when new permanent road beds are constructed across large unspoiled roadless areas and are known to have negative consequences for large migratory mammals including the endangered Canadian Lynx. The Lynx's known territory may reach as far south as this unpopulated region of the WMNF and will require more data and follow up by the ECC to confirm. Research for determining where undisturbed wildlife corridors for eco system preservation is needed for a project of the scope

The visual impacts on the view shed when changing from wooden support structures to larger and higher steel structures would change the aesthetic of the valley to a more industrialized landscape.

In summary we are looking at impacts in Easton Valley on construction period of air pollution, noise pollution and wetland ecosystem disturbances as well as long term water quality, and aesthetic metrics.

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