



For Immediate Release
August 16, 2024

Public Consumer Advocates Vigorously Object to Eversource NH Project

Consumer Advocates of New England (CANE), an informal organization representing the statutorily designated ratepayer advocates of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, today lodged its concerns with Eversource Energy regarding a transmission upgrade that Eversource has planned for one of its New Hampshire lines.

The 49-mile project in northern New Hampshire, named [X-178](#), could cost ratepayers in New England upwards of \$360 million.

Although the regional grid is a public asset, large transmission lines are owned by private owners, just like a local electric company owns neighborhood power lines.

The X-178 project is proposed as an “asset condition project,” where a transmission line owner replaces older, aging infrastructure with new poles and lines. Eversource sought input from stakeholders at the Planning Advisory Committee (“PAC”), which is facilitated through the regional grid manager, ISO-New England, explaining the need for the project and attempting to justify the costs it anticipates charging ratepayers once it completes the work.

Eversource and other transmission owners present their asset condition projects to attendees at PAC, but ultimately decisions about the scope of the project and how much it will charge the ratepayers for the improvements lie with the individual asset owner, in this case Eversource.

In a letter to Eversource, CANE urges the company to reconsider the project in New Hampshire. CANE joins the New England States Committee on Electricity (NESCOE), which represents state governments in regional electric matters, and which also sent [a letter](#) to Eversource outlining its concerns with the X-178 project earlier this month.

CANE also notes that should Eversource go forward with its plan to improve X-178 and spend \$360 million for the work, its members, who represent the majority of New England’s ratepayers, could challenge that charge before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Quote from Claire Coleman, Connecticut Consumer Counsel

Scrutinizing transmission costs to help prevent the region’s ratepayers from paying for unnecessary or overly expensive projects is a high priority for the OCC, and I am pleased to be collaborating with our

fellow New England consumer advocates to call attention to this concerning project. If Eversource moves forward with the X-178 project as it has proposed, working with my consumer advocate colleagues, we will do everything within our power to keep these costs out of New England ratepayers' electric bills.

*Contact: Paula Pineda (Paula.Pineda@ct.gov)
Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel*

Quote from William Harwood, Public Advocate, Maine

The X-178 project is ill-conceived. Eversource is proposing to spend more than \$360 million to replace a 49-mile transmission line. This includes 580 wooden poles between Campton and Whitefield, NH. However, according to its own research, only 41 poles need replacement. If this project is built, Maine's share will be approximately \$32 million, increasing the financial burden on many Maine ratepayers struggling to pay their electricity bills. I urge Eversource to reconsider its proposal.

*Contact: William Harwood (William.Harwood@maine.gov)
Maine Public Advocate*

Quote from Liz Anderson, Chief, Energy & Ratepayer Advocacy Division, Massachusetts Office of Attorney General

The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office is dedicated to advocating for an affordable and equitable clean energy transition. Investments in our energy grid need to be made in the most cost-effective way possible to keep bills manageable for the region's consumers. Eversource has been unable, or unwilling, to demonstrate that the X-178 project is cost-effective. The MA AGO joins with its fellow consumer advocates in New England to call on Eversource to engage with stakeholders in a more meaningful and robust manner before pursuing this project.

*Contact: Sydney Heiberger (Sydney.Heiberger@mass.gov)
Press Secretary, Massachusetts Office of Attorney General*

Quote from Donald Kreis, Consumer Advocate, New Hampshire

Affordable electricity is one of our top public policy priorities in New Hampshire, so it is especially regrettable that Eversource is trying to make a project in our state the poster child for unconstrained spending on so-called asset condition transmission projects. I'm proud to join my counterparts from around the region in opposing efforts to gold-plate the transmission grid and send the bill to everyone in New England.

*Contact: Don Kreis (Donald.M.Kreis@oca.nh.gov)
Consumer Advocate, State of New Hampshire*

Quote from Linda George, Administrator, Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers

The RI Division of Public Utilities and Carriers is committed to affordable electricity, not only in the short term, but with the goal of maintaining sustainable costs that will facilitate the electrification needed to meet state and regional environmental goals. Over the years, Rhode Island has closely scrutinized the region's major electric transmission projects that present significant and detrimental costs to ratepayers. In

this context, the X-178 project, as proposed, represents an excessive overbuild with correspondingly excessive ratepayer costs.

*Contact: Thomas Kogut (thomas.kogut@dpuc.ri.gov)
RI Division of Public Utilities and Carriers*