

COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS
ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD



<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/warwick-to-sterling-replacement-project>

NOTICE OF ADJUDICATION
AND PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

EFSB 23-02/D.P.U. 23-45 - New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid A1/B2 Refurbishment: Warwick to Sterling Transmission Replacement Project

Project Summary and Public Comment Hearing Overview

New England Power Company, doing business as National Grid (“National Grid” or the “Company”) proposes to replace an existing double circuit transmission line, tap lines, and structures with a new double circuit overhead transmission line, tap lines, and structures in an existing transmission corridor in Warwick, Royalston, Athol, Winchendon, Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Sterling, Massachusetts (the “Project”). The Project would be capable of operating at 115 kilovolts (“kV”), although it would initially operate at 69 kV, as does the existing line. A description and map of the Project is provided below.

The Siting Board will conduct three public comment hearings with both in person and remote participation options:

**Wednesday April 10, 2024,
at 1:00 PM**

**Athol Public Library
Program Room
568 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331**

**Wednesday April 10, 2024,
at 6:30 PM**

**Mount Wachusett
Community College
North Cafeteria
444 Green Street
Gardner, MA 01440**

**Thursday April 11, 2024,
at 6:30 PM**

**Fitchburg State University
Ellis White Lecture Hall
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg MA 01420**

Remote attendees: join by clicking (or entering) this link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87501780143> from a computer, tablet, or smart device. For audio-only participation, attendees can dial in at (646) 558-8656 (not a toll-free number) and then enter the **Webinar ID: 87501780143**.

To provide oral comments during the public comment hearings (in person or on Zoom), please send an email to Yonathan.Mengesh@mass.gov with your name, email address, mailing address, and specify which hearing location, by noon **April 9**. To provide comments by telephone, please leave a voicemail message referencing “EFSB 23-02” at (617) 305-3544 with your name, telephone number, mailing address, and specify which hearing date, by **noon April 9**. Pre-registered commenters will speak first, and other commenters afterwards.

The Siting Board also invites written comments on the Project. Written comments will be most useful to the Siting Board if submitted by **Friday April 26**.

Important Dates:	
Public Comment Hearings	April 10 & 11, 2024
Deadline to File Written Comments	April 26, 2024
Deadline to file for intervention/limited participant status	April 26, 2024

Public Comment Hearings

You are invited to a public comment hearing to learn more about the Project and provide comments on the proposed Project. To build the Project, National Grid needs approval from the Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board”), part of Massachusetts state government.

The Company will present an overview of the Project. Public officials and members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the proposed Project. The public comment hearing will be transcribed by a court reporter. A recording of the public comment hearing will be available on the [Siting Board’s YouTube](#) channel after the hearing.

Public Review of the Company’s Petition

A detailed description of the Project is electronically available via the Siting Board’s webpage for the Project: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/warwick-to-sterling-replacement-project>. In addition, links to the Company’s petitions, attachments, and analysis are on the webpage, and have been provided to the municipalities of Warwick, Royalston, Athol, Winchendon, Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Sterling. The Company also maintains a webpage for the Project: <https://www.newenglandalb2.com/>.

Hard copies of the Company’s petitions, including all attachments, are available for public inspection at the following locations:

Boston

- Energy Facilities Siting Board, One South Station, 3rd floor, Boston, MA 02110

Municipalities Directly Impacted

- Municipal/Clerk offices and main public libraries in Warwick, Royalston, Athol, Winchendon, Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Sterling

Warwick:
Clerk Office
12 Athol Rd
Warwick, MA 01378
Library
4 Hotel Rd
Warwick, MA 01378

Athol:
Clerk Office
584 Main St Ste 10
Athol, MA 0133
Library
568 Main St
Athol, MA 01331

Gardner:
Clerk Office
95 Pleasant St Rm 121
Gardner, MA 01440
Library
55 W Lynde St
Gardner, MA 01440

Royalston:
Clerk Office
5 School St
Royalston, MA 01368
Library
19 On The Cmn.
Royalston, MA 01368

Winchendon:
Clerk Office
109 Front St Ste 3
Winchendon, MA 01475
Library
50 Pleasant St
Winchendon, MA 01475

Westminster:
Clerk Office
11 South Street
Westminster, MA 01473
Library
118 Main St
Westminster, MA 01473

Fitchburg:
Clerk Office
166 Boulder Dr, Ste 108
Fitchburg, MA 01420
Library
610 Main St
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Leominster:
Clerk Office
25 W Street Room 5
Leominster, MA 01453
Library
30 West St
Leominster, MA 01453

Sterling:
Clerk Office
1 Park St
Sterling, MA 01564
Library
4 Meetinghouse Hill Rd
Sterling, MA 01564

Decision on the Project Proposal

The public comment hearing marks the beginning of an official, state-level decision-making process focused on whether the Project should be approved. The Siting Board will make the decision based on the following laws:

- 1) Under G.L. (Massachusetts General Law) c.(chapter) 164, § (section) 69J, the Siting Board will review the Company’s proposed Project to determine whether the Project will provide a reliable energy supply with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost.
- 2) Under G.L. c. 164, § 72, the Siting Board will determine whether the proposed Project is necessary, serves the public convenience, and is consistent with the public interest.

Intervention and Participation

Persons or groups who wish to be involved in the Siting Board proceeding, beyond providing comments at the public comment hearing or submitting written comments, may seek either to intervene as a party or to participate as a limited participant. A petition to intervene or participate must also be filed no later than April 26, 2024, and follow the instructions provided below.

“Intervenor” or “Party” Status: An **intervenor** can participate fully in the evidentiary phase of the proceeding, including the right to participate in evidentiary hearings, file a brief and present comments to the Siting Board on the Tentative Decision, and to appeal a Final Decision.

“Limited Participant” Status: A **limited participant** receives documents during the proceeding and may file a brief and present comments regarding the Tentative Decision to the Siting Board.

Any person seeking intervenor or limited participant status in this proceeding must file April 26, 2024. A petition to intervene must demonstrate that the petitioner may be substantially and specifically affected by this proceeding. See below for filing instructions. For more information on the Siting Board’s procedural rules, please see the following link:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/980-cmr-105/download>.

Filing Instructions

Written comments on the Project, or a petition to intervene or participate as a limited participant in this proceeding, must be filed in two places:

First, the comments or petition must be sent to the Siting Board by email - to dpu.efiling@mass.gov - AND to Connor.C.Tarr@mass.gov - no later than the close of business on April 26, 2024. The text of the e-mail must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (EFSB 23-02/D.P.U. 23-45); (2) the name of the person or entity submitting the filing; and (3) a brief description of the document. The email should also include the name, title, and telephone number of a person to contact in the event of questions about the filing.

Second, the comments or petition must be sent by email to counsel for the Company, Catherine J. Keuthen, Esq. at ckeuthen@keeganwerlin.com and David Waterfall, Esq. at David.Waterfall@nationalgrid.com.

Accommodation Requests

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities (e.g., Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format) are available upon request. Include a complete description of the accommodation you will need and a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please provide as much advance notice as possible. Last minute requests will be accepted, but we may be unable to fulfill the request. Please contact the Department’s ADA coordinator at Andrea.R.Casul@mass.gov.

Spanish interpretation will be provided for the public comment hearings. Additional language interpretation services are available upon request. Include in your request the language required and a way to contact you if we need more information. Requests may be made no later than April 1, 2024. It may not be possible to accommodate last-minute requests. Contact the Presiding Officer to make a request (contact information below).

Non-discrimination Notice

The EFSB does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, income, ethnicity, class, handicap, religious creed or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, English language proficiency or ancestry in administration of its programs or activities. See the EFSB's Non-Discrimination Notice at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-non-discrimination-notice>.

Contact

For further information about the proceeding, please contact the Presiding Officer at the address or telephone number below:

Connor C. Tarr, Presiding Officer
Energy Facilities Siting Board
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110
Connor.C.Tarr@mass.gov
(617) 305-3596

For periodic updates please visit the Siting Board's webpage for this proceeding found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/warwick-to-sterling-replacement-project>.

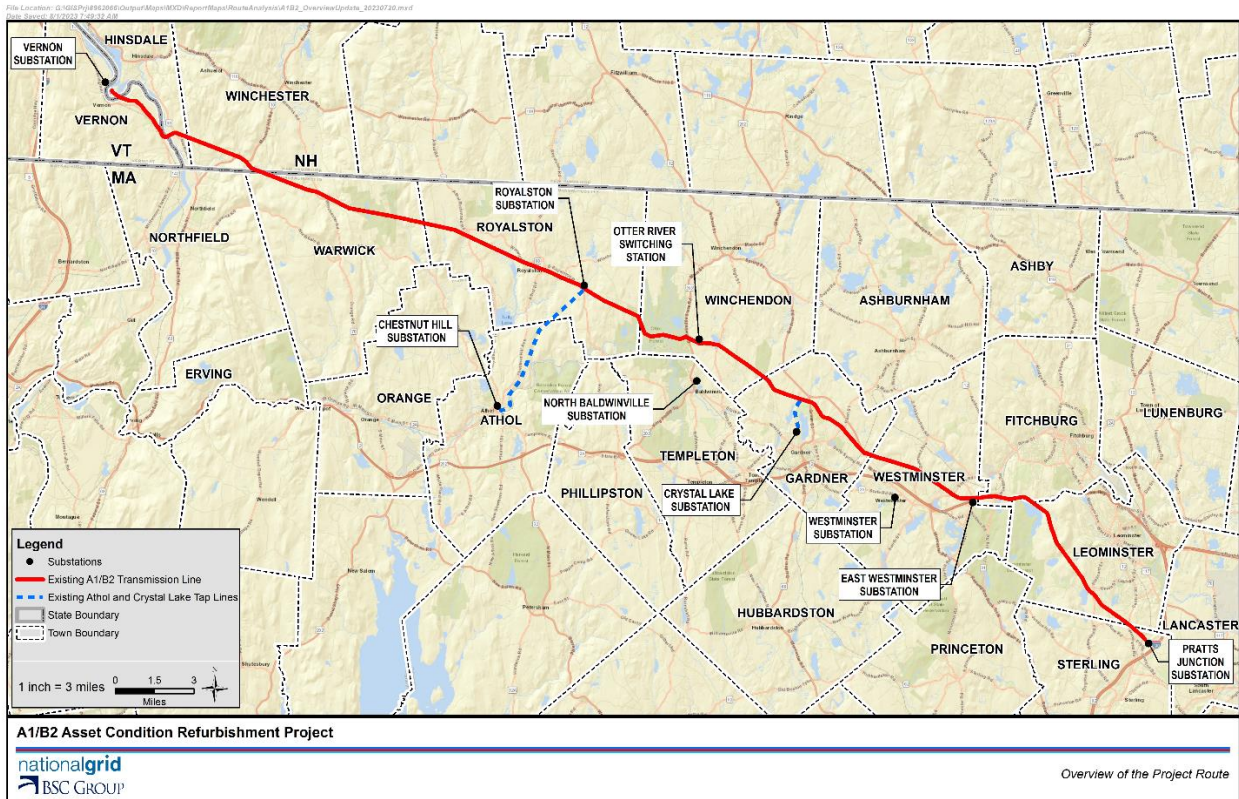
Project Description

The Company manages a transmission corridor ("ROW") containing existing transmission lines (officially known as the A1 and B2 transmission lines) that extends about 53 miles, beginning in Vernon, Vermont, then running through a small part of New Hampshire and into Warwick, Massachusetts. The ROW then continues through Royalston, Winchendon, Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and terminates at the Pratts Junction Substation, in Sterling Massachusetts. For the Massachusetts part of the ROW (about 47 miles long), the Company proposes to replace the lines and transmission structures that are holding up the lines ("Replacement Transmission Line"). The Company also proposes to replace two smaller transmission lines and associated structures that feed into the corridor: (1) a line beginning in Athol that connects to the corridor in neighboring Royalston; and (2) a line beginning and connecting in Gardner ("Replacement Taps"). Once the Replacement Transmission Line, Replacement Taps, and structures are constructed (collectively "Replacement Line"), National Grid will remove the old lines and structures. Examples of the existing structures and their replacements are available at:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/17423325>

The Company maintains that the Project is needed so that the Company can continue to: (1) meet regional demands for a reliable supply of electricity; and (2) support connection of increasing amounts of renewable energy in central and western Massachusetts, consistent with the Commonwealth's and region's carbon reduction targets. The Company asserts that the existing lines, originally built in 1909, are nearing the end of their lifespan, resulting in greater risk of service loss and power outages.

A general map of the Project area is shown below. An interactive map of the Project is available at the following link: <https://www.newenglandalb2.com/> (Click "CONTINUE AS GUEST" to view the map).



Route Description by Municipality

Warwick: The Replacement Line starts in Warwick, Massachusetts in the wooded area near Pauchaug Brook near the state border of Winchester, New Hampshire. The Replacement Line then continues southeast on the ROW, intersecting Parker Camp Road (an unpaved road) and Black Brook, before crossing Flower Hill Road and entering a residential/rural area. The Replacement Line continues along Winchester Road (Route 78) and intersects Old Winchester Road (an unpaved road). The Replacement Line then returns to forested areas through Warwick State Forest, past Kidder Brook and Richards Reservoir before passing Warwick Forestry Camp on Richmond Road, and finally intersecting Kelton Road and Raymond Rd.

Royalston: The Replacement Line passes through forested areas in Royalston State Forest before entering a residential/rural area, where it crosses Bliss Hill Road, Collar Brook, and Athol-Richmond Road (Route 32). The Replacement Line then passes over Tully River and Boyce Brook and continues parallel to Warwick Road. The Replacement Line continues parallel to Warwick Road, crossing Athol Road and Town Dump Road until the Royalston Fire Station. Then, the Replacement Line continues past Mill Yard Road and Lawrence Brook near Lawrence Brook Cemetery before crossing Main Street (Route 68) in a wooded area. The Replacement Line passes by the existing Royalston Substation. From there, the Replacement Line continues

over Beaver Brook, into residential/rural areas on Neale Road, Stockwell Brook, and Morse Road.

Winchendon: The Replacement Line continues southeast through rural areas in Otter River State Forest where it intersects with Swamp Road and Goodnow Road. Then, the Replacement Line intersects Swamp Road again before continuing over Middle Road and River Road crossing Millers River. The Replacement Line continues eastward, crossing New Boston Road, Main Street and Route 202, passing by a residential/rural area before passing the Otter River Substation. The Replacement Line then crosses into a residential/rural area near Baldwinville Road. The Replacement Line then continues through rural areas until it reaches an area with several residences near Town Farm Road before entering forested area belonging to Balley Brook Conservation.

Gardner: The Replacement Line continues past Bailey Brook and passes near several residences on Brookside Drive. From there it crosses rural lands and Wilder Brook before passing Gardner Switching Station, which is located next to Perley Brook. Then, the Replacement Line crosses Green Street where it passes near Faith Lutheran Church before crossing Kelton Street and continuing past a nearby cul-de-sac on MacLachlan Way, and Mount Wachusett Community College. The Replacement Line then continues southeast, passing several residences along Matthews Street and a neighborhood off of Ruby Road and Pearl Street before crossing Smith Street and Willis Road. The Replacement Line then enters an industrial area that contains an MBTA Railroad ROW, State Highway 140, and Royco Distributors Inc. on Colony Road.

Westminster: The Replacement Line enters a forested area in Westminster where it passes a body of water before crossing Overlook Road and the Westminster Switching Station. Continuing southeast, the Replacement Line enters a residential area and crosses Oakmont Avenue, Common Road and Town Farm Road, followed by more forested land. The Replacement Line approaches another residential area near State Highway 2A, followed by Willard Road and Turnpike Road before passing Fitchburg Welding Co., Inc. on Depot Road and East Westminster Switching Station,

Fitchburg: In Fitchburg, the Replacement Line runs parallel to and south of State Highway Route 2 until it intersects Princeton Road.

Leominster: The Replacement Line briefly crosses over to the northern side of State Highway 2 near Notown Reservoir before continuing south past residences on Mount Elam Road, and into the forested area of Nashua Valley, past Elm Street and “Leite’s Residence,” where it continues south through conservation areas before reaching a residential area on Wachusett Street near Fall Brook Reservoir. The Replacement Line then passes by the intersection of Hapgood Road and Pleasant Street in a residential area. Then, it continues south past Samoset Middle School, before entering another residential area near Samoset Drive and Willard Street. The Replacement Line continues by the LKQ Junkyard before crossing Central Street (Route 12).

Sterling: From Leominster, the Replacement Line crosses over commercial lots between Beverly Drive and Legate Hill Road before terminating at the Sterling Substation.

Athol Tap Lines: The Company proposes Replacement Taps in Athol that connect to the Replacement Transmission Line at the Royalston Switching Station south of the Royalston Substation #701 near S. Royalston Road. The Athol tap lines travel from Royalston southwest for six miles south to Athol near Chestnut Hill Road and connects to the Chestnut Hill Substation #702 near Main Street.

Crystal Lake Tap Lines: The Company also proposes Replacement Taps for the Crystal Lake tap lines which connects to the Replacement Transmission Line at the Gardner Switching Station west of Perley Brook. The Crystal Lake tap lines travel south for 1.2 miles and connects to the Crystal Lake Substation #610 in Gardner to the west of Crystal Lake, off Park Street.

Additional Unrelated Substation Work

National Grid will also be conducting work at several substations at locations along the Replacement Line that are related to the proposed Project, but not being proposed as part of the Project. This work includes upgrading or rebuilding the Royalston, Chestnut Hill, and Otter River Substations. The Company also has ongoing and planned work at the Pratts Junction Substation, Gardner Switching Station, and Westminster Switching Station.