



August 13, 2016

Dear Sirs:

I write this letter in support of the June 28, 2016 letter from Elizabeth A. Herland, Wildlife Refuge Manager for the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex (“the Refuge”), and as the President of the Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (“the Friends”). As an organization that works for the betterment and sustainability of the Refuge, we strongly oppose the plan for the new 115 kV above ground power line between Sudbury and Hudson. We believe that power lines should be installed underground along existing roadways so as to lessen the deleterious effects the lines will have on the Refuge, its wildlife, and its visitors.

The Friends is a non-profit organization of volunteers who work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to protect and enhance the Refuge’s flora and fauna. We engage community and other stake-holders to promote maximum use and enjoyment of the Refuge for the surrounding communities while balancing those benefits with the primary goal of protecting its natural resources. Through stewardship activities, education and outreach programs, the Friends work to ensure the Refuge’s valuable resources are available for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. On a monthly basis, the Friends reach out to over 200 members and another 10,000 non-members through emails, programs and seminars.

The Refuge is a remarkably prized resource to Eastern Massachusetts, and in particular to the surrounding communities of Maynard, Hudson, Marlboro, Stow, and Sudbury. These communities would be directly affected by the plan to cut the 82-foot wide transmission corridor along the MBTA abandoned rail line to accommodate large overhead towers and transmission lines. Residents of these and other nearby cities and towns are Friends members and volunteers who have spent years helping to clear and prepare the land to be a better sanctuary for native animals, birds, fish and over 650 plants species. They send their children to Refuge programs to learn about the environment, and to nurture and release endangered Blanding’s turtles back into the wild. The proposed corridor would disrupt the natural beauty of the Refuge and impact its plants and wildlife.

I wholeheartedly urge you to save the Refuge’s revived pristine beauty and habitat from the adverse effect of Eversource’s plan for overhead transmission lines by considering an underground alternative.

Sincerely,

Dave Manjarrez

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