Dear Jim Beyers,

We had met at a meeting in your offices earlier this summer and discussed some information and local issues that you might not have all the details on in The Forks area surrounding the NECEC powerline and its impacts in our area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on and inform you of some of the local issues surrounding NECEC transmission line. I tried to capture the core issues and explain them succinctly. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at any time. My phone number is 207-831-7373 or feel free to return email.

The local environmental position is that the NECEC powerline needs to prefer the overhead solution to cross the Kennebec Gorge. The vast majority and those that I spoke to in the local community feels that an overhead solution has the least environmental impact both short and long term. The underground solution has massive impact starting with a directional bore resulting in filings, slurry, and blasting. Permanent roads, redundant lines with cooling systems would also be part of an underground solution. These permanent roads would also give and encourage addition traffic and pressure to an area of the Kennebec Gorge that has never had it before. For these reasons the local community that I have correspond with prefers an overhead solution. The visual impacts are unfortunate but do out weight the damage created by an underground solution.

Western Mountain and Rivers Corporation has been formed with strong governance and representation. This organization represents all the local communities. Its board has town selectman, county commissioners, prominent business people, representation from business in the unorganized territories, state economic development people and is well grounded and connected to the public. Its mission is clear and its operation transparent. As you are aware I sit on its board. This letter is to give you my position on the issues discussed and from my position as the owner of Three Rivers and a prominent local employer and business person. I am sure that it will align with the intervention letter and position of the Western Mountains and Rivers Corporation but be in some more detail.

Planning and consulting are a large part of the Memorandum of Understanding and the operation of Western Mountains and Rivers. Central Maine Power has already contributed $250,000 to WMRC for the purpose of beginning this planning process. The MOU also contains an additional $50,000 per year to update and continue a tourism development plan to include marketing and infrastructure planning to achieve the communities long term goals.

The over head solution to cross the Kennebec has been discussed, argued about and negotiated for two years. The impact of an overhead solution is to be limited to the best possible extent by reducing the number of structures, reducing the height of these structures. No deforestation inside the gorge down to the rivers edge and the height of the conductors from the river will also help reduce the visual impacts. For these reasons myself, the WMRC and the local community feel that this is the better of the available solutions.

Central Maine Power has had long negotiations, discussions and consideration of the structure, visual impact, short and long-term revegetation through meetings and informational presentations with the community. We have also considered the effect on the rafting industries trip both short and long term, as well as timing of construction to minimize impact or interruption.

The purchase of local leases and adjacent lands for businesses in this region was put in the MOU with WMRC to clear the way for productive discussion and negotiation of a long-term agreement. The community did not want to have CMP in a position of power after the agreement to financially recoup mitigation funds through the increased lease fees of local businesses, so they agreed to sell at fair market value the commercial leases and adjacent lands to the businesses that held them. This also provides space for addition tourism and economic development in the area.

The lands portion of the MOU is also put in place to further conserve lands in the area for the purpose of maintaining a natural environment and esthetics required to help maintain the eco-tourism economy in the region.

CMP’S Gravel assets have been added to the WMRC MOU to help make the trails infrastructure offered in the MOU more valuable. These assets will greatly reduce the cost and construction of the existing and proposed local trail systems. Both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails realize these benefits. Ongoing maintenance is a huge expense in our recreational trail systems and this helps address that issue.

A Visitors Center is proposed in the WMRC MOU and will be a place where trails, rivers and communities come together. This space will be for meetings and community gathering space, trails maintenance and construction, equipment storage and maintenance work. It is proposed to have retail profit centers for shopping and recreation rentals. This visitors center will be a place near the confluence of these great rivers for the community, boaters, all river enthusiasts, the general public and community leaders to gather. It is an important part of the MOU.

Public and Commercial Access has been a destabilizing factor in our area. Private ownership of the roads to access the largest and most important natural assets of the area continues to be a massive threat. These assets and access include the Kennebec River, Indian Pond and The Dead Rivers. Outfitters currently pay $3 per person to access the Kennebec River but have been repeatedly threatened with an increase that could be triple or beyond. Outfitters in our area currently pay $13.50 per person to access The Dead River and that could go up at any time. These fees make it not profitable to operate river trips and create a huge barrier for the public to enjoy these resources. It is part of the MOU to gain access for the commercial and public interests in accessing these assets. This cures a long-term problem for our communities and will immediately assist in local economic development in the region.

Optical Ground Cable and expanded internet access is essential to the growth of our communities. This MOU and mitigation package includes the needed infrastructure to accomplish this goal. This goal could not be accomplished by our communities on their own. The financial investment needed to accomplish this goal and its impact on our local economy should not be underestimated. This is an important part of the mitigation package and the MOU is very important.

The possible overhead or underground solutions for the NECEC to cross the Kennebec River have been discussed and negotiated for a very long time now. We considered the option of Crossing at Harris station as well. WMRC understands the need for large amounts of renewable energy in the region. We will continue to do so for the life of this project and beyond.

The possibility of Crossing at Harris Station has been an ongoing discussion and seemed to be a viable solution in the beginning. This solution is no longer a viable option or solution. Many of the local governments, businesses, environmental interests and pubic groups are signed on a negotiated settlement for the FERC license at Harris Station. A crossing at Harris Station would necessitate a reopening of that license and would potentials devastate many other mitigation packages in place that enable our local economy to be successful now. This is compounded by an unwillingness of Brookfield Renewables LLC, owner at Harris Station, to discuss this solution due to competitive issues in these power markets.

The Rafting industry and our local economy have a long-standing relationship with the power producers in the region. These generation and transmission facilities provide for boating and fishing release schedules and are at the core of our local economy. Our guests and local people are relatively accustomed to transmission lines and facilities in the area. This is one of the reasons that WMRC and the local community feels that the mitigation offered for an overhead crossing solution is consistent with the damage created and the visual impacts of the crossing.

The Trail sites and tourism infrastructure amenities in the MOU have been carefully considered. They are not only in the package and plan to improve local amenities and activities, but more importantly to connect our community with all the other major tourism communities in the mountains of Maine, including but not limited to: Rangeley, Carrabassett Valley, Eustis, Jackman, Rockwood, Greenville, and out to the Mount Katahdin and Millinocket area. The trails and infrastructure in the MOU will improve connectivity and the tourism industry in the entire western mountains region and beyond.

At face value it seems that there is a large amount of money changing hands and might seem as a money grab for mitigation. The elements of the WMRC MOU have been considered, discussed and negotiated for 2 years. These mitigation funds and other elements in the MOU are a long-term investment intended to support and grow these communities for the life of the project and beyond. The planning and consideration that has gone into developing these amounts are not arbitrary and have been developed to accomplish both specific and potential goals of the regions and to support these communities. The WMRC is designed to represent the communities and a broad and complete fashion and operate in a completely stable and transparent way, that allows for public input and follows and economic development plan. It is the intension of the WMRC to invest these funds, find leverage and match for these funds that results in large scale benefit to these communities in perpetuity.

A charitable trust has been formed as and additional assurance and security to protect and monitor these funds to reduce any threat of fraud or misuse of funds. This has also been discussed for quite some time. The needed governance and oversight is in place for this to be successful.

WMRC has added clause to the MOU to ensure that it will be part of any discussion or negotiation for expansion of transmission facilities in this area to ensure that they will be properly mitigated and benefit the community.

I thank you for the consideration of this information in your decision-making process. I believe that this project is going to greatly benefit our community when it is all said and done. Please feel free to contact me with questions or for additional information.

Joseph Christopher

President

Three Rivers Whitewater Inc.

Inn By The River and

Kennebec Riverside Cabins