

Kirkland, April

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**From:** Andy Webb <andy@riverdrivers.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 05, 2019 7:59 AM  
**To:** DEP, NECEC; Hinkel, Bill  
**Subject:** Public comment concerning NECEC

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To: The Department of Environmental Protection and The Land Use Planning Commission

This letter is in response to an Editorial from the Bangor Daily News March 2, 2019 and perhaps other as well. Peggy Dwyer, an agent from Dirigo Partners (A Land acquisition firm employed by CMP to negotiate land for NECEC) In the article. She stated that the protesters was staging on town owned property donated by CMP.

For starters, that land "donated" by CMP was a conservation "bribe", if you will, from their Reliability Project several years ago. This deal was a Front Page-Shaking Hands with a Small Town Look What We Did Opportunity for CMP. This was excess land to be put into conservation to offset land used for an expansion of their pole lines in Southern Maine. At that time, I was 1st Assessor of West Forks and fought against it but in the end, either the town or the state was going to own it- meaning we lost about \$2000 in taxes then. Reluctantly, the Board of Assessors thought that the town should own it and control what little we could on it. It was prime land, some with water frontage, some with road frontage. Now the town has no tax revenue from it, must insure it, can't generate any meaningful revenues or use it to expand the town. How this land was acquired by CMP years ago raises many other questions as well. Did the ratepayers buy it for Hydro exploration in the 1950's? This parcel of land was in the tree growth program as well. So potentially the town could have made much more in taxes than the \$2000 +/-.

Maine is bombarded with tax free conservation land. It's not sustainable for its residents. Or is it beneficial to tourism in the long run. No matter what the "selling" point is, the people lose freedoms and pick up more of the tab. I believe that in a few more years, that the Northwoods will be unrecognizable. While CMP has pledged to add to the tax base with the NECEC Project, it's not beneficial to the existing taxpayers, people who make their living from the land, folks who rely on tourism and the trickle down economy that ensues. An argument that you are well aware of.

She states that the Opposition rode for miles to Coburn Mountain (on snowmobiles) on state owned lands as well as private and more land owned by CMP. Most of this journey was in West Forks Plantation. These lands are mostly all enrolled in tree growth program. Lands with reduced taxes for sustainable forestry practices. Maine residents in any plantation, town or unorganized territory that have "Tree Growth" actually are subsidizing the owner to profit from timber harvesting. Unfortunately, there is no law giving people a right to use the lands but there should be some benefits to the public for the big company's tax breaks on the properties. Her letter intends to shame the protesters for using and wanting to keep the woodlands in traditional ways but the taxpayers have already paid their fair share for the big corporations to profit off Maine. I wholeheartedly disagree with her argument. We have plenty of "skin in the game" when we pay our taxes. Incidentally, the protesters live, work, recreate and are raising families, all who SPEND money in the area now. These people are the future.

I urge you to make the right decision for the People of Maine. Say No to the corridor.

Respectfully,

Andrew Webb, resident of West Forks

Former Tax Assessor of West Forks of 17 years, campground owner, outdoor enthusiast and owner of Andy Webb & Daughter Construction Company