Department of Public Utilities Findings
DRAFT FINDINGS PURSUANT TO G.L. CHAPTER 30, SECTION 61

Project Name: N12/M13 Double Circuit Tower Separation Project

Project Location: Somerset and Fall River

Project Proponent: New England Power Company

EOEA Number: 16467

Agency Actions: Petition to Construct pursuant to Chapter 164, Section 72

Intent of These Section 61 Findings: The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act ("MEPA") regulations 301 CMR 11.12(5) provide that in "accordance with M.G.L. c.30, §61, any Agency that takes Agency Action on a Project for which the Secretary required a Single Environmental Impact Report ("SEIR") shall determine whether the Project is likely, directly or indirectly, to cause any damage to the environment and confirming that all feasible measures have been taken to avoid or minimize the damage to the environment." The Section 61 Findings are to be incorporated into the conditions or restrictions to the relevant permit or authorization. The following proposed Section 61 Findings have been prepared by New England Power Company ("NEP" or the "Company") and are intended to assist the Department of Public Utilities (the "Department") in fulfilling its obligations in accordance with G.L. c. 30, § 61. These Findings are limited to the subject matter jurisdiction of the Petition for Determination of Public Necessity and Convenience pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 72.

Project Description: NEP proposes to separate a 1.85-mile segment of its existing N12 and M13 115 kV overhead transmission lines, currently installed on double circuit steel lattice towers, and place the lines on two distinct sets of structures. The existing double circuit segment begins on the west shore of the Taunton River in Somerset, crosses the Taunton River into Fall River, and continues easterly within an existing NEP transmission corridor to the Sykes Road Substation in Fall River ("Project Route").

To accomplish this separation, NEP will remove a total of seven existing steel lattice towers, one 3-pole structure, and one H-frame structure and replace these structures with 11 paired, single circuit steel monopole structures; four intermediate single circuit steel monopole structures; and two steel H-frame structures. Existing structures range in height from approximately 50 to 110 feet and replacement structures will range in height from 65 to 130 feet. Additionally, at the Taunton River crossing, the two existing approximately 300-foot-tall steel lattice towers will remain in place (existing structures N12-1 and N12-2 to be renumbered as N12-5 and N12-6, respectively) and two new approximately 300-foot-tall, galvanized steel Y-frame monopole structures will be installed (proposed structures M13N-5 and M13N-6), one on each side of the river. The existing conductor between existing structures N12-5, N12-6 and N12-7 will be electrically connected (bussed) to become the N12 Line. Overhead conductor will be installed between proposed N12 structures N12-7 and N12-19, and between proposed structures M13N-5 and M13N-19 and from there, into the Sykes Road Substation where they will be terminated onto existing structures.

The new N12 and M13 monopole structures will be constructed within NEP's existing ROW to replace the existing DCT transmission structures. Construction of the Y-frame river crossing structure proposed on the Fall River side of the Taunton River (proposed structure M13N-6) will require additional temporary and permanent property rights from the adjacent landowner for installation of the structure and to maintain safe horizontal clearance from the existing river crossing tower. NEP is also seeking to eliminate the construction of proposed structures N12-13 and M13N-13 (located on the west side of

Highland Avenue), if additional real estate easements can be obtained from the abutting property owners; if not, these structures will be constructed as part of the Project. The remainder of the Project will be constructed on NEP property and within NEP's existing ROW.

MEPA History: Pursuant to G.L. c. 30, §§61- 62A-H, of MEPA and its implementing regulations at 301 CMR 11.00, NEP submitted an Expanded Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") to the MEPA office on September 30, 2021. The Project is subject to MEPA review as it requires one or more state permits and exceeds thresholds requiring the filing of an ENF and an SEIR for Wetlands, Waterways, and Tidelands for the requirement of a permit and an expected alteration of one or more acres of bordering vegetated wetlands (301 CMR 11.03(a)(1)(a)). The Project will require several state permits, including an approval from the Department.

The Project received an extended public comment period pursuant to Section 11.06(1) of the MEPA regulations. The Secretary issued a Certificate on November 28, 2021, requiring the preparation of an EIR allowing NEP to prepare a SEIR in fulfillment of the requirements of Section 11.03 of the MEPA regulations.

Project Impacts and Mitigation: The Department review will identify terms and conditions during the evaluation of the Project to determine public necessity and convenience and will review the environmental impacts that are to be assessed by MEPA and the other participating state agencies.

Findings: Based on its review of the MEPA documents and the permit applications, the Department finds that the foregoing information adequately describes the environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project, and that with the implementation of the terms and conditions to be determined during the Department's review processes, all feasible means will have been taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable for those impacts subject to the Department's authority. Implementation of the mitigation measures will occur in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the "Final Decision" on the Company's petition for the proposed transmission line reconfiguration to describe more fully and ensure implementation of said measures.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

BY DATE