

- Section 5.8 presents a discussion of the reliability of the Preferred Northern Route and the Noticed-Alternative Southern Route.
- The final section, Section 5.9, presents a summary and comparison of the Preferred Northern Route and Noticed-Alternative Southern Route.

5.2 STANDARD OF REVIEW

In implementing its statutory mandate to ensure a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost, the Siting Board requires a petitioner to show that its proposed facility is sited at a location that minimizes costs and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable energy supply. To determine whether such a showing is made, the Siting Board requires a petitioner to show that the proposed site for the facility is superior to the Noticed-Alternative on the basis of balancing cost, environmental impact and reliability of supply. NSTAR Electric 2005 at 296; CELCO 2001 at 334; MMWEC 2001 at 127; Berkshire Gas 1999 at 40; BECO 1997 at 287.

An assessment of all impacts of a proposed facility is necessary to determine whether an appropriate balance is achieved both among different environmental concerns and environmental impacts, cost and reliability. A facility that achieves an appropriate balance thereby meets the Siting Board's statutory requirement to minimize environmental impacts at the lowest possible cost. NSTAR Electric 2005 at 297; CELCO 2001 at 335; MMWEC 2001 at 128; Berkshire Gas 1999 at 46; BECO 1997 at 287.

In order to determine if a petitioner has achieved the proper balance among environmental impacts, cost and reliability, the Siting Board determines if the petitioner has provided sufficient information regarding environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures. The Siting Board can then determine whether environmental impacts would be minimized. Similarly, the Siting Board must find that the petitioner has provided sufficient cost information in order to determine if the appropriate balance among environmental impacts, cost and reliability is achieved. NSTAR Electric 2005 at 297; CELCO 2001 at 335; MMWEC 2001 at 128; NEPCO 1998 at 384; Commonwealth Electric Company, 5 DOMSB 273, at 337 (1997).

As shown below, the evidence in this case clearly demonstrates that environmental impacts of the Project for both routes have been minimized, consistent with considerations of cost, and that the Preferred Northern Route is superior to the Noticed-Alternative Southern Route in minimizing such impacts.