



PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY AND RESPONSE DOCUMENT

Summary of comments received during 30-day public comment period (August 19, 2025 – September 18, 2025) with commitment to substantive address some or all comments in the environmental impact evaluation in accordance with Sec. 22a-1a-8(f)(7) of the CEPA regulations.

Date: March 3, 2026

Forty-two (42) written public comments were submitted to DEEP during the thirty (30)-day public comment period (August 19, 2025 – September 18, 2025) established under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) to assist DEEP in considering an application from Eversource Energy requesting modification of DEEP’s electric transmission line easements to add a natural gas pipeline through the Hurd and Connecticut Valley Railroad State Parks. In addition to these written comments, members of the public provided five (5) oral comments during the voluntary public scoping meeting that DEEP hosted by Zoom on September 9, 2025.

Below, DEEP summarizes and provides initial responses to the concerns raised in public comments:

Summary of Comments: Potential impacts to sensitive wildlife/NDDB species and wetlands habitats need to be better understood.

DEEP Response to Comments: DEEP agrees that before an amendment to an existing easement moves forward, additional surveys of critical species, natural communities, and their habitats within and in proximity to the easement corridor should and will be required from the applicant. The additional information may include surveys of the easement corridor for listed species and otherwise critical species and habitats that could be significantly impacted during the construction and ongoing operation and maintenance of a natural gas pipeline within the existing easement corridor. This additional information is essential to understand the potential impacts of this project and what avoidance, mitigation, and restoration measures would be implemented if the existing easements are amended. The Environmental Impact Evaluation will include the results of such surveys and discuss appropriate mitigation measures.

Summary of Comments: Alternatives to the state action need to be better understood.

DEEP Response to Comments: No alternative routes for the gas pipeline were provided to DEEP as part of the application materials submitted to the Land Acquisition and Management Office on August 6, 2025 or thereafter. Other potential alternatives that could have avoided the need for state action could have included (i) crossing the Connecticut River in locations that do not require

crossing public property; (ii) co-locating with an existing pipeline or other infrastructure crossing of the River; or (iii) connecting the proposed pipeline to the regional transmission infrastructure east of the Connecticut River, eliminating the need for utilization of the park. Eversource also constructed the rest of the pipeline at significant expense to Eversource before applying to obtain this necessary modification of the existing easement. These decisions by Eversource limit the agency's ability to assess alternatives to locating the pipeline in such a sensitive natural and recreational area at the time of scoping. Alternatives will be more thoroughly assessed in the environmental impact evaluation

Summary of Comments: There is potential for soil and water contamination or methane emissions associated with leaks from natural gas pipelines and/or fluids associated with horizontal directional drilling (HDD).

DEEP Response to Comments: Although the potential for leakage does exist with any gas pipeline, it is likely low and not unreasonable. Despite the low risk, it is worth noting here because of the potential for environmental impacts to sensitive species and habitats if there ever were a significant leak at this location.

Summary of Comments: This natural gas project is inconsistent with the state's goal of phasing out fossil fuels by 2050.

DEEP Response to Comments: Meeting the state's climate goals for 2030, 2040, and 2050 continue to be top priorities for DEEP and the Lamont Administration. At the same time, ensuring resiliency and affordability of Connecticut's existing energy infrastructure is also critical. It is challenging to balance these priorities, but we proceed with moving in the State's and its resident's best interest with the choices available.

Summary of Comments: Natural gas projects can perpetuate problems associated with fracking, methane pollution, related air and water quality impacts, and greenhouse gas emissions.

DEEP Response to Comments: We acknowledge that these issues, raised in several public comments, are significant concerns on a regional and global scale. However, such concerns are raised by matters implicating expansion of natural gas service. In the context of this easement modification, no increase in customer base is proposed and thus impacts on, e.g., fracked natural gas demand would not be greater than the current condition.

Summary of Comments: Connecticut needs to diversify its energy sources and not over-rely on fossil fuels/fracked natural gas to be better protected against future energy disruptions.

DEEP Response to Comments: It is unlikely that this project would impact the overall energy diversification of Connecticut, but DEEP generally agrees that there is a significant need for a greater supply of clean, reliable, and affordable energy in the state.

Summary of Comments: Who has authority over the portion of the pipeline that would cross beneath the Connecticut River?

DEEP Response to Comments: DEEP is the regulatory agency for activities proposed in public trust areas like the Connecticut River. However, DEEP's statutory authority to grant interests in submerged land beneath navigable waters is limited to lands beneath certain lighthouses in Long Island Sound. That authority is not implicated here and Eversource has not requested such rights from DEEP. In the absence of a delegation of authority to a state agency to grant those rights, the General Assembly would have authority to grant an interest in submerged lands.

Summary of Comments: What about impacts on access to public land that stretches beyond the existing ROW/easement area?

DEEP Response to Comments: If this project were to move forward, any impacts on recreational access during construction would be expected to be relatively minor and short in duration; and restoration of access would be required post construction.

Summary of Comments: Is there an opportunity to consider moving electric transmission lines underground and below the Connecticut River at the same time that a natural gas pipeline is being considered in this corridor?

DEEP Response to Comments: We appreciate the issue being raised. Although the focus of this proceeding is on amending the existing transmission line easement to accommodate a natural gas pipeline, it is a good time to be aware of these kinds of opportunities.

Summary of Comments: What would the cumulative and long-term impacts of the project be?

DEEP Response to Comments: DEEP knows that in the long-term a new pipeline will necessitate increased access to the property for repairs, vegetation management, or other reasons, but the full extent of the habitat and species impacts will only be understood once the additional habitat and species analyses are completed. Going forward, any impacts would be mitigated before and during construction as well as each successive time Eversource re-enters for work on the pipeline.

Summary of Comments: What would the financial impact(s) of this project be on ratepayers?

DEEP Response to Comments: The financial impact of this specific segment of pipeline as part of the Southeast Resiliency Project is unknown. The project was originally proposed to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) as part of a resiliency effort that would be supported by ratepayers of Eversource/Yankee Gas Services Company. Any discussion of ratepayer impact is within the purview of PURA and would be addressed in that forum.

Summary of Comments: What would the impact be if this project was delayed in moving forward?

DEEP Response to Comments: Potential impacts associated with any potential delays in project implementation are unknown and likely are beyond the scope of DEEP's consideration of Eversource's application.