

New England Clean Energy Connect

OVERVIEW

Central Maine Power (CMP) has assembled a strategic corridor for electric transmission between Quebec and New England that will significantly benefit current and future generations. The New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) and its locational efficiency from the Canadian border is a significant milestone that calls for broad outreach, awareness and recognition of the benefits New England will reap as the region moves into a new clean energy era.

The NECEC team began its outreach campaign to introduce and advance the project on July 17, 2017 with a series of quiet conversations with targeted stakeholders. With the proposal now submitted, the communications plan offers multiple opportunities for the public to gain an understanding of the project and its benefits, and to provide valuable input during the permitting phase. Given that the project follows a path through Maine's commercial forest land before connecting to an existing transmission corridor, impacts to environmental, social and recreational resources can be managed and minimized. Where the potential for impacts exist, every effort is being made to fully understand and mitigate those issues.

The NECEC outreach team recognizes its responsibility to inform Maine and Massachusetts stakeholders about this project. In Maine, 145 miles of new and existing transmission corridor is of considerable interest to a wide variety of stakeholders: from the tourism industry in western Maine and the economic development agencies that have worked to support this industry, to the environmental organizations who are watching the various proposals closely, and the host communities that already have experience with a transmission line in their midst.

Benefits from the project include reductions in locational marginal electric prices, new construction investment and attendant jobs, and a strengthened electric grid. However, the outreach team is realistic about impacts as well, and will work with stakeholders to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. A targeted outreach plan to stakeholders who have an interest in the benefits and impacts of the project is underway. One-on-one meetings have yielded early support. Presentations to larger groups will occur immediately following the project's announcement, which has been kept confidential until the proposal submission.

In Massachusetts, the Clean Energy Request for Proposals (RFP) has been the subject of extensive media coverage and public dialogue. For that reason, the NECEC outreach team will ensure that stakeholders from The Commonwealth have an opportunity to learn about the New England Clean Energy Connect and provide input during every phase of the permitting and review processes.

The communications plan is presented in three phases:

Phase 1: Pre-filing communication to ensure key stakeholders are well informed and not surprised by CMP's proposal

Phase 2: Post-filing outreach to build project awareness and gather input throughout the permitting process

Phase 3: Construction communication to minimize disruption to communities and neighbors

During the pre-filing timeframe, prior to a broad public announcement, the project team made contact with key stakeholders to provide project details, including the route map, the economic benefits and plans to avoid sensitive areas. A number of communications tactics have been employed during this period to both inform these stakeholders and address their questions or concerns.

While the project awaits selection notification, communicating regularly and often with a broader base of stakeholders in the region is a best practice that Central Maine Power has utilized successfully with other projects such as Maine Power Reliability Program (MPRP). The outreach team understands that it is essential to provide clear information, address any concerns, offer project updates and build trust throughout the area where the project will be built. This is also an important time to solidify support for the project, and this will take place through one-on-one meetings, group presentations, community/public meetings and online communications tools including a project video, which will serve as a virtual tour of the route.

Should NECEC be selected to provide 1,090 megawatts of clean, renewable energy to Massachusetts, ongoing outreach will be essential up to and during construction. By January 2018, multiple public information meetings, scoping sessions and public hearings will have occurred. A more regional approach will be undertaken post-selection to satisfy the many different constituencies who will benefit from NECEC. With construction beginning in early 2019, a comprehensive construction communication plan will be initiated in advance so affected parties know what to expect and can make any special requests in a timely manner.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODS

The NECEC **public-facing** communication tools described in this plan are as follows:

- **Website**
- **Project brochure**
- **Project maps**
- **Q&A**
- **Presentation**
- **Posters**
- **Video**
- **Economic impact summary**
- **Facebook and Twitter accounts**

- Telephone hotline
- E-newsletter
- Information packets
- News releases
- Media folders
- Testimonials
- Informational ads
- Public and legal notices
- Project newsletter
- Field cards

The NECEC **internal** analysis, data bases and activity tracking devices in use include:

- Routing analysis
- Stakeholder database
- Stakeholder contact plan
- Activity tracker
- Background reports
- NECEC By-The-Numbers
- Message manual
- CMP community tax history report
- Project investment per town and county

PHASE 1: PRE-FILING COMMUNICATION

This is an essential first step in a successful communication and outreach plan and involves developing messages that resonate, clear project materials and meetings with key stakeholders who warrant early notification that CMP is submitting a major proposal into the competitive bid process. Even before the project is announced publicly and is the subject of media attention, elected officials, business and community leaders and economic development officials have been provided with the project details, answers to their questions, and an understanding of the projected economic benefits. At this early stage, key stakeholders have been encouraged to share any concerns and offer suggestions. Direct contact is essential and has been accomplished with personal, one-on-one meetings that offer not only the chance to provide project information and plans for success, but also to build a level of trust and awareness about NECEC.

PHASE 1 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Ensure key government, municipal and business leaders hear about the project directly from CMP
- Build and maintain valuable relationships along the route
- Identify and address issues of importance to key stakeholders

- Use early input to develop a project worthy of expedited permitting

EARLY COMMUNICATION TIMELINE



STRATEGY | Message development

- ***The Right Team:*** a strong partnership between CMP/AVANGRID and energy partners in Quebec; highly experienced firms with strong financial backing and no risk of conflict in the selection process.
- ***The Right Project:*** delivers clean, reliable, baseload energy at low cost and stable prices.
- ***The Right Site:*** end-to-end site control, strong local support and a project that avoids highly sensitive areas adds up to the best site for expeditious permitting and construction.
- ***The Right Price:*** leverages recent transmission reinforcements through the MPRP; economical overhead construction; and cost protection for Massachusetts consumers.

STRATEGY | Collateral materials

To aid in the early outreach phase, the project team has prepared initial collateral materials that frame the project's narrative and its benefits to the region, the state and affected communities. These materials were designed for the initial outreach work and have been used across a wide variety of platforms, including discussions with elected officials, regulatory agencies, host community leaders, landowners and user groups.

Project materials in use during the early, one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders included:

- **Project identity**
The name New England Clean Energy Connect is easily understood and resonates with the public. The unique triangle in the logo symbolizes the partnership and shared benefits between Massachusetts, Maine and New England.
- **One-page informational sheet**
This outlines NECEC in a clear and concise fashion and includes a simple, graphic map as well as a general outline of the project's benefits.

- **Project maps**

Stakeholders appreciate a graphic presentation of the project. The overview map clearly delineates the route and the location of existing infrastructure (transmission lines, substations, converter station). The route map shows the town-by-town transmission line route and geographical features such as water bodies. Together, they provide a full understanding of the project elements.

STRATEGY | Early stakeholder meetings

Early conversations with key stakeholders – including local opinion leaders, decision makers and interest groups – have ensured that local leaders hear directly about the project before reading about it in the paper or hearing through word of mouth. Early meetings with key regional stakeholders have also:

- Tangibly demonstrated the project team’s commitment to transparency and our willingness to engage in meaningful and respectful conversations about the project,
- Allowed the project team to garner important intelligence regarding local opinions, potential pockets of opposition and the identification of potential supporters, and
- Built trust and confidence with key stakeholders and regional opinion leaders who will be learning more about it as the permitting phase advances.

CMP has a long and positive relationship with communities, leaders and user groups along approximately 100 miles of the route that is an existing transmission corridor. This has been highly valuable during the first round of stakeholder meetings, as the project team has been able to gain a better understanding of the region’s issues and needs. Feedback received has been incorporated into both the project design and narrative to make it responsive to community priorities.

Beyond these initial meetings, ongoing and frequent contact with these and other key stakeholders is planned throughout the permitting process.

The pre-filing outreach has included meeting with:

- Governor Paul R. LePage
- Maine Public Utility Commission
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Legislative leaders
- County government
- Municipal government
- Major landowners
- Larger host communities that will see expanded transmission infrastructure

- Economic development organizations in affected Maine counties
- Industry groups, such as the recreational rafting company owners
- Trade associations (e.g., Associated General Contractors of Maine)
- Business owners
- MPRP vendors
- Chambers of Commerce

PHASE 2: PRE-SELECTION COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

With the proposal now public and submitted, the outreach team is focused on positioning the project for success, introducing New England Clean Energy Connect throughout the region, and building awareness and support for a cost-effective, viable project that opens the door to significant clean energy resources.

New England clean energy leaders will be introduced to the unique attributes of NECEC, which include the strong partnership between two major energy companies, neither of which are incumbent Massachusetts utilities and both of which have excellent financial backing, and the experience and capability to build a project of this magnitude. During this phase, NECEC builds strong regional and local support for a project that will provide lower-cost clean energy as well as economic development benefits to the region.

PHASE 2 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- To engage the public and facilitate an informed dialogue about the project
- To provide collateral material and resources that are responsive to public questions
- To inform potentially affected parties and work with them to minimize impacts
- To support state and federal permitting through public comment sessions and hearings
- To regularly inform and respond to media inquiries

PRE-SELECTION OUTREACH: COMMUNICATION TIMELINE



STRATEGY | Collateral materials

Collateral materials to inform the public include:

- **Project website**
The project website will be the singular source of project information and will include an interactive component to encourage feedback and questions. Information on public information sessions, scoping session and hearings will be featured. Links to agencies and media reports will be included, as well as project maps and reports.
- **Q&A**
The Q&A is comprehensive, thorough and regularly updated. It is used as a handout and featured on the website.
- **Project presentation**
A PowerPoint presentation is used for larger meetings and tailored to the interests of the audience.
- **Posters**
Tabletop posters are used for smaller audiences, with larger posters reserved for public meetings, covering topics such as project route and project benefits.
- **Video**
A project video is being created to show the project route, describe the project sponsors and highlight project benefits for the region. This will be featured on the website and embedded in presentations.
- **Economic impact summary**
The detailed economic impact summary will boil down the highlights of the analysis so the public can understand the multiple ways NECEC has value for individual states and the region.
- **Facebook and Twitter accounts**
Social media platforms will help push out accurate and timely information.
- **Telephone hotline**
A toll-free number will be advertised on all project materials, including the website and collaterals.
- **E-newsletter**
Updated project information will be emailed to all who sign up to receive news.
- **Informational packets**
All printed information will be made available in information packets.
- **News releases**
Project milestones, including filing the proposal, will be shared through news releases.
- **Media folders**

Media folders will be provided during interviews and tours.

- **Testimonials**
Testimonials will be featured on the website and provided as part of briefing packages.
- **Informational ads**
Informational ads will be placed in local papers and community bulletins to provide updated information and notices about upcoming opportunities for public input.
- **Public and legal notices**
Notices will be placed in newspapers as required and distributed in town offices to inform the public of public meetings, scoping sessions and hearings.

STRATEGY | Stakeholder and interested party outreach

Experience has shown that interested members of the public want to feel engaged and have their concerns noted and validated by the project team. Early input from the public can help shape the project in a way that is responsive to local needs and still consistent with project objectives. This strategy leads to the development of meaningful and valuable relationships built on mutual understanding, trust and respect.

The project team will broaden its initial communication outreach to gain a better understanding of the region's issues and needs. Feedback received will be incorporated into the project's design and mitigation during this pre-selection phase.

Outreach in the form of meetings, calls and presentations will be directed to:

- Municipal officials
- Landowners
- County officials
- Recreation user groups
- Economic development interests
- Environmental organizations
- Sporting interests
- Conservation easement holders
- Legislators

Meetings will include one-on-one sessions as well as presentations. The goal is to provide detailed information and invite input from all individuals and associations interested in the project. The website and project collaterals offer the opportunity to learn about all elements of the project, and during the permitting phase, potentially affect micro-siting of the line.

During this phase of the project, NECEC will seek public speaking opportunities in order to provide project details at both the local and regional level. Presentations will be scheduled with assessors/town councils, meetings of county commissioners, and events hosted by other organizations and interest

groups. Representatives of NECEC will attend public events, including community events, chamber meetings and service club meetings. NECEC will have a visible presence at community fairs, festivals and related events.

During this phase, the project team will launch a more extensive, interactive website that allows the public to review information on their own schedule and to pose questions and raise any concerns about the project. The website will feature an interactive map of the project that allows visitors to measure distances from the project as well as download or view information about the project.

Outreach will also include a community e-newsletter that can be sent electronically to all identified stakeholders. This tool will provide information similar to what is posted and updated on the project website and its social media pages. Email addresses will be collected throughout the public outreach process. This step will further cement our commitment to early and frequent communication throughout all phases of the project.

The outreach team will also establish a telephone hotline that allows the public to contact the project team to ask questions and offer feedback at any point throughout the project. The phone line number will be prominently displayed on the project website, social media and all public handout materials.

The outreach team plans to document all stakeholder outreach, media reports, op-eds and letters to the editor and any on-going dialogue to address stakeholder issues.

STRATEGY | Media relations

The outreach team believes that media will take a strong interest in NECEC due to the fact that it is positioned to be a strong competitor in the bid. However, proactive outreach to key reporters and editors is part of the communications plan to ensure timely and accurate reporting. This was initiated at the time the proposal was filed, and continued responsiveness and outreach is planned throughout the permitting, review and selection process.

Because both traditional and social media outlets serve as a direct conduit for the distribution of information about the project to a broader public audience, Facebook and Twitter will be used to supplement traditional media outlets.

The media relations effort includes:

- An initial press release and press kit with key messages included
- Scheduled media interviews in Maine and Massachusetts
- Responsiveness to any media inquiries and requests for interviews
- Follow-up editorial board meetings with targeted media
- A project tour offered to key reporters and editors
- A designated project spokesperson available to answer any questions the media might have
- The launch of NECEC's Facebook page and Twitter feed, along with regular updates to these social media tools

STRATEGY | Community and public meetings

In the late summer/early fall of 2017, public open house meetings will be held in Moscow, Maine (northern region of the project), Lewiston, Maine (southern region) and Wiscasset, Maine (eastern upgrades). The meetings will be well-publicized through newspapers, bulletins and direct calls to interested individuals or groups. The meetings will feature stations staffed by subject matter experts available to answer questions.

These informational meetings will include:

- A welcome station where participants can sign in and provide their contact information
- An opportunity to sign up for regular (email) project updates
- Project handouts and materials
- Informational posters on:
 - Route
 - Permitting
 - Engineering and design
 - Environmental impacts and mitigation
 - Schedule
 - Economic benefits
- Project video
- Locally sourced refreshments

Required public meetings and scoping sessions connected to state and federal permitting will also take place during this phase. These meetings will be well-advertised in the local news, on social media and in direct outreach to the key stakeholders with whom the outreach team has already met. Even though these meetings are required by the regulatory agencies and there is an established, similar project information and materials will be available at these public meetings.

The goal of all these meetings is to reach all interested parties and stakeholders, to provide answers to their questions and to follow up with anyone who has concerns about project impacts.

In October, the NECEC will provide a substantive Project Status Report to the Review Committee to demonstrate the project team's extensive public outreach and related results.

- Document public outreach
- Document meetings and outcomes
- Provide all collateral materials and presentations
- Update on permitting progress
- Share additional letters of support
- Highlight media coverage

PHASE 3: POST-SELECTION OUTREACH AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Should NECEC be selected to move forward, continued outreach will be essential in order to ensure timely and accurate media coverage, confirm the project's design and mitigation elements, build greater community support through a number of local sponsorships and programs, and finally to provide updated information about the schedule for construction, to minimize potential disruption to communities.

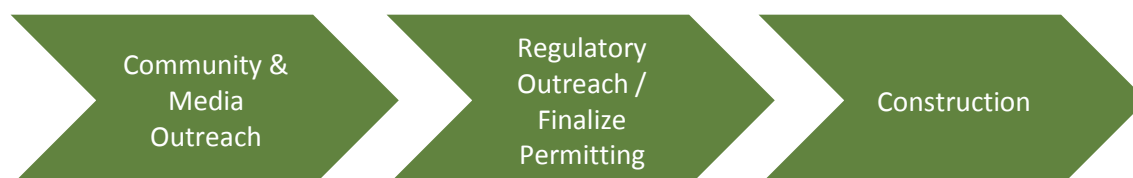
PHASE 3 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Broaden regional awareness of NECEC
- Ensure the public has access to project materials and personnel
- Implement a construction communications plan to minimize disruption and ensure local officials and neighbors have advance information on local construction activities

At this phase of the project, the information will be modified to provide more detail about the project schedule. Community outreach and full understanding during this next phase is essential to smooth implementation, maintaining community interest, and creating overall satisfaction with this project.

It will be during this post-selection phase that New England Clean Energy Connect will become a household name in both Maine and Massachusetts. With this status comes a responsibility to be an exceptionally good neighbor and to be responsive to any questions from the public about the next steps.

POST-SELECTION COMMUNICATION TIMELINE



STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

STRATEGY | Ongoing community and media outreach

NECEC will capitalize on and initiate opportunities to present the project to broader audiences throughout the region. Project materials and the website will once again be updated to reflect the project's success and the intention to provide regular updates regarding permitting and construction.

Stakeholder meetings with vendors, environmental groups, recreation interests, legislators and community leaders will continue, with a focus on the timeline for completion including the potential for

community disruption during construction. A thorough outreach effort will take place to ensure that all residents of project communities are informed about opportunities for employment or to provide services and about changes to traffic patterns and construction in their local community during this final phase.

The project plans to sponsor several kick-off, celebratory receptions where stakeholders will meet the leaders of project team, and where local involvement with NECEC can be highlighted.

STRATEGY | Media

NECEC's selection in this competitive bid process will warrant a major media announcement. While State of Maine officials may decide to host a press conference, NECEC is likely to hold its own press event with executives from Central Maine Power /AVANGRID, Iberdrola and Hydro Quebec. Elected officials will be invited to participate.

A comprehensive press packet will be developed and distributed, followed closely by a round of scheduled media interviews.

STRATEGY | Regulatory agency updates

Throughout the project's permitting and construction stages, the project team will conduct regular and proactive meetings with all regulatory agencies to ensure that they are provided with timely updates and status reports regarding community engagement. These meetings will be conducted via tele-conference calls or regular e-mail notifications and will provide updates on the project's status and milestones, including the scope and progress of our one-on-one meetings, feedback received from the public and the project's timetable.

These frequent meetings will allow us to understand and respond quickly to agency concerns and will demonstrate the project team's commitment to transparency and public input.

STRATEGY | Community outreach during construction

The goal for communication during construction is to minimize disruption and ensure there are no surprises when it comes to traffic delays, road issues or right-of-way clearing distractions.

This is a time for regular, direct communication with town leaders, economic development agencies and any stakeholders that are impacted by the construction of a major project. During this phase, regular construction updates will be posted on the project website as well as sent to town offices where local officials can post information on their town websites, and share information via their own social media networks. The e-newsletter will serve a valuable role in alerting affected communities and individuals. Proactive and detailed communication during the construction phase is the mark of an exemplary project. CMP demonstrated its commitment to such communication for MPRP, and no less of an effort will be mounted for NECEC.