



House Science, Technology and Energy Committee

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HB1602 – Letter of Support

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EmpowerNH is a broad-based coalition of environmental and consumer organizations, business and trade groups, and power providers. The coalition aims to educate New Hampshire consumers about the power they have to save money and protect the environment through their choice of electricity supplier, and to make it easy to access information and compare offers from competitive suppliers. The members of the EmpowerNH coalition support HB1602, which would be a gateway for the process of divestiture, which we believe is in the best economic interests of New Hampshire ratepayers.

EmpowerNH believes that the energy generating market place should be open, and that to create a level playing field, PSNH should be one of many energy suppliers in the marketplace, and not in the energy generation business.

The three main points we would like to make on behalf of the EmpowerNH coalition members and their combined customer base are:

The New Hampshire energy market should be a competitive market place.

The coalition supports any solution that clearly preserves and promotes a competitive marketplace. HB1602 opens the door for that process. New Hampshire consumers are benefitting from a very competitive market, and the benefits are circular. More competition leads to cheaper electric bills over the long run which leads to less energy coming from polluting coal plants. It's a win-win-win for NH residents, our economy and the environment, and the more people who exercise their power to choose, the stronger the circle will be.

The continued migration of customers makes a strong statement about choice.

More than 98 percent of the utility's large commercial and industrial customers have switched to competitive supply, and more than half of all the electricity consumed in PSNH's distribution service territory is supplied by a competitive retail provider. The latest statistics filed with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission show that more than 96,000 residential electricity customers have left PSNH for a competitive service provider, continuing a trend that reflects the utility's long-term consistent above-market costs. So many energy consumers in the PSNH market cannot be wrong; they made a choice that was not only easy and reliable, but a statement in itself by choosing to get their energy from alternative, competitive sources.

Stranded costs need to be greatly minimized or avoided.

PSNH's power plants should participate in the competitive market without guaranteed rates paid by consumers, as do the vast majority of power plants in New England. The costs associated with any corporation should be shared among its shareholders, NOT borne by consumers.

Members of the EmpowerNH coalition include Conservation Law Foundation, ENH Power, North American Power, the Green Alliance, the Retail Energy Supply Association, Conservation NH, NH Sustainable Energy Association, Climate Counts, COMPETE Coalition, and ReVision Energy. EmpowerNH believes that competition among electricity suppliers is good for New Hampshire residents, businesses, and the state's economy and environment.