Elizabeth Wyman

Lancaster, NH

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**Statement Calling on Yale to Stop Northern Pass**

**Yale University Investment Office**

Thank you all for coming out today. My name is Liz Wyman, and I live in Lancaster, New Hampshire, which borders the White Mountains and the Great North Woods. I am a 2004 graduate of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, and I am the Conservation Education Chair of the Appalachian Mountain Club’s New Hampshire Chapter. I along with (6) other New Hampshire residents have traveled here today to implore Yale University to stop destroying our landscape, communities, environment, and economy with poor management decisions on its thousands of acres of timberland in New Hampshire.

I am encouraged to see so many have turned out to help us stop Yale’s exploitation.

The Yale endowment owns hundreds of thousands of acres of forest land in northern New England, and hired a company called Wagner Forest Management to manage its land. Wagner claims to practice sustainable forestry, yet from New Hampshire to Nova Scotia they face community opposition for the way they manage Yale’s timberlands. The forest cover loss on land owned by Yale and operated by Wagner is alarming. Now Yale is going beyond the exploitation of timber by entering into an agreement to lease a 24-mile right-of-way to Northern Pass, a very unpopular electric transmission project.

Northern Pass would bring hydro-electric power from Canada to Massachusetts and Connecticut by creating a 192-mile scar across New Hampshire. Steel towers over 160 feet high will mar scenic viewpoints and will profoundly impact tourism, recreation, and property values. Family farms that have been worked for generations will be permanently transformed. Wilderness areas will no longer offer the same sense of solitude. Whether this high-capacity line is above- or below-ground, its construction will disrupt forests, wetlands, wildlife, and waterways.

The energy produced by Hydro-Quebec’s massive dams is not green energy. Just last week I traveled 750 miles north of here to visit the Pessamit Innu territory in Quebec, and witnessed the devastation that flooding millions of acres of boreal forest on these First Nations lands has had on the Pessamit’s culture and livelihood.

Although we are facing powerful organizations, New Hampshire communities are fighting against the exploitation in Canada and in New Hampshire. North Country land owners have turned down multi-million dollar offers to sell their land for Northern Pass, and all of our region’s major environmental organizations oppose the project. Now we are presenting an open letter that calls on Yale to do the right thing by stopping Northern Pass. This letter is signed by leading environmental, community and Yale campus organizations like the Appalachian Mountain Club, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Ammonoosuc Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Beyond Extreme Energy, Divest Dartmouth, and the Yale Student Environmental Coalition, like the Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, two New Hampshire Select Boards and the New Hampshire Community Rights Network. It also has the support of the Council of the Pessamit Innu, the Association for Native Americans At Yale, and the Piscataway Indian Nation.

Yale still has a choice. The University can continue to be complicit in destroying communities, landscapes, and livelihoods in northern New England. Or, this institution can put its lofty ideals into practice and make its timberland a model of social and environmental responsibility. We are presenting this open letter today and we will not stop insisting that Yale change its behavior until it has committed to sustainable forestry practices and until Northern Pass is defeated.