

## Concerned Citizens of Needham

*Position on the West Roxbury- Needham Reliability Project*

---

We **OPPOSE** the “Eversource West Roxbury Needham Reliability Project”:

- Eversource has presented viable alternatives (for example, Transmission Alternative #2) that bypass the Town of Needham.
- Proposed Massachusetts Bill H.1297 is currently in our state legislature. Its goal is to add to the Massachusetts EFSB the mandate to limit the *public health impact of proposed projects*. This project should be halted until the bill had been processed by the legislature as this bill could alter the EFSB’s evaluation of possible routes, potentially prioritizing routes that bypass Needham.
- Eversource proposals were misleading regarding the impact to our residential streets. They cited the transmission line would be mostly ‘in public streets.’ Recent information requests have revealed that the line would be buried directly under sidewalks on many streets – closer to residential houses, commuter and school children walking paths, trees and the landscape of several streets. This creates a significant environmental and residential impact.
- Eversource proposals were misleading regarding the potential health impact of the project on the children and vulnerable citizens in our community.
- This project is not intended to benefit Needham. We do not believe the Eversource conclusion that the community impacts associated with Transmission Alternative 1 are *low and/or otherwise manageable*.
- The Town and Eversource have not pursued all possible routes that would avoid significant impact to the citizens of Needham. For example, they neither considered the option to remove the existing power lines on the right of way (ROW) and place both the existing and newly proposed lines underground along the train track, nor have they considered routing along rt 95 to avoid Peacedale Road.
- The town of Needham has not had time to fully investigate the permanent impacts on health that running high voltage power lines down walkable streets/sidewalks, in front of schools and commuter rails will have on Needham’s students, residents, and commuters.
- This is a “reliability project,” yet Eversource has proposed using unproven technology (XLPE) when expert testimony has suggested alternative technology (e.g., HPFF) would cost the same or less and also mitigate EMF radiation fields substantially better.
- Other towns have contested Eversource’s flawed methodology for choosing routes (e.g., Winchester). To date, Needham’s town officials have not had time to investigate how the flawed methodology might affect route selection in Needham.
- Existing studies on EMF radiation impacts from power lines show cause for concern. There are several studies that show correlations with increased instances of childhood leukemia and several that show both correlations of increased risk and promotion of increased rates of growth of breast cancer in women.

## Concerned Citizens of Needham

Position on the West Roxbury- Needham Reliability Project

---

### We SUPPORT:

- Transmission Alternative#2., which would bypass the Town of Needham and keep this project out of our public streets and away from our public schools.
- A comprehensive review of the health impact by impartial health experts vetted by the Selectmen and a citizen oversight board. The Needham Board of Health make significant advances in the vetting process regarding health impacts in the Town of Needham.
- A review of the need for this project - challenges in neighboring towns have identified both inaccuracies in ISO-NE's forecasts of reliability needs, and alternative options (e.g., in Sudbury, National Grid offered an alternative bid to enhance existing infrastructure rather than add a new line to meet reliability needs).
- Any proposed route should avoid pedestrian traffic – including roads with sidewalks that are used **daily** by Needham children walking to school or commuters walking to rail stations. Proposed routes must prioritize the least populated neighborhoods and number of residences abutting the route.
- Any proposed route should avoid passing directly near a Needham public school. *The town should recall its history with school relocations and hazardous situations impacting school conditions. Given the persistent findings of health impacts, is this a risk the town should take?*

### We ASK Legislative Officials and the Town of Needham to:

- Review the need for this project in Needham and advocate for Transmission Alternative #2 and bypass Needham.
- Prioritize the health of the citizens of Needham and not the financial bottom line of Eversource.
- Keep High Voltage Power lines away from walkable routes and investigate the potential for errors and biases in Eversource's route selection criteria.
- Investigate greater protection afforded through bill H.1297 and do not grant an easement. We must give the bill time to be passed by the State legislature.
- The Energy Facilities Siting Board routinely asks Eversource to take seriously and adjust for community concerns about magnetic radiation (EMF); therefore, our town officials should respect our concerns and keep advocating on behalf of the residents of Needham and not Eversource.