

June 25, 2019

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
Bart McDonough, Chair, Conservation Commission
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

Re: Follow-up on Corrective Actions for Structure Installation in the Wetland Conservation and the Shoreland Protection Overlay District Buffers; Eversource Distribution Line Upgrade Project

Mr. Behrendt and Mr. McDonough:

Last week, Eversource notified the Planning Board and Conservation Commission of three distribution poles that were installed within the Town of Durham Wetland Conservation Overlay District (WCOD) and while in the process of drilling through ledge, for pole setting, along Durham Point Road, stones in the stone wall had shifted. Upon learning of these incidents, we immediately stopped all work, moved quickly to notify town officials, and have spent the last week taking steps to address this oversight and to implement measures to ensure it does not happen again.

It's important to Eversource that the town and Durham residents know that we're taking this very seriously and have moved quickly to put several corrective actions in place to address each situation and improve the execution of our construction moving forward.

Pole Setting: The three structures were installed in upland, non-wetland roadside areas and appropriate erosion prevention and sediment control (EPSC) measures were then deployed and will remain to prevent soil and other material from being mobilized into adjacent wetland or stream areas; no direct wetland or stream impacts have occurred. The impacts are only to areas associated with the 100-foot and 75-foot buffer zones associated with the WCOD and SPOD, respectively, and comprise a minimal total area of disturbance.

In response to this incident, Eversource stopped all work associated with the distribution upgrades in Durham. The contractor performing the pole setting was brought in to explain the incident, discuss lessons learned and develop a corrective action plan with our team. The following explains some of the corrective action and changes being made for the remainder of the project to ensure compliance.

The pole setting crew, that inadvertently set the poles in the wetland buffers, has been removed from the project. Unique identifiers were installed at the ten poles located within WCOD and SPOD buffer locations to further represent the sensitivity at the location. Appropriate erosion prevention and sediment control (EPSC) measures were then deployed and will remain to prevent soil and other material from being mobilized into adjacent wetland or stream areas. The contractor has hired a compliance manager to monitor the remainder of work. Eversource has increased the number of construction supervisors assigned to monitoring the contractor's work. An environmental monitor has been hired to ensure environmental compliance on the entire distribution upgrade project and will provide authorization to proceed, for each structure, prior to the start of work. Contractor crews will be retrained with additional reinforcement of the importance of compliance relative to, environmental compliance, safety, community relations and construction protocols and we've instituted a construction checklist for every remaining pole for compliance with permitting, construction methods, mitigation measures, site conditions and documentation.

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Reference Attachment A: Photos of Poles set in wetland buffer

- Pole 21-54 – Pole set between wetland and road within upland WCOD buffer
- Pole 21-58 – Pole set between wetland and road within upland WCOD and SPOD buffer
- Pole 21-59 – Pole set upslope of wetland within upland WCOD buffer

Stone Walls: While setting poles in ledge next to stone walls along Durham Point Road, the vibration from the drill caused small sections of some stone walls to shift. In total, there were seven locations along Durham Point Road where stone walls along two private property owners land experienced either shifting or an accumulation of soils near the stone wall.

Once identified, the stone walls were documented, landowners were notified, a professional mason was hired, and site visits were scheduled to discuss restoration. The on-site meetings were held with both property owners on June 24 to develop a mutually agreeable restoration plan with a professional mason. Eversource will seek approval from the town on the restoration plans as well since one side of the wall is owned by a private landowner and the other is the town's road right of way. Upon agreement of a restoration plan and schedule with the landowner and the town and removal of the existing (old) pole, the mason will begin the work which is anticipated to take 1-2 days. Upon completion of the work Eversource will consult with the landowner and the town to confirm their satisfaction with the restoration.

In an effort to avoid this situation for the remainder of the work, Eversource has required that a stone wall monitor remain on site during drilling where ledge is present and stone walls are in close proximity. As a mitigation measure, shoring will be installed on either side of the stone wall in advance of drilling to add some stability to the walls to minimize the shifting of stones from the vibrations. As with our agreement relative to right of way walls, should any disruption occur, we are committed to satisfactory restoration.

Reference Attachment B: Stone Walls

- M. Sandberg #1 (Pole 60) Vibrations have caused portion of stone wall to shift/slump
- M. Sandberg #2 (Pole 62X) Vibrations have caused portion of stone wall to shift/slump
- M. Sandberg #3 (Pole 64X) Vibrations have caused portion of stone wall to shift/slump
- M. Sandberg #4 (Pole 64) Vibrations have caused portion of wall to shift/slump toward pole and stones from upper courses have fallen off the wall
- M. Sandberg #5 (Pole 65) Minor stone damage visible – Spoil dirt accumulation on wall
- D. Carson #1 (Pole 57) Vibrations have caused several stones to slide off wall away from pole
- D. Carson #2 (Pole 58) Wall is very low to the ground and is partially buried in this section. Crew encountered large stone when auguring the hole for the pole, removed the stone and set aside.

We are committed to constructing this project to the highest standards and are keenly focused on improving our performance following this situation to achieve that goal. We hope this explanation shows the Planning Board and Conservation Commission that these incidents are being taken seriously, immediate attention is being taken to rectify the situation and plans are developed to avoid future issues.

Sincerely,



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ATTACHMENT A: POLES SET IN WETLAND BUFFER
POLE: 21-54



POLE: 21-58



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POLE: 21-59



ATTACHMENT B: STONE WALLS
M. Sandberg #1 (Pole 60)



M. Sandberg #2 (Pole 62X)



M. Sandberg #3 (Pole 64X)



M. Sandberg #2 (Pole 64)



M. Sandberg #3 (Pole 65)



D. Carson #1 (Pole 57)



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D. Carson #2 (Pole 58)

