

**FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

for the

TRI-LAKES RELIABILITY PROJECT



February 17, 2006

SECTION 6
PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT

1 NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
2
TRI-LAKES RELIABILITY PROJECT
3
STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT
4 (SEQRA) HEARING

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6
7

DATE: January 11, 2006

8

TIME: 2:04 to 5:00 p.m.

9

LOCATION: Ivy Terrace Room
38 Boyer Avenue
Tupper Lake, New York

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BEFORE: Edward Alkiewicz
Hearing Officer
New York Power Authority

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APPEARANCES:
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION:

- John Suloway
 - Steve Ramsey
- SPEAKERS:
- Betty Little
 - Jamie Rogers
 - Mickey Demurais
 - Jim Ellis
 - Jim Frenette
 - Tim Burpoe
 - Peter S. Day
 - Dan McClelland
 - Sylvie Nelson
 - John Button

1 (The public hearing commenced at
2 2:04 p.m.)

3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Good
4 afternoon. My name is Edward Alkiewicz, I'm an
5 environmental scientist with the New York Power
6 Authority; and I've been designated as the hearing
7 officer for the State Environmental Quality Review
8 Act public hearing, which is now formally opened for
9 the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project. I'll have some
10 introductory remarks, and then we will invite folks
11 to the podium to -- to give their statements and/or
12 ask their questions.

13 I'd like to start by saying the
14 following notice was posted in the following
15 newspapers: The Adirondack Daily Enterprise, The
16 Tupper Lake Free Press, Watertown Daily Times and The
17 Plattsburgh Press Republican. And the -- the project
18 number is two thousand and five dash one, and it was
19 posted on December 21st, 2005. This notice is issued
20 pursuant to 21 NYCRR Part 461 of the implementing
21 regulations pertaining to Article 8, State
22 Environmental Quality Review Act of the Environmental
23 Conservation Law.

24 The New York Power Authority, as

1 lead agency, has determined that the proposed action
2 described below, may have a significant impact on the
3 environment and a draft environmental impact
4 statement has been prepared. Comments are requested
5 and will be accepted by the contact person until
6 January 31st, 2006. A NYPA State Environmental
7 Quality Review Act public hearing on the D.E.I.S.
8 will be held on Wednesday, January 11th, 2006, that's
9 today, from two to five p.m. and six to nine p.m. at
10 the Ivy Terrace Room, 38 Boyer Avenue in Tupper Lake.
11 There is a snow date, which we don't have to use, of
12 January 12th also from two to five and six to nine.

13 The name of the action is the
14 Tri-Lakes Reliability Project. It is a type one
15 listed SEQR action. Under scoping activities a
16 series of outreach meetings from spring to fall 2005
17 were held with interested parties, including local
18 municipal governments and nongovernmental
19 organizations during the development of the D.E.I.S.
20 An outreach meeting open to the general public was
21 held on June 10th, 2005, with residents invited to
22 express their concerns and issues with the project.
23 Nongovernmental organizations and municipal
24 governments were also invited to the outreach meeting

1 for the general public. A section of the project web
2 page was established for those who wanted to submit
3 comments on the project after the outreach meeting.

4 Description of the action: The
5 proposal involves the installation of a new forty-six
6 kV electric line to help upgrade the existing
7 electric system in the Tri-Lakes Region. The
8 proposed project is to be located in the Adirondack
9 Park in St. Lawrence County, New York. The project
10 is being developed as a cooperative effort between
11 the villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, the New
12 York Power Authority and National Grid to help
13 alleviate longstanding power problems in the region.

14 The location: There are two
15 routes, a preferred route which begins near the Stark
16 Reservoir in the town of Parishville heading south
17 along the shoulder of State Route 56 until reaching
18 forest preserved lands near Sevey Bog. It would then
19 travel west and circle south around the forest
20 preserve parcel before heading east to again follow
21 State Route 56 south to Sevey Corners in the town of
22 Colton. The line then travels east along State Route
23 3 to connect with an existing substation in
24 Piercefield. An existing transmission line will

1 bring the power from the Piercefield substation to
2 the Tupper Lake substation.

3 The alternate route begins in
4 Newton Falls in the town of Clifton heading east
5 through Cook Corners, east along an existing
6 snowmobile trail to State Route 3 and proceeding
7 easterly to Sevey Corners in the town of Colton. It
8 would then continue east along State Route 3 to
9 connect with an existing substation in Piercefield
10 again. An existing transmission line will bring the
11 power from the Piercefield substation to the Tupper
12 Lake substation.

13 The reasons for supporting this
14 determination: A positive declaration has been
15 determined based on the following impacts:

16 Number one, wetlands will be
17 temporarily impacted during construction and may
18 experience temporary changes in hydrology, aesthetic
19 value and wildlife. To the extent the line goes
20 through forested wetlands, operational maintenance of
21 the line will cause long-term conversion of those
22 areas to shrub, scrub or low-growing
23 conifer-dominated wetlands.

24 Number two, the expansion of the

1 utility right of way will create a visual impact
2 along roadways and waterways.

3 Three, construction of access roads
4 and placement of utility poles will have a visual
5 impact on roadways and waterways.

6 And four, there will be a physical
7 change to over one hundred acres of land.

8 For further information or a copy
9 of the draft D.E.I.S. you may contact Mr. Steve
10 Ramsey, community relations manager, New York Power
11 Authority, Blenheim-Gilboa Visitors Center, 1378
12 State Route 30, North Blenheim, New York 12131. And
13 his phone number is one eight hundred seven two four
14 zero three nine -- zero -- zero three zero nine. And
15 that's Steve standing right there, so if you want to
16 talk to him immediately after your comments or after
17 the meeting, he will be here till -- till the cows
18 come home.

19 At this time I would like to
20 introduce John Suloway, the director of the Power
21 Authority's licensing division who will describe the
22 project. He'll be our first speaker.

23 MR. SULOWAY: Good afternoon. My
24 name is John Suloway, S-U-L-O-W-A-Y. I'm the

1 executive director of the licensing division for the
2 New York Power Authority.

3 In response to requests from the
4 citizens and officials of the Tri-Lakes Region the
5 villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, as well as
6 National Grid and the New York Power Authority agreed
7 to alleviate longstanding power problems in the
8 region through short- and long-term solutions.
9 The -- the purpose of the proposed Tri-Lakes
10 Reliability Project is to increase the reliability of
11 the electric system of the region. The need for the
12 proposed project is immediate and it's real.

13 With certain exceptions, the major
14 infrastructure that supplies electricity to the
15 Tri-Lakes region has not been upgraded or expanded
16 since the late 1970s although the demand for
17 electricity has grown -- grown continuously. The
18 existing electric system has reached its limit to
19 reliably serve the load of the region. The result is
20 frequent -- frequent power outages during periods of
21 high demand, which in this region often occur during
22 the severely cold winter months, which makes this a
23 health and safety concern.

24 To identify the most appropriate

1 long-term solution to the reliability problem,
2 Niagara Mohawk and the New York Power Authority
3 reviewed a number of options including the
4 construction of a power plant in the region and
5 alternative routes for power delivery. The process
6 was conducted with input from representatives of the
7 Adirondack Park Agency, the New York State Department
8 of Environmental Conservation, the New York State
9 Department of Transportation, local municipalities,
10 their state representatives, nongovernmental
11 organizations, local residents and the general public
12 to ensure that the concerns of these parties were
13 addressed in the siting and design process.

14 The Tri-Lakes Reliability Project
15 proposed in the draft environmental impact statement
16 and our applications to the Adirondack Park Agency
17 and the Department of Environmental Conservation were
18 determined -- in -- in the draft environmental impact
19 statement was determined to be the best option to
20 meet the needs of the region based on environmental,
21 engineering and economic considerations. The draft
22 environmental impact statement includes a discussion
23 of the alternatives studied, as well as the studies
24 that were performed to identify the preferred and

1 alternate routes.

2 The proposed forty-six kV line
3 along the preferred route will be approximately
4 twenty-seven miles long. About two-thirds of the
5 proposed route is along existing electric line
6 corridors and roadways whereas the remaining
7 one-third will require new rights of way. The
8 preferred route begins in Parishville, New York, at
9 the proposed Stark Falls substation, and will
10 interconnect with the existing one hundred and
11 fifteen kV system. The preferred route connects to
12 the new regulator station proposed near the existing
13 Piercefield substation where the line ends.

14 The alternate route begins in
15 Clifton, New York, at a new Newton Falls substation
16 and also ends at the Piercefield substation.

17 Wood pole structures will carry the
18 facilities. The proposed project facilities and
19 right-of-way configurations are described in the
20 draft environmental impact statement. The draft
21 environmental impact statement describes the existing
22 conditions within the anticipated project area and
23 identifies the potential impacts of project
24 construction and operation. The D.E.I.S. also

1 describes the proposed techniques for mitigating
2 these impacts.

3 Project operation is anticipated to
4 have a beneficial effect on the Tri-Lakes Region, in
5 that, will -- it will enhance the reliability of the
6 power delivery system in the villages and the region
7 as a whole, and should significantly reduce the
8 number of power outages in the area.

9 This project is being developed in
10 compliance with applicable state and federal
11 environmental regulations, including review under the
12 State Environmental Quality Review Act and the
13 Adirondack Park Agency Act -- excuse me, Adirondack Park Agency
14 Act.

15 Thank you.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

17 Okay. We're just about ready to
18 receive comments. I just want to say that any
19 comments accepted here will be addressed as part of
20 the final environmental -- environmental impact
21 statement that will be prepared. And I would ask
22 the -- the speakers to please limit your -- your
23 comments and questions to five minutes if we can to
24 give everyone a chance to participate. And if you

1 have any additional comments or written comments that
2 you would like to leave with us you can leave them
3 with Steve Ramsey on -- on your way out.

4 At this time, I'd like to invite
5 Senator Betty -- Betty Little to make a statement.
6 And the next person up will be Mayor Jamie Rogers
7 from Lake Placid.

8 Good afternoon.

9 MS. LITTLE: Thank you very much,
10 and good afternoon.

11 I've had the honor of representing
12 the Tupper Lake area since 1995 when I was elected to
13 the New York State Assembly, and continue to
14 represent it as the senator for the Forty-fifth
15 Senate District.

16 When I was first elected to the
17 assembly, one of the first things that I received in
18 my office over the fax machine was a notice of power
19 outage in Tupper Lake. And I thought, "well, that's
20 unfortunate, and the power is out for a couple of
21 hours and you know, that happens here and there."
22 Well, then I continued to get notices on my fax
23 machine of power outages taking place in Tupper Lake
24 over and over and over, and was made aware of the

1 really big issue that they had being at the end of a
2 one-way line, being subjected to having just slight
3 things happen on the line, a tree fall or whatever,
4 and the whole community is without power for a number
5 of hours.

6 This has a huge impact on this
7 community. It has since -- since they've had the
8 power line, and as the needs for electricity have
9 grown. So, the goal is to have reliable power for
10 Tupper Lake; to bring some reliability so that people
11 do not have to rely on a generator; so that a
12 generator is not part of everyone's business plan to
13 operate in Tupper Lake; so people can look at
14 expanding their business; so that we can know that
15 Sunmount and those facilities don't have to be on a
16 generator as often as they are, that their electrical
17 needs are being met as well.

18 There is a committee that formed
19 the Electric Commission, many, many volunteers who
20 work very hard as we begin to organize and apply and
21 advocate for this new power line to come into Tupper
22 Lake. And those people, I -- I believe J.J. Maroun
23 was the first chairman of that and all of the members
24 of that committee worked very, very hard and attended

1 numerous meetings. Some of those meetings I had
2 staff attend, some I attended myself. Some were
3 extremely frustrating. And with many, we would move
4 forward and then we'd move a little back. We
5 continued to move forward. But no one ever gave up
6 because this was such an important issue. It's not
7 just that we would like to have more power and better
8 power line in the Tupper Lake area, we need it. It
9 is part -- it's crucial to the economic development,
10 it's crucial to the well-being of the people that
11 live in this area.

12 As we went forward we realized that
13 not only is this important to the Tupper Lake area,
14 but the Lake Placid area as it continued to grow and
15 had expanding power needs needed more power from --
16 from that one fifteen kV line that was coming in.
17 And by Tupper Lake getting a separate line coming in,
18 in the other direction it would free up some power
19 for the Lake Placid, Saranac Lake area. So, then it
20 became a Tri-Lakes issue, and that certainly brought
21 on more advocates and more need for this power line
22 to take place.

23 I commend the New York Power
24 Authority for their efforts, and I commend Niagara

1 Mohawk, now National Grid. Their name has changed,
2 but many of those people have not changed, and they
3 have continued to understand our needs and to help us
4 as we move forward in this process. All of them have
5 worked together as part of this team to get to this
6 point.

7 And as we stand here today we do
8 have a plan. We have a plan that is going to end the
9 frustration; that is going to bring reliable power to
10 Tupper Lake; improve the health and safety of the
11 residents of the Tri-Lakes area; and certainly help
12 us go forward with economic development in this area.

13 I support, certainly, their efforts
14 and their time spent in looking at routes and the
15 best way, and what is the best way to do this line.
16 And certainly when you are trying to build anything
17 within the Adirondack Park, you have to have a lot of
18 separate special considerations. And they have taken
19 those things into consideration, and I believe have
20 developed a route that is going to really be one that
21 can be easily approved and accepted by the
22 environmental communities as well.

23 The preferred route, the
24 Stark-Sevey Corners-Piercefield route has less of an

1 environmental impact than the alternate route. It
2 has a lower construction cost, which I'm sure is
3 everyone's consideration, and it also allows us to
4 move forward on a schedule that would have a power
5 line operating by the year 2008. The preferred route
6 is -- does not call for any underground crossings
7 which would take special consideration and more
8 permitting. It is about two miles shorter than the
9 alternate route, it's about two million dollars less
10 than the alternate route, and it certainly -- it
11 makes use of existing power poles and that fifteen
12 point six miles of the entire route would -- would be
13 able to be what they call overbuild and put on
14 existing power line poles.

15 It would require less right of way,
16 which in itself, would allow us to have this new
17 route in operation in a much sooner amount of time
18 than what we would -- would have if we had to go the
19 alternate. So, there are many, many reasons why I
20 support the preferred route, and I hope that as we go
21 forward, you will be able to continue on that route
22 and that the A.P.A. will accept that as the preferred
23 way of doing things.

24 But I can't begin to tell you how

1 pleased I am to be standing here in support of this
2 line, and actually having a plan and a schedule, and
3 knowing that this is coming to fruition. This has
4 been a tremendous effort on everyone's part, on the
5 state, the Governor's support, the New York Power
6 Authority, National Grid and everyone locally
7 involved in this in all three communities in the
8 Tri-Lakes. We need this power line.

9 I look forward to -- I don't know
10 if you have a groundbreaking for a power line, but
11 I'd want to be there, at least when they pull the
12 switch and we have the new power coming in.

13 But thank you to everyone who's
14 participated. We would not be at this point today
15 without a tremendous effort on everyone's part, and I
16 thank you very much.

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
18 Senator Little.

19 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Our next
21 speaker will be Mayor Rogers from Lake Placid. And
22 the speaker after that will be the mayor of Tupper
23 Lake, Mayor Demurais.

24 Good afternoon.

1 MR. ROGERS: Shouldn't the hosting
2 community go first?

3 I am Jamie Rogers, the mayor from
4 Lake Placid and it's a privilege to be here today.
5 I'm not going to address the technical aspects of
6 this project, but I would like to stress, just
7 briefly, the needs and the importance that this means
8 to our community, and I believe, the whole Tri-Lakes
9 Region.

10 We're going to hear reliability,
11 public safety and economics. And I would put the
12 public safety first and foremost. And I can tell you
13 all, as a new mayor of our community, knowing what
14 I've learned about power issues in the last few
15 years, that it is extremely -- extremely puts us --
16 our community in a very nervous situation, that when
17 you have a community full of guests, and it's twenty
18 below zero, and you're maxed out, you're extremely
19 nervous that you could have a power failure and have
20 a massive problem in the community. That, I look at
21 from the public safety issue.

22 The reliability issue is of the
23 utmost importance. And we've had a number of times
24 just recently where we have been without power. This

1 double loop into Tupper Lake not only frees us up
2 power, but also makes the Tupper Lake area and our
3 area more reliable.

4 And the other issue, I believe, is
5 the economic issue. Obviously, economic growth in
6 the Tri-Lakes is something that we all encourage and
7 we want, and we try to do that in a very responsible
8 way. We try to be -- control our communities as I
9 look at it as the quality community.

10 However, with new expansions there
11 are new power needs, and we are addressing those in
12 our community. I can tell you that we adopted no
13 more electric heat in commercial facilities. We are
14 requesting that people go to natural gas or other
15 alternatives. We are in the business to generate
16 power -- or to sell power, and that does hurt our
17 revenues. However, we are very aware of the
18 conservation needs that need to take place in the
19 economic development, and we are addressing those
20 today.

21 Take away all the economic growth,
22 if everything stayed the way it is today, we are
23 maxed out. That's the other importance of this line.
24 I think what proves that point is that if you look at

1 the municipal -- the municipal utility of Tupper Lake
2 they are on generators in the winter, it stands by
3 when we're maxed out that they have to come up,
4 operate those generators to reduce the load in this
5 area.

6 In the village of Lake Placid we
7 have worked with our high school, the O.T.C., we've
8 worked with ORDA, we've worked with a couple of
9 private facilities that have generation, we
10 established a load-shedding program, so that when
11 National Grid said to our communities that we are in
12 a dangerous situation, we contact those areas --
13 those -- those facilities and fire up the generators
14 to load shed.

15 So, those three things, I think are
16 the three things that I think are most important to
17 this project.

18 The other thing I think you may end
19 up hearing over the next few hours is another
20 alternative that people may think that energy
21 conservation is the way. To implement energy
22 conservation would allow our communities and this
23 agreement not to go forth, that through proper energy
24 conservation we don't need the power line.

1 I don't agree with that. I think
2 energy conservation is a must to our area, but I
3 think the big thing about energy conservation is, A,
4 right now it creates public awareness, and with
5 public awareness in our community we've implemented
6 light bulb programs, Energy Star programs, but I
7 don't believe that you're going to be able to shed
8 enough power to reduce the needs and take care of the
9 growth in the future. I think the bright spot of
10 energy conservation is it's the future and I think as
11 technological advantages and alternatives come up
12 through public awareness, we will be at the forefront
13 of implementing some of those programs in our
14 community.

15 The other thing I would like to
16 say, and I would like to thank the senator for her
17 help. This has been an ongoing dialogue. And I want
18 to thank the Senator for her help, as I just
19 mentioned. I want to thank Gene Zeltman of the New
20 York State Power Authority for their help. And I
21 also want to thank the village of Tupper Lake,
22 National Grid, D.E.C. and the A.P.A.

23 For those of you who don't know,
24 for the last two years we sat together in dialogue to

1 discuss viable solutions to this need. And this
2 project and the public hearing that we're holding
3 today, I believe with the help and the input of all
4 the people I just thanked, is what we all
5 collaboratively agree on as to be the best solution
6 for our needs to date and for our future.

7 So, with that said, I thank you.

8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
9 Mayor Rogers.

10 Our next speaker will be Mayor
11 Demurais from Tupper Lake. And after that, Mr. Jim
12 Ellis.

13 MR. DEMURAIS: Good afternoon.

14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Afternoon.

15 MR. DEMURAIS: First of all, I'd
16 like to thank the people that got us where we are
17 this afternoon. And just to name a few, you know,
18 New York State Power Authority, National Grid, John
19 Bouck, our superintendent, past board members, and
20 you know, former Mayor Strader made many, many trips
21 to Albany, along with the committee we set up.

22 What this -- what this line is
23 going to do, you know, this could propel Tupper Lake
24 into a much better and safer future. Economically,

1 it propels us into a better economic fashion. And I
2 dare say that this is what happens when you've got a
3 combined effort with good team work. When everybody
4 gets together and everybody gets together for one
5 reason, and -- and you can make things happen.

6 One other note. There -- there is
7 a side note to this. Every time the lights used to
8 go out my kids used to get excited, because we'd go
9 in the back yard and build a fire to cook breakfast
10 or something. I've made a little grill to cook food
11 on our wood stove. So, my grandson hears these
12 things, and he said dad, when -- or "Papa," he says,
13 "when is the lights going to go out." I said
14 hopefully not so -- but -- so there is a sad side to
15 it, but it did create good memories when the lights
16 go out unfortunately, so -- anyway I'd like to thank
17 everybody again that -- that got us where we are
18 today.

19 Thank you.

20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
21 Mayor.

22 Our next speaker, Mr. Jim Ellis.
23 And after that, Jim Frenette.

24 MR. ELLIS: Good afternoon.

1 THE HEARING OFFICER: Good
2 afternoon.

3 MR. ELLIS: I'm a staff member of
4 the Adirondack North Country Association. On behalf
5 of its board, excuse me, I'd like to -- I'd like to
6 read a short statement from them in support of the
7 project if I may.

8 Adirondack North Country
9 Association's statement in support of the New York
10 Power Authority's Tri-Lakes Electric Reliability
11 Project.

12 During 2005 the Adirondack North
13 Country Association's board of directors met to
14 discuss the New York Power Authority's Tri-Lakes
15 Electric Reliability Project. ANCA directors are
16 pleased with the extensive work planned to address
17 the power needs in Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Saranac
18 Lake and surrounding communities. The ANCA directors
19 acknowledge the need for long-term and reliable power
20 for our residents and businesses throughout the
21 Tri-Lakes Region.

22 More specifically the Power
23 Authority's options as outlined in the Project
24 provide adequate alternatives to achieve a reliable

1 power to the region. Headquartered in Saranac Lake,
2 the Adirondack North Country Association is committed
3 to economically viable communities and an improved
4 rural quality of life.

5 That is the statement from the
6 Adirondack North Country Association.

7 I would like to enter into the
8 record something that I -- I read a few moments ago,
9 and thought it was just outstanding and well done.
10 It's an editorial in today's issue of the Tupper Lake

11 Free Press, the paper dated January 11, 2006, and it

12 was written by Dan McClelland, who is the editor and
13 one of the publishers of the Tupper Lake Free Press.

14 I will not read it, but I will leave it here to be
15 entered into the record.

16 I'm not going to sign my name as
17 Jim Ellis, M-A-M-E-D-C-A-S. Some of those who are
18 local understand what that means.

19 Although I've lived here all my
20 life I'm not -- I'm not unused to these -- to these
21 particular problems. Except for the four years in --
22 in college and five years in the army I made it my
23 choice to come back here.

24 It would be interesting to note,

1 though, that since July 27th of 1989 through October
2 9 of 2004 five hundred and thirty-five hours of
3 outages in Tupper Lake. And of that, NiMo was
4 responsible for only thirty-five. Those were things
5 where they had to shut the line down in order to do
6 what was necessary as far as necessary maintenance or
7 switching gears or whatever.

8 I don't think there's another part
9 of the state that would have to tolerate, nor would
10 they tolerate, that kind of -- that kind of
11 electrical outage.

12 In the twenty years that I served
13 as high school principal, I can tell you the number
14 of days that we've had to tell kids who probably were
15 only going to get their only hot lunch in school that
16 they had to eat peanut butter sandwiches, because the
17 electricity was out and we couldn't cook. And a
18 thousand -- a thousand of our students either were
19 let go during the day because the building got too
20 cold, or suffered through whatever we had to suffer
21 through. Kids didn't get instructed, and the food
22 didn't get prepared, and a lot of kids went home to
23 houses that I thought were basically pretty
24 dangerous. In most cases, they had wood fires, and I

1 certainly wouldn't want my young children going home
2 and building a wood fire, nor attending one.

3 My eighty-three-year-old dad, in
4 order to make sure that he didn't freeze during the
5 few years prior to now that he -- he was alive, I put
6 a generator over at his house to power his house to
7 make sure that he -- he wouldn't have to be brought
8 out and be brought down to a shelter, which we've had
9 to do here in the past.

10 Just a quick rundown and that's all
11 I'm going to do.

12 The whole thing that we're dealing
13 with here is reliability. It's really a health and
14 safety issue. It's to keep people from freezing to
15 death in the dark, you know. And we don't want to
16 see that happen. And I think over the years, this
17 twenty-five to thirty-year process that we're just
18 hopefully coming to the end of, is -- is going to be
19 the end of that kind of a problem where you don't
20 have to worry about being a third -- you know, a
21 third-nation country anymore, but rather someone who
22 lives in New York State in the 21st Century.

23 The whole idea of reliability is
24 based on the fact that Tupper Lake's power needs

1 right now, are served with what's known as a radial
2 line. It's a dead end, it comes into Tupper Lake, it
3 stops here. That's it. So, if anything happens in
4 the twenty-three miles between Tupper and where we're
5 serviced from in Lake Colby, we're the only ones that
6 suffer from it. Although Lake Placid has had its
7 share and Saranac Lake its share, the greatest share
8 fell on Tupper Lake.

9 So, now with the new line, and by
10 the way I think most of us believe that the
11 preferred -- the preferred route is both most
12 reasonable and less -- less of a problem
13 environmentally. That -- that's the one that I think
14 as a member of the electric commission that was
15 appointed by Mayor Strader a few years ago, that's
16 the one that I -- I prefer myself.

17 But so many people say, "well, why
18 don't you just fix the line that's already there?"

19 You can't shut down the electric
20 line for months on end while it's being repaired.
21 So, the only thing we can do is to build a new line
22 to take up whatever -- whatever slack is going to be
23 felt on this end while we're, in fact, repairing or
24 making necessary and essential repairs to the

1 twenty-three-mile radial line that dead ends in
2 Tupper Lake.

3 This actually helps Lake Placid, it
4 helps Saranac Lake, it helps all of the people of the
5 Tri-Lakes, because whatever power Tupper Lake is
6 taking from that side now can be thrown back into the
7 grid, and we don't have to worry, as Mayor Rogers
8 pointed out, quite frankly, that -- that we have to
9 worry about browning out or load shedding or doing
10 all the other things that are necessary because we do
11 have a very aggressive energy conservation program
12 going on here. The new line and necessary repairs to
13 the switching sites make more economic sense if we do
14 it this way.

15 Proposed routing along major
16 highways, Route 56, and then later Route 3 into
17 Piercefield, makes -- makes an awful lot of sense.
18 It doesn't require, as I -- as I see it, it doesn't
19 require any more -- you know, the usage of any more
20 private citizen property. What it's basically going
21 to do is it's going to rise -- make a little bit of a
22 rise in the telephone poles to accommodate a
23 forty-six k line and it will be strung essentially on
24 the same line of poles that are presently in place.

1 And I want to thank Senator Little
2 for all the work that she did on -- on behalf of her
3 constituency here in -- in the Tri-Lakes. She was a
4 tiger. She's too much of a lady to tell you -- to
5 tell you how she come out of the starting blocks at
6 one meeting I was at, and I said, "oh, my God," it
7 was really great to see. But you are a tiger,
8 Senator, and we thank you very much for what you did
9 for us.

10 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

11 MR. ELLIS: We do owe an awful lot
12 of debt to her predecessor, Senator Ron Stafford, but
13 it was Senator Little that brought the -- brought the
14 thing to completion working with us.

15 A special thank to you Mayor
16 Strader who appointed the electric commission, and
17 after twenty-five to thirty years of -- of breast
18 beating, and you know, chitchat and idle conversation
19 we finally got a chance to get some things.

20 It couldn't have been done, of
21 course, without John Bouck, our electric
22 superintendent, and I certainly commend him, his
23 expertise, his crew and all the rest of the guys from
24 the Village of Tupper Lake Municipal Electric System,

1 along with the gentlemen from Lake Placid who were at
2 our side every step of the way down there at -- at
3 these meetings in Albany.

4 NiMo was very good. NiMo did a
5 great job of helping us through some -- some
6 difficult times. I don't know if I have the number
7 available, at hand, but I do believe that NiMo is in
8 this for at least ten million to fifteen million.

9 Am I correct?

10 Ten to fifteen million dollars of
11 the total cost. NiMo will share that with the
12 villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, who are also
13 in the bag for some millions of dollars in order to
14 make sure that we've invested in our own future.

15 NYPA is one of the premier agencies
16 of the state of New York. Gene Zeltman, its recently
17 retired chairman, was an excellent, excellent guide.
18 He -- he helped us so much with -- with all of the
19 things we had to negotiate and without -- without --
20 without leaving anybody out, I do want to say thank
21 you to John Hayward (phonetic spelling) who was also
22 one of the -- one of the guys that worked extremely
23 hard with us. But everybody here from NYPA, I really
24 thank you all for what you've done for us.

1 Thank you, Governor Pataki. He
2 came up here last November and announced this line
3 was going -- going to happen. And his interest in
4 the people of the Tri-Lakes is certainly without --
5 without diminution. He's -- he's just been -- he's
6 just been great.

7 So, on behalf of -- of all of us
8 here, this is the preferred alternative. We would
9 like to see the -- we would like to see the switch
10 thrown in 2008. I will not use an electric shovel if
11 there is a -- or excuse me, a metal shovel if there
12 is a groundbreaking. I don't want to get too close
13 to a transformer.

14 But thank you so much. And I
15 appreciate it. Thank you.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Ellis. Yeah.

18 Actually, give it to Steve over
19 there at the table. Thank you.

20 Mr. Frenette is up next.

21 MR. FRENETTE: Thank you.

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yeah.

23 MR. FRENETTE: And good afternoon.

24 My name is Jim Frenette, I'm a full-time, lifetime

1 resident of the town of Tupper Lake, town of
2 Altamont -- yeah, town of Tupper Lake. Yeah, excuse
3 me. I date myself.

4 I first became involved in this
5 problem over twenty years ago when along with then
6 Mayor Earl Fletcher, we went to Syracuse to meet with
7 the NiMo people, seeking a resolution to our
8 unreliable source of electric power and the resulting
9 impact on the lives of people and economic activity
10 in Tupper Lake.

11 Now, today happens to be my
12 seventy-seventh birthday and that represents a lot of
13 candles on the cake, but a lot more candles have been
14 since lit -- have been lit since that meeting by
15 residents cursing the darkness of yet another power
16 outage. This has been a long and often frustrating
17 process. We are now in the second generation of
18 people working on the solution of this problem.
19 Young men and women I had in class as a teacher of
20 the elementary school are now part of the town and
21 village board and serve on the committees dealing
22 with this problem. It has been a long and
23 frustrating process.

24 However, with people like Gene

1 Zeltman and Senator Little, who have demonstrated the
2 ability to view -- to view the problem from top to
3 bottom; the ability to work with all the factors and
4 all the actors from the corporate point of view,
5 elected officials, consideration of the environmental
6 and economic implications, down to the little old
7 lady shivering in the dark, possibly cursing the
8 darkness as she lights yet another candle; this has
9 enabled a solution to be crafted that has -- has been
10 avoided being crafted by crafty people for decades.
11 We now have a solution to the regional and not just
12 this local problem.

13 Now, we all know that this is not a
14 perfect world and this is not a perfect solution,
15 however, if the goal is perfection we can look
16 forward to another decade of delay, darkness and
17 despair. The goal should not be perfection, but to
18 strive to do our best to develop a plan that serves
19 the greatest needs of the greatest number of people
20 and do it in a most reasonable manner. And I believe
21 that this proposal does just that, and it is long
22 past the time for us to replace dialogue with deeds.

23 And my thanks to all of the people,
24 of all those who -- who were involved in this, who

1 worked so diligently over many years to achieve this
2 goal. We have met the need -- excuse me. I skipped
3 a part of this. A lot more -- oh boy, I should have
4 rehearsed this.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Take your
6 time.

7 MR. FRENETTE: Oh, I'm not in a
8 hurry.

9 THE HEARING OFFICER: There's no
10 hurry.

11 MR. FRENETTE: I don't really --
12 it's still my birthday party.

13 Thanks are due to all those people
14 at all levels of involvement who have worked so
15 diligently over many years to achieve this goal. We
16 have the need, we have the plan, now let's implement
17 it.

18 Thank you.

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Frenette.

21 Our next speaker is Franklin County
22 Legislator Tim Burpoe, if he's here.

23 MR. BURPOE: I -- I'll make this
24 brief.

1 My name is Tim Burpoe, Franklin
2 County Legislator from District Seven. I represent
3 the -- the towns of Harrietstown and Franklin and the
4 Franklin County portion of -- of Saranac Lake.

5 I do, too, want to thank Senator
6 Little for the tenacity that she -- she brings to
7 this project, but also to NYPA, NiMo, National Grid,
8 the villages and towns and believe it or not, the
9 D.E.C. and the Adirondack Park Agency.

10 But -- but all kidding aside,
11 it's -- it's a tremendous project, and -- and what --
12 what it's going to do for our communities here in the
13 Adirondacks is just kind of pretty much give us what
14 everybody else has in the state of New York. So,
15 really, I -- I'm pleased that we're finally seeing a
16 plan, we're getting down to the finish line. We've
17 just got to keep an eye on the prize.

18 My main concern, and I -- and I
19 expressed it before, but I thought what the heck,
20 might as well say it one more time, is my -- my
21 concern is the cost. And you know -- and -- and when
22 we -- when Niagara Mohawk and -- and National Grid
23 takes this over in 2012 I think it is, what's that
24 going to do to the ratepayers that are going to be

1 paying this?

2 I -- I -- I understand that NYPA's
3 going to be funding this for the next twelve years or
4 so, but until that time that National Grid takes it
5 over and then they start passing it over to our
6 ratepayers, it's going to be a difficult, and -- and
7 probably overburdensome expense for the -- the people
8 of the Adirondacks. So, I am concerned about that.
9 If we could straighten that line out and run right
10 down the -- the -- the highway, which probably would
11 have saved a few more million of dollars.

12 But I think that the alternative --
13 the -- the -- the proposal today is -- is a viable
14 one. It's going to be beneficial to the people of
15 the Adirondacks and I'm pleased that we're getting
16 towards the finish line.

17 So, thank you very much and a great
18 job.

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
20 Legislator Burpoe.

21 Is there anyone else that would
22 like to make a statement?

23 We're -- we're not going to adjourn
24 the hearing until five p.m., because that's what we

1 published, so we will be here in case someone comes
2 in to make a statement. So, you're welcome to stay
3 or leave. We'll be here at the table and -- in case
4 someone shows up between now and five p.m.

5 But thank you for attending.

6 (A recess was taken at 2:44 p.m.)

7 (The public hearing resumed at 3:13
8 p.m.)

9 THE HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Peter Day
10 from Tupper Lake, New York. And go ahead and make
11 your statement regarding the Tri-Lakes Reliability
12 Project. We would appreciate it. Thank you. The
13 meeting --.

14 MR. DAY: My name is Peter S. Day,
15 I am a local business person in Tupper Lake. I'm
16 the manager of Day's Wholesale, Incorporated, and I
17 am also a previous owner of Big Tupper Ski Area in
18 Tupper Lake.

19 I would like to say that it is
20 extremely important that we have reliable power in
21 Tupper Lake. I have lived -- I've been in business
22 in Tupper Lake since 1980 as an independent
23 businessperson and as a resident, a full-time
24 resident. And I have seen the reliability issues

1 throughout the last twenty-five years. We've had
2 outages that have occurred in Tupper Lake that have
3 lasted as long as forty-eight hours in
4 life-threatening -- created life-threatening
5 situations, where it was in very low-temperature
6 conditions.

7 I'll go back to my business aspect
8 of it. In the year 1999 we installed a forty-five kW
9 propane generator at a cost of thirty thousand
10 dollars to operate my business to deal with the
11 reliability issues, because we could not be out of
12 power. It cost me a lot more money to be out of
13 power, but it -- it has cost me a lot of money to
14 remain in business here just to -- to -- to put the
15 generator in.

16 I'd like to address the issue of --
17 as being a former president of Big Tupper Ski Area
18 and majority shareholder, we had a life-threatening
19 situation at one point in time, probably -- I can't
20 recall the year. We had a power outage, and we had
21 people on a ski lift at zero Fahrenheit air
22 temperature. It created a life-threatening
23 situation. We were able to run the lift with a
24 gasoline engine and get the -- get the skiers off the

1 lift, but there has been many instances of
2 life-threatening situations in Tupper Lake in
3 cold-weather situations when there has been a power
4 outage.

5 This is extremely important to the
6 community. Our community, in my opinion, can no
7 longer have any growth whatsoever without this power
8 line. We would have to have diesel power on the days
9 that it's twenty, thirty below zero. There is not
10 enough electricity to go around. Everyone in the
11 community is asked, in that situation, to curtail
12 their power usage; all the businesses are asked to
13 curtail their power usages; individuals are asked to
14 not use their showers and their hot water heaters in
15 the morning; you're asked to keep your electric heat
16 turned down, just so that power can be maintained in
17 the entire community.

18 Power is -- electrical power is not
19 a privilege, it's a right. And we have the right,
20 even though some people think that we live in the
21 Adirondack Park and our rights are not the same as
22 other areas of the country, we have the right to have
23 reliable continuous power in Tupper Lake.

24 That's about all I've got to say.

1 Thank you.

2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
3 Mr. Day. And your comments will be included and
4 considered in the final environmental impact
5 statement. That's where you'll see a response to
6 that.

7 MR. DAY: Thank you.

8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Our next
9 speaker, Mr. Dan McClelland.

10 MR. MCCLELLAND: Thank you.

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'm sorry,
12 you missed the introduction and for the project
13 description. Are you interested in that, or do you
14 want to just --?

15 MR. MCCLELLAND: Well, I've been
16 following the issue on that and I've read your --
17 your various announcements, so, yes -- yes, I'm quite
18 familiar with the project.

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. I mean
20 I -- I -- we can go through it again, or you can just
21 go ahead and make your statement.

22 MR. MCCLELLAND: No, it's okay.

23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

24 MR. MCCLELLAND: I can provide you

1 with it probably.

2 I'm a local businessman and a local
3 landowner/landlord. Whenever we have a power outage
4 here it creates a tremendous trauma in the community.
5 We have -- I have people in my apartments who will
6 sit alone in the dark and shiver. Many times I've
7 gone around with portable generators. I -- I -- I
8 remember back to an outage -- a thirty-three-hour
9 outage. It was -- it -- it could have been
10 horrendously life-threatening. Unfortunately -- or
11 fortunately, the temperature stayed about like the
12 temperature today, so people could -- could endure
13 apartments that were forty degrees and thirty --
14 thirty-eight degrees.

15 In Tupper Lake we've had to bear
16 this for -- for years and years and years. Power
17 outages here are -- are like a -- like a way of life.
18 They're like when the -- we have a -- we have a --
19 kind of an expression here, whenever the wind blows,
20 expect the power to go out. We're dependent on a
21 radial line from Lake Clear that goes through a very
22 heavily forested area and every time a branch falls
23 on a tree, the tree -- or the limb falls on the line,
24 out goes our power.

1 Now, typically when the power goes
2 out here on that radial line, very few times in the
3 many outages we've -- we've had here, do I ever
4 remember the power coming in less than four hours.
5 It's get ready -- the power goes out, get ready,
6 you're going to wait for four hours before it comes
7 back.

8 I -- I lived in a couple other
9 communities, and normally when their power would go
10 out it would be a bit of a blip, and boom, the power
11 would come. They -- they were on some sort of
12 circular feed, and -- and that's what I deserve we
13 should be on. We -- we shouldn't be any different
14 than anyplace else in America. We shouldn't be
15 dependent on a radial line; we shouldn't be dependent
16 on Mother Nature to keep from -- the wind from
17 blowing; we should have some kind of proper reliable
18 system to provide electricity to this community.

19 We're also -- I was with the
20 Chamber of Commerce for a lot of years. There can be
21 no growth in Tupper Lake without this power. Right
22 now we have an electrical heat moratorium. The --
23 basically that says to me that -- that there will be
24 no growth here until we get an available power

1 source. We're looking to become a tourist community.
2 Can you imagine having three or four hundred -- if
3 we're fortunate enough to eventually have three or
4 four hundred rooms here, can you imagine having three
5 or four hundred people staying in your community on a
6 cold winter weekend, the power goes out, they're
7 stuck in a motel room without any auxiliary power? I
8 mean, it's pretty scary stuff. Of course, they have
9 the good fortune of getting the -- the good luck
10 perhaps of getting in a car and going back to
11 wherever they came from.

12 This is -- this issue -- I'm a
13 local newspaper publisher, and this is probably the
14 number one issue in Tupper Lake, unreliable power.
15 People worry about it. Again, as I said, as a
16 landlord, I have little old ladies who -- who worry,
17 they -- they start to shiver as soon as the lights
18 start to flicker.

19 I see Tupper Lake stymied. I see
20 us in continual danger until the time we have a
21 second transmission line and a backup power feed to
22 this community.

23 I guess that's all I have to say.
24 Thank you.

1 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you
2 very much.

3 And let me just add, your comments
4 will be considered in the final environmental impact
5 statement, so you'll see it --.

6 MR. MCCLELLAND: My editorial was
7 submitted earlier and I appreciate that as well.

8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Yeah.

9 MR. MCCLELLAND: I could have read
10 it, but I thought I'd print it.

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay.

12 MR. MCCLELLAND: Thank you.

13 (A recess was taken at 3:21 p.m.)

14 (The public hearing resumed at 4:00
15 p.m.)

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thanks for
17 coming in.

18 MS. NELSON: Thank you.

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: This is the
20 State Environmental Quality Review Act public hearing
21 for the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project. And we did a
22 project introduction and description. If you want us
23 to, we can go through that again for you, or if you
24 just want to make your statement you can do that.

1 MS. NELSON: Yeah, I think I
2 just -- because I'm -- I'm somewhat familiar with
3 what you're here for.

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. I'm
5 the hearing officer, and you're Sylvie --

6 MS. NELSON: Sylvie Nelson.

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: -- Nelson?

8 MS. NELSON: I'm the executive
9 director at the Saranac Lake Area Chamber of
10 Commerce.

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Please
12 make your statement, and it will be considered as
13 part of the final environmental impact statement that
14 will be prepared for this project.

15 MS. NELSON: Well, I am here in
16 support of the project, purely on a business -- as I
17 represent four hundred businesses plus in the Saranac
18 Lake area. We work very closely here with the
19 Chamber in Tupper Lake as well, and -- and for us
20 it's -- it's very crucial that power be efficient,
21 and it would be available in somewhat adverse
22 conditions as the weather can be temperamental and so
23 on. And we understand that having reliable power is
24 basically at the basis -- at the basis of the -- the

1 business community. And in turn, also as -- as a
2 whole, for the entire community.

3 So, I think that's it.

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: That's it?

5 MS. NELSON: Yes.

6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Well,
7 thank you very much for your statement.

8 MS. NELSON: Thank you.

9 (A recess was taken at 4:02 p.m.)

10 (The public hearing resumed at 4:26
11 p.m.)

12 THE HEARING OFFICER: The State
13 Environmental Quality Review Act public hearing for
14 the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project, and we -- we had
15 an introductory session where we described the
16 project. If you want us to go through that, we can,
17 or if you just want to make your statement --.

18 MR. BUTTON: You don't need to go
19 through it again for me.

20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. So,
21 please go ahead, make your statement and your
22 comments will be factored into the final
23 environmental impact statement when that is prepared.
24 And there is a draft environmental impact statement

1 out right now, which is on a web site and it's also
2 in several repositories like libraries and --

3 MR. BUTTON: Okay.

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: -- so, Mr.
5 Button, please go ahead.

6 MR. BUTTON: My name is John
7 Button, and I'm a councilman for the town of Tupper
8 Lake. And I would like to say how important this
9 project is for the future development of Tupper Lake.
10 I hope this project will get underway as quickly as
11 possible so that a reliable source of power can be
12 counted on for the Tupper Lake area. I've lived here
13 for thirty plus years now, and all too many times me
14 and my family have gone without electricity for
15 sometimes hours on end, because we could not count on
16 the reliability of the transmission line that we have
17 into Tupper Lake now. So, I encourage all the
18 parties concerned to get this project going as
19 quickly as possible, and take care of what I see as a
20 serious need to be fulfilled here in this area.

21 Thank you.

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Thank
23 you very much.

24 (A recess was taken at 4:27 p.m.)

1 (The public hearing resumed at 5:00
2 p.m.)

3 THE HEARING OFFICER: This is the
4 Tri-Lakes Reliability Project State Environmental
5 Quality Review Act public hearing, and it's going to
6 be adjourned -- it's five o'clock. It will be
7 adjourned until six p.m. We'll open up the hearing
8 again.

9 (The public hearing concluded at
10 5:00 p.m.)

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1 I, Howard P. Hubbard, do hereby certify that the
 2 foregoing was taken by me, in the cause, at the time
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1 NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
2
TRI-LAKES RELIABILITY PROJECT
3
STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT
4 (SEQRA) HEARING

5
6
7

DATE: January 11, 2006

8

TIME: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

9

LOCATION: Ivy Terrace Room
38 Boyer Avenue
Tupper Lake, New York

10

11

BEFORE: Edward Alkiewicz
Hearing Officer
New York Power Authority

12

13

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23

24

Associated Reporters Int'l, Inc.
e-mail Courtsteno@aol.com

(800) 523-7887

COPY

1 APPEARANCES :

2 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
3 CONSERVATION:

3

John Suloway

4

Steve Ramsey

5

SPEAKERS:

6

Jamie Rogers

Kevin Buckley

7

John Davis

Peter S. Day

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Martin Ryan

Carl Hathaway

9

Paul Maroun

John Bouck

10

Peter Bauer

Chad Martin

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1 (The public hearing commenced at
2 6:00 p.m.)

3 THE HEARING OFFICER: It's now six
4 p.m. and we are going to reopen the Tri-Lakes
5 Reliability Project State Environmental Quality
6 Review Act public hearing. And I think I'm going to
7 wait before we begin the introductions until there's
8 some more people in attendance.

9 (A recess was taken at 6:00 p.m.)

10 (The public hearing resumed at 6:15
11 p.m.)

12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Good evening.
13 My name is Edward Alkiewicz, I'm an environmental
14 scientist with the New York Power Authority. And the
15 reason we're here today is to conduct a State
16 Environmental Quality Review Act public hearing on
17 the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project. And we will
18 accept comments after I make some introductory
19 remarks. And I have some -- the names of some
20 people. I will call out your name so you can be
21 ready to prepare and make your statements.

22 The following notice has appeared
23 in the following newspapers: The Adirondack Daily

24 _____
Enterprise, The Tupper Lake Free Press, The Watertown

1 Daily Times and The Plattsburgh Press Republican.

2 And the -- the project number is two thousand and
3 five dash one, and it was appeared on December 21st,
4 2005. This notice is issued pursuant to 21 NYCRR
5 Part 461 of the implementing regulations pertaining
6 to Article 8, State Environmental Quality Review Act
7 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

8 The New York Power Authority, as
9 lead agency, has determined that the proposed action
10 described below may have a significant impact on the
11 environment and a draft environmental impact
12 statement has been prepared. Comments are requested,
13 and will be accepted by the contact person, until
14 January 31st, 2006. A NYPA State Environmental
15 Quality Review Act public hearing on the D.E.I.S.
16 will be held on Wednesday, January 11th, 2006 -
17 that's today - from two to five p.m. and six to nine
18 p.m. at the Ivy Terrace Room, 38 Boyer Avenue in
19 Tupper Lake, New York. The snow date is Thursday,
20 January 12th. Which we won't need.

21 The name of the action is the
22 Tri-Lakes Reliability Project. It's SEQR status. It
23 is a type one action. Under scoping activities
24 series of outreach meetings from spring to fall 2005

1 were held with interested parties, including local
2 municipal governments and nongovernmental
3 organizations during the development of the D.E.I.S.
4 An outreach meeting open to the general public was
5 held on June 10th, 2005, with residents invited to
6 express their concerns and issues with the project.
7 Nongovernmental organizations and municipal
8 governments were also invited to the outreach meeting
9 for the general public. A section of the project web
10 page was established for those who wanted to submit
11 comments on the project after the outreach meeting.

12 And if anybody needs the address of
13 the web site we will give it to you after this
14 session.

15 A description of the action: The
16 proposal involves the installation of a new forty-six
17 kV electric line to help upgrade the existing
18 electric system in the Tri-Lakes Region. The
19 proposed project is to be located in the Adirondack
20 Park in St. Lawrence County, New York. The project
21 is being developed as a cooperative effort between
22 the villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, the
23 Power Authority and National Grid to alleviate
24 longstanding power problems in the region.

1 The location of the project: There
2 are actually two routes. There is a preferred route
3 and alternate route. The preferred route begins near
4 the Stark Reservoir in the town of Parishville
5 heading south along the shoulder to State Route 56
6 until reaching forest preserved lands near Sevey Bog.
7 It would then travel west and circle south around the
8 forest preserved parcel before heading east to again
9 follow State Route 56 south to Sevey Corners in the
10 town of Colton. The line then travels east along
11 State Route 3 to connect with an existing substation
12 in Piercefield. An existing transmission line will
13 bring the power from the Piercefield substation to
14 the Tupper Lake substation.

15 The alternate route begins in
16 Newton Falls in the town of Clifton heading east
17 through Cook Corners, east along an existing
18 snowmobile trail to State Route 3 and proceeding
19 easterly to Sevey Corners in the town of Colton. It
20 would then continue east along State Route 3 to
21 connect with an existing substation in Piercefield.
22 An existing transmission line will bring the power
23 from the Piercefield substation to the Tupper Lake
24 substation.

1 The reasons for supporting this
2 determination: A positive declaration has been
3 determined based on the following impacts:

4 One, wetlands will be temporarily
5 impacted during construction and may experience
6 temporary changes in hydrology, aesthetic value and
7 wildlife. To the extent the line goes through
8 forested wetlands, operational maintenance of the
9 line will cause long-term conversion of those areas
10 to shrub, scrub or low-growing conifer-dominated
11 wetlands.

12 Two, expansion of the utility right
13 of way will create a visual impact along roadways and
14 waterways.

15 Three, construction of access roads
16 and placement of utility poles will have a visual
17 impact on roadways and waterways.

18 Physical change -- and four,
19 lastly, there will be physical changes to over one
20 hundred acres of land.

21 For further information or a copy
22 of the draft D.E.I.S. in addition to the web -- web
23 page, you may contact Steve Ramsey, community
24 relations manager, New York Power Authority,

1 Blenheim-Gilboa Visitors Center, 1378 State Route 30,
2 North Blenheim, New York 12131.

3 And Mr. Steve Ramsey is present
4 tonight, and you can see him after the session if you
5 wish.

6 At this time I would like to
7 introduce John Suloway, the director of licensing for
8 the Power Authority, who will describe the project.

9 John?

10 MR. SULOWAY: Good evening.

11 In response to requests from the
12 citizens and officials of the Tri-Lakes Region, the
13 villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, National
14 Grid and the New York Power Authority agreed to
15 alleviate longstanding power problems in the region
16 through a set of short and long-term solutions. The
17 purpose of the proposed Tri-Lakes Reliability Project
18 is to increase the reliability of the electric system
19 in this region. The need for the proposed project is
20 immediate and real.

21 With certain exceptions, the major
22 infrastructure that supplies electricity to the
23 Tri-Lakes Region has not been upgraded or expanded
24 since the -- since the late 1970s, although the

1 demand for electricity has grown continuously. The
2 existing electric system has reached its limit to
3 reliably serve the load in this region. The result
4 is frequent power outages during periods of high
5 demand, which in this region often occur during the
6 severely cold winter months, which makes this a
7 health and safety concern.

8 To identify the most appropriate
9 long-term solution to the reliability problem,
10 Niagara Mohawk and the New York Power Authority
11 reviewed a number of options, including construction
12 of a power plant in the region, and alternative
13 routes for power delivery. The process was conducted
14 with input from representatives of the Adirondack
15 Park Agency, the New York Department of Environmental
16 Conservation, the New York State Department of
17 Transportation, local municipalities, nongovernmental
18 organizations, local residents and the general
19 public. This was done to ensure that the concerns of
20 these parties were addressed in the siting and design
21 process.

22 The Tri-Lakes Reliability Project
23 proposed in this draft environmental impact
24 statement, and in our applications to the Adirondack

1 Park Agency and the D.E.C., was determined to be the
2 best option to meet the needs of the region based on
3 environmental, engineering and economic
4 considerations. The draft environmental impact
5 statement includes a discussion of the alternatives
6 studied, as well as the studies that were performed
7 to identify the preferred and alternate routes.

8 The proposed -- proposed forty-six
9 kV line along the preferred route will be
10 approximately twenty-seven miles long. About
11 two-thirds of the proposed route is along existing
12 electric line corridors and roadways, whereas the
13 remaining one-third will require new rights of way.
14 The preferred route begins in Parishville, New York,
15 at the proposed Stark Falls substation, and will
16 interconnect with the existing one hundred and
17 fifteen kV system. The preferred route connects to a
18 new regulator station near the existing Piercefield
19 substation where the line ends.

20 The alternate route begins in
21 Clifton, New York, at a new Newton Falls substation
22 and also ends at the Piercefield substation.

23 Wood pole structures will carry the
24 facilities. The proposed project facilities and the

1 right-of-way configurations are described in the
2 draft environmental impact statement.

3 The draft environmental impact
4 statement describes the existing conditions within
5 the anticipated project area, and identifies the
6 potential impacts of project construction and
7 operation. The D.E.I.S. also describes the proposed
8 techniques for mitigating these impacts. Project
9 operation is anticipated to have a beneficial effect
10 on the Tri-Lakes Region, in that, will -- it will
11 enhance the reliability of the power delivery system
12 in the villages and the region as a whole, and
13 should -- should significantly reduce the number of
14 power outages in the area.

15 This project is being developed in
16 compliance with applicable state and federal
17 environmental regulations, including review under the
18 State Environmental Quality Review Act and the
19 Adirondack Park Agency Act.

20 Thank you.

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
22 John.

23 At this time we will begin
24 accepting other public comments. And as I said

1 earlier, comments are -- will be accepted until
2 January 31st. Aside from tonight you can also mail
3 in comments until January 31st, 2006. And any
4 comments that are taken today or by January 31st will
5 be addressed in the final environmental impact
6 statement.

7 Okay, Marty?

8 MR. RYAN: And will you be taking
9 any questions?

10 THE HEARING OFFICER: No, just
11 statements. I mean, you can pose a question at the
12 podium, but I will not be able to answer it here
13 today. It will be addressed in the final
14 environmental impact statement; okay?

15 At this time -- Marty, if you want
16 to fill out a card to -- to make a statement, go
17 right up to the desk, and they'll accommodate you.
18 That's the best way to get your comment into the
19 system.

20 At this time I'm going to invite
21 Mayor Jamie Rogers from the village of Lake Placid to
22 come up and make a statement. And the -- the next
23 speaker will be Kevin Buckley, the supervisor of the
24 town of Piercefild.

1 MR. ROGERS: Thank you, again, for
2 the opportunity to address you. And I would say that
3 it's a pleasure to be here, but I look -- it is a
4 pleasure to be here. However, I feel it's more of a
5 necessity.

6 I'm not here to address the
7 technical issues associated with this project. There
8 are people much more qualified and who have spent a
9 lot more hours looking at that than I have. But I'd
10 like to talk briefly about the need and the
11 importance of having this new forty-six kV line
12 constructed.

13 We - and by "we" I mean Tupper
14 Lake, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid - are at and have
15 been at -- have been for the last few years at a
16 critical point, and that point is we need more
17 electricity. There are three main issues that I
18 think define the need for this project, or three key
19 issues. That is public safety, reliability,
20 preserving our existing economy, as well as our
21 future economy.

22 And I'd like to start with the
23 public safety: This issue alone makes me extremely
24 nervous. If the Tri-Lakes Region were to have one of

1 its cold spells at the same time our communities were
2 filled with visitors there now exists a very real
3 potential of having our current system fail. Not
4 only would we be struggling to deal with our guests,
5 but we would also have a very serious situation in
6 dealing with our residents. Think of the needs of
7 our ill, our elderly, as well as the demand on the
8 municipalities and our volunteers that would be
9 required to handle this situation.

10 Reliability: This proposed line
11 into Tupper Lake frees up necessary power for Saranac
12 Lake and Lake Placid. In the case of Tupper Lake,
13 who by far has been the victim of the most power
14 outages, you will know how to -- you will now have a
15 closed loop system that will allow you to
16 back-feed -- to back-feed your community and reduce
17 your hours of darkness.

18 Preserving our existing economy, as
19 well as our future growth: Can you imagine the
20 economic impact on our area if visitors were forced
21 to leave, not to mention the fact that people who are
22 thinking of visiting, may not visit upon learning
23 that they may be spending hard earned dollars to
24 experience the true winter camping.

1 What we are doing to try to
2 alleviate the potential power outages? Well, I will
3 tell you upon signing and even before signing the
4 Tri-Lakes agreement the village of Lake Placid
5 developed a load shedding plan. We have identified
6 the facilities that have the capability of generating
7 power through the use of diesel generation. We have
8 agreements with all of them, and upon our request
9 they will switch their power needs to those
10 generators. For all of us concerned about our
11 environment I don't need to tell you the shortfalls
12 of diesel generators, let alone the expense of their
13 operations. And I dare say Tupper Lake knows all too
14 well about those aspects.

15 Now, some present this evening may
16 say that energy conservation is the solution to the
17 alternative to building this line. I believe it
18 simply not a viable alternative. I don't want anyone
19 to think for a second that our communities are not
20 addressing the issue of energy conservation. We take
21 this very seriously, and I, as the new mayor elected
22 in Lake Placid, have made this one of our top issues.

23 I can tell you that the village of
24 Lake Placid is pursuing energy conservation

1 alternatives. Through our partnership with the
2 I.E.E.P., and that's the Independent Energy
3 Efficiency Program, which we are members of, and the
4 New York State Power Authority, we have conducted
5 energy audits; in our public buildings we have
6 installed the most efficient lighting available; we
7 have implemented insulation programs for our
8 homeowners; we offer and continue to offer Energy
9 Star rebates above and beyond what the manufacturers
10 may offer; and last year we gave away free light
11 bulbs to all our electric customers; and most
12 recently we have been working with our local Boy
13 Scouts in selling our energy efficiency bulbs. They
14 sell them for a dollar, and the money helps -- goes
15 directly into their accounts and helps them with our
16 projects and also helps our community. Our -- our
17 bulb program has just reached the eleven thousand
18 four hundred mark in sales, just shy of reducing our
19 load by one megawatt.

20 As ORDA upgrades its facilities it
21 is committed to the most energy efficient technology
22 available. And I would also add to that that when we
23 just constructed our fourteen-million-dollar upgrade
24 of our sewage treatment plant we did the same.

1 However, if you were to look at
2 what we have done in the Tri-Lakes on energy
3 efficiency, we still have not achieved the amount
4 equal to the amount that we have asked for -- are
5 generating -- are creating electricity with our
6 generating programs and our load shedding areas.
7 Energy efficiency is the answer to reducing our
8 current bills and more importantly it reduces the
9 need for more power lines in the future.

10 And the last point I would share
11 with all of you is this: We - and by "we" I mean
12 National Grid, the New York State Power Authority,
13 the villages of Tupper Lake and Lake Placid - have
14 all invested countless hours working for short-term
15 solutions, as well as long-term solutions. We all
16 agree that the only realistic solution is the
17 construction of the new power line. And to the point
18 that we are all financially committed, I would
19 encourage all of us to support the construction of
20 this new line, and that the preferred route be the
21 route of choice.

22 And I end -- I would like to end by
23 thanking Senator -- Senator Betty Little for her
24 efforts and support on this project, National Grid

1 under the leadership of Gene Zeltman, the Power
2 Authority, the village of Tupper Lake and the
3 residents of Lake Placid for their understanding and
4 support, as well as the Adirondack Park Agency and
5 D.E.C. This has been, in the truest sense, a team
6 effort to work for a viable solution for our power
7 needs in the Tri-Lakes.

8 Thank you.

9 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
10 Mayor Rogers.

11 The next speaker is supervisor
12 Kevin Buckley from the town of Piercefield.

13 MR. BUCKLEY: Good evening, and
14 thanks for the opportunity to speak tonight. I just
15 want to express the support that the town of
16 Piercefield Board and myself have had for this
17 project since its inception. I don't really think I
18 need to reiterate the need for an alternate power
19 source for our area. I mean, that's pretty much been
20 a given and I don't think that's a question here
21 tonight. I really find it hard to believe that
22 there's anyone who lives here in the winter -- winter
23 months, that is actually against the project. I
24 think any detractors that we have, at least in the

1 town of Piercefield, have been mostly summer
2 residents. You know, let them -- let them spend a
3 night here when it's thirty below and the power is
4 out and I think they'd change their mind.

5 What I really would like to address
6 this evening are some of the alternate routes that
7 the power line proposal, the -- the route through
8 Childwold, apparently we are not quite decided
9 whether it will run down Route 3 or travel behind
10 some of the homes in the hamlet. And I'd really just
11 like to say that it seems to me that this route
12 should be decided by the landowners in the area that
13 are affected, and not by outside groups who have
14 really no direct interest in the hamlet.

15 As far as the alternate route
16 around Sevey Bog, it seems that cutting a right of
17 way through miles of forest land is just ludicrous.
18 I can't see we've got -- I realize this is state land
19 that we -- you know, that you don't want to take
20 the -- apparently our state constitution doesn't
21 allow us to run the power line down the state highway
22 through that, but it just seems to me there's got to
23 be ways around that. To go miles out of our way
24 through forest land and wetlands and just destroying

1 beautiful habitat when there's already poles all the
2 way down Route 56, and it just doesn't seem like
3 there's any reason that we can't -- that one little
4 short stretch that we're looking at a -- jeez, a
5 major detour through the woods just, in my opinion,
6 is going to just destroy -- destroy that environment.

7 It's going to create a maintenance
8 problem. These remote areas getting -- getting to
9 these remote areas for repairs has got to be -- I
10 mean certain times of the year it's going to be
11 nearly impossible. And it just seems kind of
12 ludicrous to choose that route. Whatever we have to
13 do, it seems like our state -- state legislators and
14 assembly people could get together and come up with a
15 solution that we don't have to do that.

16 There's another -- apparently, as
17 we come closer to Piercefield there's a route that
18 the power line is proposed to take to avoid being
19 along the highway near the river. We've already got
20 power poles that run right along that highway right
21 into Piercefield. I don't see any reason why, again,
22 we have to infringe on private property, landowners
23 that don't seem to really want this going -- this
24 right of way going across their property, and I don't

1 see any reason why the power line shouldn't stay on
2 the highway there. But then again, let the
3 landowners in that area make those decisions and not
4 outside interests that seem to be making them now.

5 So, thank you for your time.

6 That's pretty much all I have to say.

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
8 Supervisor Buckley.

9 Our next speaker is Mr. John Davis
10 from the Adirondack Council.

11 MR. DAVIS: Thank you for giving us
12 the opportunity to comment. And you may be
13 surprised, Supervisor, we actually largely agree with
14 you. Before suggesting a lease cost the Adirondack
15 Council wishes to remind the agencies and regulatory
16 bodies that the best solutions to almost any major
17 energy problem are conservation, recycling and
18 efficiency.

19 We are glad to see that the Power
20 Authority is conducting energy audits in the
21 Tri-Lakes area, but we are concerned that new
22 facilities are being planned before the audits and
23 recommended measures are completed. Energy
24 retrofitting and materials recycling and conservation

1 would keep our air and water clear, our lands more
2 intact, and our communities more gainfully employed.
3 All feasible measures to conserve energy should be
4 exhausted before major new energy production and
5 distribution facilities are developed.

6 And here's where I start to agree
7 with you, Supervisor. If a new power line is truly
8 needed in the Tri-Lakes area, it should be installed
9 underground along existing roads within existing
10 right -- right of ways, even if burial of the line
11 increases the costs.

12 Of course, the Council does want
13 the constitution to be upheld, but we think that
14 those questions about the constitutionality of
15 routing the line along Route 56 can be addressed. We
16 see no need for the detour.

17 The preferred route from Stark
18 Falls, then south on 56, then east on 3 is indeed
19 generally preferable to the alternate route from
20 Newton Falls east; but as much as possible the
21 Council feels that the line should be buried along
22 existing roads. The detour around forest preserves
23 near Sevey Bog would be wasteful and ecologically
24 harmful, needlessly extending the length of the power

1 line, and fragmenting rare low-elevation boreal
2 forest.

3 Indeed, the detour would take the
4 line through lands proposed by the Adirondack Council
5 in 1988 for a low-elevation boreal heritage reserve.
6 The line detour could, thus, harm spruce sprouts,
7 black-backed three-toed woodpecker, fog lemmings and
8 other boreal species and plant communities rare in
9 the Adirondacks. Better to keep the line along Route
10 56 to minimize fragmentation of habitat and allow
11 maintenance from the existing road.

12 In short, the Adirondack Council
13 asks the New York Power Authority, D.E.C. and A.P.A.
14 to do all in their power to encourage conservation,
15 recycling and efficiency over new power facilities,
16 but when new power facilities are needed, or lines,
17 we ask that, to the extent possible, route the new
18 lines along existing roads within existing right of
19 ways.

20 Thank you very much.

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
22 Mr. Davis.

23 Our next speaker is Mr. Peter Day.

24 MR. DAY: My name is Peter S. Day,

1 I'm the president of Day Wholesale, Inc., in Tupper
2 Lake, New York. I am the former owner of Big Tupper
3 Ski Area. My comments would be that I've lived here
4 all my life so far, and we have endured power outages
5 through the years. For the past twenty years we've
6 had severe power outages, numerous power outages. It
7 costs local businesses money to reschedule employees.
8 In 1979 I installed a forty-five kW generator to
9 continue to operate my business when we have these
10 power outages. There are several other businesses in
11 town that have spent great deals of money to ensure
12 that they are able to continue to operate.

13 As the owner of -- when I owned the
14 Big Tupper Ski Area we had situations where we had
15 people suspended in the air on ski lifts due to power
16 outages. We were able to evacuate them safely,
17 but -- and the other concern is there is a public
18 safety issue here. We have -- when we have twenty
19 below zero -- minus twenty F, minus thirty F
20 temperatures, our system in Tupper Lake does not have
21 enough power to continue to operate. We are all
22 asked -- all the residents in Tupper Lake are asked
23 to conserve; don't use hot water heaters; do not turn
24 on any lights; do not turn on any stoves. Businesses

1 are asked to conserve; businesses are asked to not
2 operate at certain times of the day in -- in peak
3 demand. The -- we have a lot of people -- a lot of
4 elderly folks that have electric heat, they rely
5 upon, and with a -- with a long power outage you
6 would have a real public safety issue. People would
7 be cold in their houses, and an extended outage could
8 even lead to deaths.

9 My only other point to make is that
10 I -- I agree with the supervisor from Piercefield and
11 I also agree with the Council that I see no need to
12 go out into the -- into the woods off the main
13 highway. The highway is already a corridor, and it
14 should be -- the power line should be within the
15 highway corridor. Buried is a great idea. I don't
16 know what the difference between cost is between in
17 the air and in the ground, but it's a great idea.

18 One last thing I would like to
19 leave as a statement is that reliable electric power
20 is not a privilege; reliable electric power is a
21 right, and the people of Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake
22 and Lake Placid should not have to go out of their
23 way to shed usage because it's twenty below zero. We
24 should have enough power. Most other areas of this

1 state have enough power when they need it. And
2 again, it's -- it's a right to have reliable power,
3 not a privilege.

4 Thank you.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
6 Mr. Day.

7 Our next speaker is Mr. Martin
8 Ryan.

9 MR. RYAN: Good evening. I have a
10 camp at Sevey Corners, and therein lies my concerns.
11 There are several camps in the area. I was hoping I
12 could ask this as a question, but there have been
13 recently one vault possibly two, built underground on
14 the current electrical line pathway. And it's my
15 understanding that this new line will use that
16 existing line. That existing line is about
17 forty-five yards from my camp, and -- and from some
18 other camps right in the area. I would much rather
19 see the line - and I am in favor of the line going
20 through - away from that area and not follow that
21 existing line that comes in off from 56 and traverse
22 along the Route 3, and then crosses over to the other
23 side of Route 3. I just wish you would take a real
24 close look at that, and -- and notify the people in

1 there of what's happening. Why is that vault in the
2 ground?

3 Supposedly there's a choice of two
4 different routes, but I already see construction back
5 in that existing line. That sort of indicates that's
6 the chosen route.

7 So, I'm concerned about it, I need
8 more information about it. And would suggest looking
9 at relocating those vaults -- the one tagged on the
10 door of the one vault going underground indicates
11 highly toxic gasses. So, it's -- it's -- it's a
12 cause for concern for me because I spend a lot of
13 time at camp and for other people who are in that
14 area. And so, somehow I'd like that addressed. I'd
15 like to be notified as to what's going on there, so
16 we can have maybe more input.

17 Thank you.

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Ryan.

20 Anyone else want to -- would like
21 to make a comment or a statement in the audience? If
22 not -- I'm sorry.

23 MR. DAVIS: May I ask a question?
24 Where specifically should we send comments?

1 THE HEARING OFFICER: Where -- I'm
2 sorry?

3 MR. DAVIS: Where specifically
4 should we send comments?

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Oh, to Mr.
6 Steve Ramsey, who is right here. He's our contact
7 and he's a community relations manager at the New
8 York Power Authority. He'll give you his card and
9 address.

10 MR. DAVIS: Should we also send
11 them to A.P.A. and D.E.C. or just --?

12 THE HEARING OFFICER: No, this is
13 strictly for the -- for the SEQR process, which is --

14 MR. DAVIS: Thank you very much.

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: -- we're --
16 we're running here.

17 But to -- again, we -- any comments
18 we receive, or questions we receive tonight, or up
19 until the 31st will be addressed in the F.E.I.S., the
20 final environmental impact statement. That's when
21 you will see the answers.

22 These are all considered comments
23 to the D.E.I.S., but the responses will be finalized
24 in the final E.I.S.

1 Question?

2 MR. HATHAWAY: I have a question
3 that hasn't been broached yet. But I know we
4 have --.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'm sorry,
6 could you come to the podium; could I ask you to come
7 to the podium, please, so we can get it on the
8 recorder?

9 MR. HATHAWAY: I'm Carl Hathaway, I
10 live just on the other side of Raymo Hill up here.

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay.

12 MR. HATHAWAY: And I've been in
13 Tupper Lake -- I graduated from Tupper a long time
14 ago.

15 But my concern is that during the
16 winter with a purchase of electric power, our
17 electric bill runs from about thirty dollars in the
18 summertime to better than two hundred and fifty
19 dollars in the winter. And I was wondering if
20 there's going to be any relief from -- with this new
21 line going through, which I know we need. We've got
22 to have it one way or the other, because we're right
23 to maxed out now on power all the way around through
24 the three villages. We've got to do something, and

1 so it's got to come in.

2 I do go along one hundred percent
3 in following the highway corridors. It saves, as
4 this gentleman from Piercefield mentioned, of having
5 to go into wetlands and so on. That line's got to be
6 maintained and it's got to be maintained with the
7 proper equipment. Now, you get too far back in the
8 woods you're going to have an awful time getting it
9 there to get the repairs done. Now, those are a
10 couple of things that I've got in mind.

11 And basically, one thing was that
12 if there's going to be a differential in the cost of
13 power for the -- you know, the inhabitants all the
14 way around?

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
16 Mr. Hathaway. Your --

17 MR. HATHAWAY: Thank you.

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: -- your
19 questions will be addressed in the final
20 environmental impact statement.

21 MR. HATHAWAY: Okay. Thank you
22 very much.

23 THE HEARING OFFICER: I can't
24 answer that tonight.

1 MR. HATHAWAY: I appreciate it.

2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Anyone else
3 with a comment or a question?

4 We're -- we're going to stay
5 adjourned -- we're -- we're going to stay open
6 rather, we're not going to adjourn at this time until
7 nine p.m. in case someone else comes in. So, we're
8 just going to keep the -- the hearing going, and you
9 can go to the back of the room, speak to Steve Ramsey
10 or -- and I'm going to stay here at the table and
11 wait for more comments, or more questions to come up.

12 (A recess was taken at 6:47 p.m.)

13 (The public hearing resumed at 7:09
14 p.m.)

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'd like to
16 call up County Legislator Paul Maroun to the stand.

17 MR. MAROUN: Thank you, and good
18 evening everyone. I was here earlier this afternoon
19 with Senator Little, and there was a few more in
20 attendance, but I'd like to thank you and welcome you
21 all to Franklin County and Tupper Lake.

22 Let me just start off by saying I'm
23 not going to talk about the details, the engineering
24 aspects of this plan. I'm not an engineer, some

1 would say I'm a nothing, and I tend to agree with
2 them most of the time. But I've served on the Power
3 Authority Commission here in Tupper Lake that Mayor
4 Strader appointed me to working with Ben Peets and
5 others, and a couple of things: There is no doubt
6 that this is needed for Tupper Lake, for the health
7 and safety issue alone.

8 We're fortunate tonight, it's
9 forty-five or fifty degrees, the skiers are unhappy,
10 the skaters are unhappy, but the people who are
11 living in their homes, and you have to remember about
12 fifteen years ago the big thing was to convert to
13 electric heat and a lot of people in Tupper Lake did
14 that. They have electric heat now. And it's not
15 twenty below tonight, but when it is twenty below,
16 when you have brown outs, blackouts and John Bouck
17 and his crew who do an excellent job, are out trying
18 to keep this thing going, it's -- it's an unpleasant
19 situation, and it's a situation that is seen sparsely
20 throughout the state of New York as bad as it was,
21 and as bad as it has been in Tupper Lake for many
22 years.

23 I've been a legislator, elected in
24 '78, and I've seen a lot of it. I'm born and bred

1 here.

2 But it's not only a health and
3 safety issue. It's a reliability issue. In other
4 words, if we want to try and bring small businesses
5 into the area, we have to tell them that we have a
6 reliable source of power. Not coal, not fuel oil,
7 but electricity, something that they can rely on.
8 And we have not been able to say that in the past.

9 Now, this afternoon the editor of
10 the Tupper Lake Free Press was with me and Senator

11 Little and the supervisor was with me and the Mayor.
12 We toured the plastics plant in Tupper Lake. Now,
13 every time the power goes off down there, it takes
14 about four and a half hours to restart it, because
15 those are hot fueled engines that have to reheat that
16 plastic mold and it costs money. And as everybody
17 knows, if you want to have a business in your
18 community in New York State, whether you're in Long
19 Island, Buffalo, Syracuse or Tupper Lake, the bottom
20 line is profit. And when you have to retool for four
21 and a half to six hours, as Roger can attest to, we
22 were there today with the plastic spoons and the
23 straws we witnessed coming off the line, you're going
24 to lose money. So, we can't have that if we're going

1 to try to keep them here. The Jarden Company now,
2 formerly the O.W.D. Or if we're going to bring new
3 business in. So, it's also an employment factor and
4 reliability issue.

5 Let me just tell you a few other
6 small businesses in the community that have problems
7 when this goes out. And I forget, Jim Ellis was here
8 earlier today, he told the times it's gone out over
9 so many years, I think it was five hundred and
10 twenty-six times and only thirty some times were the
11 real cause of Niagara Mohawk for one reason or the
12 other, based on they were going to switch their lines
13 over or do some upgrading. The rest of the time it
14 was because the line was insufficient to handle the
15 loads.

16 And I know that the lines that
17 you've drawn up are reliable, and of course, the --
18 the line that you really want, I believe, is -- or
19 that I would like to see, is the Stark through --
20 down into St. Lawrence County and over into
21 Piercefield, and I think that's the one that a lot of
22 people have spoke about today. I think it's
23 environmentally sound, I think that the cost is
24 within our grasp, and I also think that we could

1 probably take another route that we've looked at, but
2 the environmentalists, again, would not be so --
3 what's the word I want to use -- happy with that
4 line. So, I'm hopeful that this line will go
5 through.

6 Let me just tell you another thing.
7 We had the mayor of Lake Placid here today. This
8 isn't just a Tupper Lake issue. In the first case it
9 is, because our people are concerned about heating
10 their homes; but this line, when it comes down and
11 breaks off, is going to allow more electricity to
12 Lake Placid, the Olympic Center of New York State and
13 the Northeast, it's going to allow more power into
14 that -- into that community, and into Saranac Lake.
15 And it will eliminate the stigma that we've had here
16 in Tupper Lake for years, that the end of the line is
17 Tupper Lake, and that's not being jokingly saying it,
18 but it's the end of the line as far as power goes.
19 So, with this line we will have two sources of power,
20 and we will then be able to move ahead and try to
21 secure some new small businesses into the area.

22 Another issue, if you're in the
23 trade of hardware and selling generators, you want to
24 move to Tupper Lake, because over the years people

1 have been buying generators to hook up to their
2 homes, generators to hook up to the bank, generators
3 to hook up to insurance companies that rely on
4 computers. I suspect the Tupper Lake Free Press may

5 even be in the process of buying one, but now if we
6 get this line they're going to save money, and
7 they're going to reduce --.

8 MR. MCCLELLAND: A big twelve-volt
9 one.

10 MR. MAROUN: That's what I thought.
11 Yeah.

12 But in any event, the point is
13 other cities people don't have to buy generators to
14 have electricity into their homes and into their
15 businesses. Yes, some people have a backup generator
16 occasionally, but it shouldn't be, and this line will
17 rectify that.

18 There were so many thanks this
19 afternoon that I really don't want to go through them
20 again, but I'd -- I'd be remiss if I didn't. And the
21 Power Authority has done a fine job in working with
22 the village of Tupper Lake and others. National
23 Grid, formerly NiMo, has worked with us on this, the
24 governor's office, the governor, and many other

1 people, John Bouck and his crew and the village crew
2 and everybody, to try and bring it to the point where
3 we are today.

4 And you know, I've heard, and I've
5 had calls, and the mayor -- the supervisor and I
6 didn't discuss it this afternoon, but I've had calls
7 saying, "Paul," and I don't want to raise this issue
8 here, other than to just touch on it, "what if this
9 thing at the mountain goes through, everybody's going
10 to put electric heat in, and we're going to be in the
11 same boat we are -- we were before?" Well, let me
12 answer that question right now here. And we ask this
13 in our early discussions with the Power Authority.
14 Those people that build homes, buy homes and condos,
15 if that ever goes through, will not be allowed to put
16 electric heat in up there. So, that settles that
17 question here and now, and that's a public statement,
18 and I'm sure you can check it out with the mayor's
19 office and Mr. Bouck.

20 So, this is important to this
21 community, it's important to the North Country, it's
22 important to keeping Lake Placid happy, and as you
23 all witnessed this afternoon, the mayor was very
24 pleased to support our plan. And once again, I would

1 just like to thank everybody and on behalf of the
2 small businesses, the homes, the apartments, anyone
3 who uses computers, and anyone who is used to using
4 electricity for just regular purposes, and then the
5 business that Roger and I witnessed today who use it
6 for a very important purpose, that of producing
7 materials, who hire a hundred and twenty-seven people
8 here in Tupper Lake. We need this line.

9 And I would like to, once again,
10 thank you all for coming, holding these hearings, and
11 I look forward to a rapid growth of this. And as
12 Senator Little said today, I, too, hope that I'm here
13 to somehow help flip that switch in 2008 or before.

14 Thank you very much.

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
16 Legislator Maroun.

17 Our next speaker will be Mr. John
18 Bouck, the electric superintendent for the village of
19 Tupper Lake.

20 MR. BOUCK: Good evening. I'm John
21 Bouck; I'm the electric superintendent for the
22 village of Tupper Lake. And welcome to Tupper Lake
23 on this hot, balmy day in January.

24 I'm the author of a lot of those

1 letters that have gone to Betty Little for the last
2 ten years documenting the outages experienced in the
3 village of Tupper Lake alone. Tupper Lake is a
4 municipality with three thousand -- over three
5 thousand customers, and we've been in existence for
6 over a hundred years. And our goal is to maintain
7 that for another hundred years.

8 We set out on a -- well, we've
9 already documented that very well, that a commission
10 was established by the boards of the past to resolve
11 a problem that's been an issue for Tupper Lake for
12 over twenty or thirty years. We accomplished that.
13 But I wanted to also point out as when our
14 discussions got going longer and Lake Placid got
15 involved in our discussions, the question of
16 reliability not only came to Tupper Lake reliability,
17 it came up to reliability for the whole Tri-Lake
18 Region, including Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Paul
19 Smith's, and all the way up to Malone. Reliability
20 is an issue that we all want for the whole
21 Adirondacks.

22 Conservation is always important
23 issue for us. Conserve energy in Tupper Lake. We
24 have already put a moratorium on electric heat. We

1 will maintain that for another five years. And we'll
2 push our other issues for energy conservation to our
3 customers.

4 I'm confident with the team that
5 we've put together -- that's been put together,
6 excuse me, NiMo -- National Grid, excuse me, and
7 NYPA, and would hope that the environmental impacts
8 that are going to take place are -- are an issue with
9 the new placement of the transmission and the line.
10 And I truly favor the route that's proposed from
11 Stark to Piercefield. I think that -- that the team
12 will work hard to resolve those issues to the best
13 fashions.

14 Thank you for your support. Thank
15 you to the community for their support.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Bouck.

18 For the folks who just joined us,
19 this is the State Environmental Quality Review Act
20 public hearing for the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project.
21 And we're accepting public comments because the Power
22 Authority, as the lead agency, has determined that
23 there is going to be significant environmental impact
24 from this action. So, we're accepting comments

1 tonight, but also you have until January 31st to
2 submit written comments. And the comments could be
3 submitted to Steve Ramsey, the gentleman that's at
4 the head table there. And we can give you his name
5 and address if you would like to provide comments
6 later on.

7 We also went through a description
8 of the project. Are you interested in hearing that
9 again, or -- it was -- we did it before -- before you
10 arrived.

11 So, Mr. Suloway, our director of
12 licensing, would you like to give the project
13 description, please?

14 MR. SULOWAY: Mr. Hearing Officer.

15 This project was put together in --
16 in response to requests from the citizens and the
17 officials of the Tri-Lakes Region. In response to
18 that request, the villages of Tupper Lake and Lake
19 Placid, the New York Power Authority and National
20 Grid agreed to help alleviate the longstanding power
21 problems in the region through a set of short- and
22 long-term solutions.

23 The -- the purpose of the proposed
24 Tri-Lakes Reliability Project is to increase the

1 reliability of the electric system in the region.
2 The need for the proposed project is immediate and
3 real. With certain exceptions there have not been
4 any major infrastructure changes and expansions to
5 the system for the Tri-Lakes Region since the 1970s.
6 At that same time the demand for electricity has
7 continued to grow.

8 The existing electric system has
9 reached its limit to reliably serve the load of the
10 region. The result is frequent power outages during
11 periods of high demand, which in this region as we've
12 heard, is in the very cold winter months, which makes
13 this a health and safety issue.

14 To identify the most appropriate
15 long-term solution for the reliability problem,
16 Niagara Mohawk and the New York Power Authority of
17 the state of New York reviewed a number of options,
18 including the construction of a power plant in the
19 region, and alternative routes for power delivery.
20 This process was conducted with input from
21 representatives from the Adirondack Park Agency, the
22 Department of Environmental Conservation, the
23 Department of Transportation, local municipalities,
24 nongovernmental organizations, local residents and

1 the general public. We did that to ensure that the
2 concerns of all these parties were addressed in the
3 siting and design process.

4 This Reliability Project that is
5 proposed in the draft environmental impact statement,
6 and our applications to the A.P.A. and D.E.C. was
7 determined to be the best option to meet the needs of
8 the region based on environmental, engineering and
9 economic considerations. The draft environmental
10 impact statement contains a discussion of the
11 alternatives that were studied, as well as the
12 studies that were conducted to identify the preferred
13 and alternate routes.

14 The proposed -- proposed forty-six
15 kV line along the preferred route will be
16 approximately twenty-seven miles long. About
17 two-thirds of that route is along existing electric
18 line corridors and roadways, whereas the remaining
19 one-third of the route requires new right of way.
20 The preferred route, as described previously, begins
21 in Parishville, New York, at the proposed Stark Falls
22 substation and will interconnect with the existing
23 one hundred and fifty kV system. The preferred route
24 connects to the new regulator station proposed near

1 the existing Piercefield substation where the line
2 ends.

3 The alternative route that was
4 studied begins in Clifton, New York, at a new Newton
5 Falls substation and also ends in the Piercefield
6 substation.

7 There's a diagram up there that you
8 can take a look at.

9 Wood pole structures would be used
10 to carry the facilities. The proposed project
11 facilities and right-of-way configurations are
12 described in the D.E.I.S.

13 The D.E.I.S. also describes the
14 existing conditions within the anticipated project
15 area and specifically identifies the potential
16 impacts of project construction and operation. In
17 addition, the D.E.I.S. also describes the proposed
18 techniques for mitigating those impacts of both
19 construction and operation.

20 The project operation is
21 anticipated to have a beneficial effect on the
22 region, in that, it will enhance the reliability of
23 the power delivery system and should significantly
24 reduce the number of power outages in the area.

1 This project is being developed in
2 compliance with applicable state and federal
3 environmental regulations, including review under the
4 State Environmental Quality Review Act and the
5 Adirondack Park Agency.

6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
7 John.

8 And the -- the D.E.I.S. document
9 that John is referring to is available on a web site,
10 and also in the public libraries if you would like to
11 take a look at it.

12 Any comments we receive tonight or
13 by January 31st of this year will be addressed in the
14 final environmental impact statement to be published
15 later. So, that -- that pretty much covers it.

16 Any questions, or would you like to
17 make a statement?

18 Okay. I just wanted to bring you
19 up to speed in the -- the short version. You missed
20 the long version.

21 Okay. We'll -- we're going to be
22 here till nine p.m., and keep the hearing open in
23 case someone else comes in. So, we'll just be here
24 at the table.

1 (A recess was taken at 7:25 p.m.)

2 (The public hearing resumed at 8:48
3 p.m.)

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you for
5 coming.

6 This is the State Environmental
7 Quality Review Act public hearing for the Tri-Lakes
8 Reliability Project. And the Power Authority, as the
9 lead agency, has determined that the proposed action
10 may have a significant impact on the environment and
11 a draft environmental impact statement has been
12 prepared. And we're having this public hearing to
13 take comments on the D.E.I.S. And any comments that
14 we get today or before January 31st will be addressed
15 in the F.E.I.S.

16 We now have Mr. Peter Bauer,
17 whenever he's ready that will make a statement.

18 MR. BAUER: Thank you very much for
19 the opportunity to speak. It's Peter Bauer,
20 executive director of the Resident's Committee to
21 Protect the Adirondacks. I'd like to thank the Power
22 Authority for holding this public hearing this
23 evening in Tupper Lake. We will submit comments in
24 writing by the deadline period.

1 We -- we have several concerns
2 that -- and we will pose questions that we would like
3 to see answered in much more specificity in the
4 final -- in -- in the final submissions to the Park
5 Agency, and the final environmental impact statement.

6 Mainly it has to do with the Route
7 56 alternative. We are supportive of the Route 56
8 alternative in this project, and agree with the Power
9 Authority that is the preferred alternative. Our
10 main concern is we seek a preference for keeping the
11 line on Route 56 and not abrogating west of isolated
12 sections of the forest preserve, north of Sevey's
13 Corners, and then coming back to join up with Route
14 3. We would like to see the line kept on Route 56
15 for the entire way. We think that would cause many
16 fewer environmental impacts.

17 We note in the draft E.I.S., and
18 I'm reading from volume two, appendix A, page twenty,
19 "the conclusion where the Power Authority states
20 because of the pressing need to -- to license and
21 construct the forty-six kV line to improve the
22 reliability of electrical delivery systems to the
23 Tri-Lakes Region, the Route 56 alternative which may
24 be susceptible to potential delays as a result of

1 forest preserve issues was not selected as the
2 preferred alternative."

3 We -- we do not see exhaustive
4 research done in this document on those forest
5 preserve issues. And if there is ever a reason to
6 send this project to an official A.P.A. adjudicatory
7 public hearing, it would be to tackle these specific
8 issues, because we think that this project can be
9 done, and in a way that has many fewer environmental
10 impacts than it's currently provided. Specifically
11 we would like to see legal analyses provided by the
12 D.E.C. on keeping this line along the Route 56
13 corridor undergrounded at the southernmost point of
14 Route 56 coming into Route 3. Specifically, we'd
15 like to see a legal analyses provided by the D.O.T.
16 as well.

17 Also, there is no reason why the
18 Power Authority cannot request an opinion from the
19 attorney general on this issue. The attorney
20 general's opinions that are cited in their legal
21 analysis only impact this -- this project
22 tangentially and are not specific questions about
23 this specific project. And we think that it's
24 perfectly appropriate to get the best legal reasoning

1 on the forest preserve and legal research possible,
2 and the A.G.'s office could certainly provide that,
3 and they would do so if the Power Authority or the
4 A.P.A. or the D.E.C., or even the local government
5 requested them to do that.

6 So, I think it's important to
7 provide a much more robust legal analysis about the
8 constitutionality of keeping this new line on the
9 Route 56 corridor. And we would like to see that
10 provided in the final.

11 Secondly, we would like to see a
12 cost estimate. What is the cost of keeping this line
13 on Route 56 versus sending it west. We would like to
14 see that provided as well.

15 Third, the criteria for an
16 Adirondack Park Agency public hearing have to do with
17 issues of -- of public controversy is one criteria
18 for sending the project to a public hearing. You
19 certainly have a number of folks concerned about the
20 constitutionality of this issue, and that becomes a
21 matter of public concern. And if -- if this -- you
22 know, one way for this project to really slow down is
23 not to do the work in the environmental impact
24 statement, but have to tease out these issues during

1 an A.P.A. adjudicatory public hearing. That's not
2 the preferred route, but -- but it's important to get
3 these answers. So, it -- we should provide all of
4 these answers ahead of time in the final E.I.S.,
5 rather than going the route of having to look at them
6 during an A.P.A. public hearing.

7 The second issue has to do with the
8 energy audits that were undertaken by the Power
9 Authority. There's some summary materials, but it
10 would be really interesting to provide the actual
11 data to the public in the final E.I.S. of what the
12 energy audits found. We're certainly not interested
13 in individual names of residences or business names,
14 but we certainly are interested in the findings of
15 the energy audits and believe that that data should
16 be made available because, you know, it's -- it's the
17 rising -- it's reliability, but it's also the rising
18 use of energy in the Tri-Lakes that are driving this
19 project.

20 Thirdly, you know, I -- I live in
21 Blue Mountain Lake in a community that has one
22 electrical line coming into town. We have frequent
23 power outages as well, so I can sympathize with folks
24 in Tupper Lake. I am on an intimate basis with, you

1 know, our generator, and -- and -- and know what it's
2 like to -- to -- to have to fire it up in the middle
3 of the night to keep the -- to keep the house warm,
4 the pipes from freezing and all of that. So, we
5 certainly sympathize and see the need and the
6 importance of this project, but we think that it can
7 be done in ways that will satisfy the information
8 that has really -- that is -- that is needed as far
9 as the constitutionality and as far as public use and
10 energy audits.

11 So, thank you very much for the
12 opportunity to make those comments and we will
13 provide comments more specific in written form by the
14 required deadline.

15 Thank you.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Bauer.

18 And your comments that you made
19 tonight and the ones we receive before the 31st will
20 be addressed in the F.E.I.S.

21 Our next speaker is Mr. Chad Martin
22 from the village of Tupper Lake, trustee.

23 MR. MARTIN: Good evening
24 gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here this evening

1 and address. As we've reviewed this project, and I'm
2 new on the trustee -- a new trustee on the village
3 board overseeing the electric department, it's
4 exciting to see a project such as this which is going
5 to provide power for economic revitalization, but
6 more importantly it's going to provide the safety for
7 our people here. That's the ultimate and critical
8 issue here. And ultimately it's been a long time
9 coming, so we look forward to expediting the project
10 and moving and working along with you with the
11 project.

12 And with that being said, if
13 there's anything further that we can assist with,
14 please contact us and we'll work further with you to
15 move things along quickly.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Very good.

17 MR. MARTIN: Thank you very much.

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Martin.

20 We have a few minutes before nine
21 p.m. when we will adjourn this -- this hearing, so I
22 guess we'll wait until that time to formally adjourn.

23 (A recess was taken at 8:56 p.m.)

24 (The public hearing resumed at 9:00

1 p.m.)

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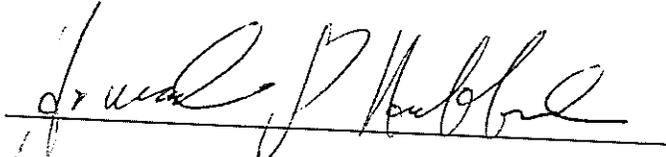
THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay. At
this time it's nine p.m. I would like to adjourn the
State Environmental Quality Review Act public hearing
for the Tri-Lakes Reliability Project.

Thank you for attending.

(The public hearing adjourned at
9:00 p.m.)

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I, Howard P. Hubbard, do hereby certify that the foregoing was taken by me, in the cause, at the time and place, as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten transcription, consisting of pages number 1 to 53, inclusive, is a true record prepared by me and completed by Associated Reporters Int'l., Inc. from materials provided by me.



Howard P. Hubbard, Reporter

1/24/2006 Date

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