

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD**

Petition of Champlain VT, LLC d/b/a TDI New England)
for a Certificate of Public Good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §248,)
authorizing the installation and operation of a high voltage)
direct current (HVDC) underwater and underground electric)
transmission line with a capacity of 1,000 MW, a converter)
station, and other associated facilities, to be located in Lake)
Champlain and in the Counties of Grand Isle, Chittenden,)
Addison, Rutland, and Windsor, Vermont, and to be known)
as the New England Clean Power Link Project (“NECPL”))

Docket No. _____

**PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER R. SABICK
ON BEHALF OF CHAMPLAIN VT, LLC**

December 8, 2014

Summary:

Mr. Sabick provides testimony regarding historic resources within Lake Champlain, and the Project’s compliance with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5) and 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8) (Historic Sites). Mr. Sabick summarizes the results of a Phase I Archaeological Assessment, and presents his preliminary conclusions concerning the NECPL.

Exhibit Number	Name of Exhibit
TDI-CRS-1	Resume
TDI-CRS-2	NECPL Phase 1 Archaeological Report – Lake Route (LCMM)

1 **Q1. Please state your name, occupation, and connection to the NECPL.**

2 A1. Response: Christopher Robert Sabick, Director of Archaeology at the Lake Champlain
3 Maritime Museum ("LCMM"). LCMM is under contract to Champlain VT, LLC, d/b/a
4 TDI New England ("TDI-NE") to advise them on submerged cultural resources within
5 Lake Champlain in relation to the New England Clean Power Link Project (the "NECPL").
6

7 **Q2. Please describe your qualifications and expertise.**

8 A2. Response: I hold a Bachelor's degree from Ball State University in Anthropology and
9 History as well as a Master's degree in Anthropology from Texas A&M University, with a
10 focus on Nautical Archaeology. I have been working to document, manage, and share the
11 cultural resources of the Champlain Valley and surrounding region for more than 15 years. I
12 came to work at the LCMM in 1998 as an intern and was then hired full time as a lab
13 technician in 1999. Since then I have also served as Director of Artifact Conservation
14 (2001-2013) and now as the Archaeological Director (2013 to present).
15 My resume is attached as *Exhibit (Exh.) TDI-CRS-1*.
16

17 **Q3. Have you previously testified before the Public Service Board or in other judicial or
18 administrative proceedings?**

19 A3. Response: No I have not.
20

21 **Q4. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

22 A4. Response: I provide testimony regarding historic resources within Lake Champlain, and the
23 NECPL's compliance with 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5) and 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8) (Historic Sites).

1 I summarize the results of my Phase I Archaeological Assessment, and present my
2 preliminary conclusions concerning the NECPL.

3

4 **Q5. What work have you performed concerning the effects of the NECPL on historic**
5 **sites relative to the Lake Champlain segment of the Project?**

6 A5. Response: TDI-NE approached LCMM to advise them on Cultural Resources within Lake
7 Champlain in November of 2013. Since that time I have worked with TDI-NE to select a
8 route through Lake Champlain for the NECPL Project that avoids impacting known cultural
9 resources located on the bottom lands of Lake Champlain. I have completed a Phase IA
10 Archaeological Resource Assessment for the corridor within the Lake that is proposed for
11 the installation. See *Exh. TDI-CRS-2*.

12 The Phase IA Archaeological Assessment involved a careful analysis of the known,
13 and potential, cultural resources that lay within the Project's Area of Potential Effect
14 ("APE") as well as gaining an understanding of sites nearby (within 500m). The Phase IA
15 report contains locational site data that is sensitive and considered to be protected
16 information by the State of Vermont. This data is presented in a separate Appendix that will
17 be furnished only to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

18 I continue to consult and advise TDI-NE as the Project moves forward.

19

20 **Q6. Have you relied on the work of any other experts concerning the NECPL?**

21 A6. Response: Much of the data that I have based my work on was gathered by others including
22 (but not limited to): Sean Murphy from TRC who informed me about this Project and its
23 installation techniques, Arthur Cohn founder of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and

1 lake researcher/archaeologist for more than 30 years, Fred Fayette operator of Juniper
2 Research and Captain of the R/V Neptune who is extremely knowledgeable about lake
3 survey technology, Patricia and Tom Manley who are Professors of Geology at Middlebury
4 College and were instrumental in the Lake Champlain Cultural Resources Survey, Peter
5 Barranco who is a Lake Champlain historian, Scott McLaughlin, regional archaeologist and
6 historian, and Adam Kane, former archaeological director at LCMM.

7
8 **Q7. Have you provided project information to other experts in support of their section**
9 **248 testimony and if so, what?**

10 A7. Response: No.

11
12 **30 V.S.A. § 248 (b)(5) and 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8) – Historic Sites**

13 **Q8. How did you review and consider impacts to historic lake structures and resources**
14 **along the Lake Champlain segment of the NECPL?**

15 A8. Response: In order to assess the potential impact to historic lake structures I began by
16 locating the known and potential cultural resources along the 50-foot wide Project corridor
17 and then evaluated their distance to the corridor and the likelihood of them being impacted
18 by the proposed installation techniques (laying the cable on the bottom in deep water, the
19 use of a jet-plow and shear-plow, and using articulated concrete mats over other existing
20 cable crossings). This assessment allowed me to suggest potential alternative routes in some
21 locations and to point out areas of particular concern where there are historic structures
22 within Lake Champlain at or near the proposed NECPL corridor. See my Phase I report at
23 pages 8-10, and 46.

1 My examination of potential historic structures that could be impacted by the
2 NECPL involved the detailed review of previously collected remote sensing data and
3 archaeological reports of structures located along the NECPL corridor. From these sources,
4 I was able to identify resources within proximity to the NECPL corridor and assess the
5 possibility of impact to each. My Phase I Report at 33-43 describes this assessment in
6 greater detail.

7
8 **Q9. Based upon your assessment, are there any potential historic structures along the**
9 **NECPL corridor within the Lake?**

10 A9. Response: My examination of the cultural resources along the NECPL corridor has
11 identified three known resources that stretch across Lake Champlain. The three sites are the
12 Rouses Point Train Trestle Bridge, the Larrabees Point-Willow Point Train Trestle, and the
13 Revolutionary War Great Bridge between Mount Independence, VT and Ticonderoga, NY.
14 With the information available at this time about these sites, it is not certain that they can be
15 completely avoided by the Project. Therefore, additional field work is recommended that
16 would reveal a clearer depiction of the resources characteristics in the immediate vicinity of
17 the Project, along with the related debris fields associated with the resources. This additional
18 work will be used to identify a safe corridor for the NECPL so that impacts to these three
19 resources can be avoided or minimized. The Phase I survey has also identified three
20 unverified sonar targets that lay within 40m of the NECPL corridor. These targets have not
21 been identified as cultural in nature. If the NECPL cannot be constructed in a manner that
22 avoids these three sonar targets, then it is recommended that additional study be completed
23 to determine if they are, in fact, cultural resources.

1 **Q10. Would the NECPL cause any potential adverse impacts with respect to the historic**
2 **resources?**

3 A10. Response: There is the potential for impact to the three noted historic resources above.
4 However, with additional fieldwork to inform route selection to identify a safe corridor for
5 the NECPL, impacts to these three resources can be avoided or minimized. TDI-NE has
6 expressed its willingness to continue to work with cultural resource professionals to identify
7 safe routes through or around these resources.

8

9 **Q11. In your opinion has TDI-NE taken appropriate steps to avoid and/or minimize**
10 **impacts to any lake-bound historic resources along the NECPL route?**

11 A11. Response: Yes. TDI-NE has utilized my recommendations so the Project can be developed
12 with minimal or no impact to cultural resources located within Lake Champlain. These steps
13 have included consultation with cultural resources professionals in the planning phases and
14 the completion of an Archaeological Resource Assessment to identify known resources near
15 the Project area. TDI-NE has also has committed to utilize my recommendation to
16 minimize or eliminate impact to the few known resources that lay across the Project
17 corridor.

18

19 **Q12. What conclusions have you reached concerning the potential impact of the NECPL**
20 **on historic structures within Lake Champlain?**

21 A12. Response: If TDI-NE follows the recommendations previously mentioned, my conclusion
22 is that the Project will not cause an undue adverse impact to identified or potential historic
23 structures in Lake Champlain.

1

2 **Q13. Does this conclude your testimony at this time?**

3 A13. Response: Yes.

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