

# City of Berlin, NH

## Mayor's Office



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### **Northern Pass Benefits to County Should Not Be Overlooked**

**By Paul Grenier, Coos County Commissioner and Mayor of the City of Berlin**

Over the next several months, towns in Coos County will be giving significant consideration to the revised plan of the Northern Pass electric transmission project that is currently planned to traverse much of Coos County. Clearly, there are significant issues that need to be considered and major discussions that need to take place between the communities and the developer of this project.

An important aspect of this project that should not be overlooked is the potential benefits this project would bring to county government in Coos. As taxpayers in Coos County, we all need to give consideration to this investment, and what it could mean to taxes, jobs and services currently provided by Coos County government.

Like many counties around our state, maintaining county government services remains a constant challenge. The sheriff's department, corrections department, register of deeds, two nursing homes and various other departments and services are operated through county government. Growing costs of these services and a declining tax base add difficulty to these challenges.

As currently proposed, it is estimated that the Northern Pass project would add an additional \$1.5 million in annual tax revenue to Coos County government. Coos County currently raises a little over \$14 million in property taxes from county residents, businesses and other property owners, and the Northern Pass investment would increase the county's tax revenues by approximately 11 percent.

To give this some context, the estimated Northern Pass annual tax payment is approximately equal to the total cost of all county workers' salaries in the sheriff's department, register of deeds, and corrections department combined. This estimated annual tax payment would cover roughly half of the annual cost of salaries for all nurses at the West Stewartstown Nursing Hospital.

Debates about the future of the county farm, county jobs and maintaining other services become slightly less challenging with economic growth and an expanding tax base. Most importantly, an expanding tax base reduces the financial pressure placed on citizens and existing taxpayers by sharing these costs across a broader tax base.

Clearly, there are many issues that need to be considered before this project can move forward, but Coos County and northern New Hampshire cannot afford to reject out of hand efforts to invest in our county. We cannot afford to blindly follow those who would oppose this development for any reason.

Instead, we would be better to pursue a path of honest communication, fact based discussions and an effort to gain understanding of all sides to see if this can lead to an outcome that brings benefits to everyone in Coos County.