

## TOWN OF SUDBURY

*Board of Selectmen*

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For immediate release

### **OARS Raises News Concerns about Impact of ‘Ecologically Damaging’ Eversource Project on Vital Eastern Brook Trout and Habitat**

*Citing environmental and fish concerns with the Sudbury to Hudson  
Transmission Reliability Project, OARS recommends Eversource develop  
alternative proposal*

**Sudbury, Mass. (October 17, 2016)** – Environmental nonprofit OARS today raised new concerns about the impact of Eversource’s Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project on a vital fish species: the Eastern brook trout.

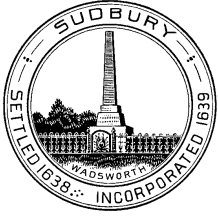
In a strongly worded letter to Eversource, OARS Executive Director Alison Field-Juna outlined the potential harmful impacts to this critical fish species and its habitat, which would result from clear-cutting a massive 82-foot wide transmission line corridor through vital conservation land.

“Alternatives to this ecologically-damaging route must be considered,” Field-Juna wrote in the letter. “Putting the transmission under already-existing streets would result in far less ecological damage.”

Sudbury, Marlborough and Hudson are home to streams that feature some of the few remaining native Eastern brook trout populations in Eastern Massachusetts. Geographically-isolated populations of these fish remain in only about 10 percent of the sub-watersheds in eastern Massachusetts.

The Eastern brook trout is increasingly threatened by pressures associated with human development and temperature changes that result from pollution, climate change and the loss of natural vegetation.

The Eversource project, as currently proposed, will lead to warmer water temperatures in these local streams due to the loss of shading from the clear-cutting. Water temperatures in these streams are already approaching limits that could harm these fish, and efforts must be taken to prevent additional warming.



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In addition, wild trout and the surrounding habitat could be exposed to devastating herbicides that Eversource plans to use to maintain the clear-cut corridor. Just as concerning, the corridor would likely increase the presence of ATVs and dirt bikes, which are extremely difficult to control and damaging when they cross streams due to erosion and siltation.

“We appreciate the need to increase the reliability of the grid, particularly with climate disruptions that increase the likelihood of damaging wind and ice storms,” Field-Juna continued in the letter. “However to damage one of the few remaining healthy wild trout habitats which has been protected through major public and private investment is not in the interest of either the Commonwealth or the local communities.”

OARS says it shares the concerns about the Eversource’s Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project which have been raised by other environmental organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Marlborough Conservation Commission and the Sudbury Valley Trustees.

OARS is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance the natural and recreational features of the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers, their tributaries and watersheds, and to increase public awareness of the rivers’ values as important natural resources.

“We are gratified that OARS has called attention to the serious environmental risks associated with the Eversource Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project,” said Board of Selectmen Chairman Susan Iuliano. “This flawed project is a threat to vital conservation land that is of critical importance to many plant and wildlife species, including the Eastern brook trout. We hope Eversource will take OARS’ recommendations into consideration and create an alternative proposal that is not so damaging to the environment and this critical fish species.”

Earlier this spring, the Board of Selectman voted unanimously to oppose the Eversource Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project, and the Board continues to actively voice its concerns about it. Eversource is moving forward with plans – which, if approved – would run 4.3 miles of high voltage above-ground power lines through Sudbury neighborhoods, in conservation land, and along a National Wildlife Refuge, while spraying dangerous herbicides within proximity to hundreds of homes. It would also require a massive clear-cutting of local forest, destroying critical habitats for a number of plant and animal species, and creating a number of public health and safety hazards.

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