



158 N King Street, Northampton, MA 01060

RE: National Grid Proposed Three Phase Power Upgrade via 45' Poles
Avery Brook Road
Charlemont and Heath, Massachusetts

Dec.7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a licensed full-time Real Estate Broker and a member of the Pioneer Valley, Massachusetts and National Boards of Realtors. I have 40 years of experience in the field and have sold hundreds of properties in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. As part of my job, I am required to disclose material facts, deficiencies and environmental hazards that I am aware of on every property. Over my career, I have had many Buyers walk away from homes located near power lines, cell towers, transmission stations and large scale solar fields. I am always having conversations about current market value and potential resale in the future.

As my career continues, more and more Buyers are asking questions about the environmental and potential health risks associated with being close to the infrastructure that transmits electromagnetic frequency and power. While we all appreciate the increasing technologies that require more power and faster speeds, there are negative consequences that come with upgrades. For example, large 45' poles where three to four poles are required to replace one existing pole. On a country road like Avery Brook and the rural nature the properties offer, it seems that spoiling the landscape with oversized poles will reduce the value of each landowners parcel. The National Association of Realtors has provided some academic research for value impacts in the South of 2.65% to 7.6% depreciation in value for properties impacted by electric grid infrastructure. In the Northeast, I believe the impact is much higher, between 10% to 20% in market value. Lenders also require appraisers to give an opinion of the future marketability for properties they are extending mortgages on. There are specific questions on the surrounding area and any impact from power grid equipment on the appraisal form. Lending institutions are concerned about the long term value effects when lending a 30 year mortgage.

Every upgrade to infrastructure comes with costs that typically will be passed along to the end user, the property owner. The utility bills will increase and the property taxes will increase to cover the cost of moving the broadband wiring. It seems to me that there would be a positive valuation impact if the existing poles were removed and utilities were run underground.

This upgrade also impacts the current marketability of the properties on the street as this proposed power grid upgrade and the changes to the landscape will have to be disclosed by anyone looking to sell their homes or land.

National Grid could be a **trend setting** utility that is looking toward the future with less long term cost as the cable, fiberoptic and wiring are protected from the weather and climate change. Underground utilities would add value to the impacted properties along Avery Brook Road which will in turn add tax revenue to the town and offset the costs of moving the broadband wiring.

It is my professional opinion that replacing the existing power poles with twice as many 45' high utility poles will decrease the marketability and value of the Avery Brook Road properties and in particular properties like 224 and 225 Avery Brook Road where you have a combination of building lots with southeastern views looking down the road and the brand new center for Arts & Ecology.

Sincerely,

April West
Associate Broker
Delap Real Estate