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New Proposal for Power Line Project

Utility agrees to amend proposed Susquehanna-Roseland project to be consistent with Highlands Regional Master Plan; will pay for land preservation in Highlands

CHESTER, N.J. – If the proposed Susquehanna-Roseland 500-kv Transmission Line project is approved by the Board of Public Utilities, PSE&G will work with the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on a new comprehensive management plan that will protect the resources of the environmentally sensitive Highlands Region and address many of the concerns brought up by the Highlands Council staff, municipalities, environmental groups, and property owners when the project was initially proposed.

PSE&G will work with the Highlands Council staff on a protective plan to address proposed construction along its existing 26-mile right-of-way. The plan is designed to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impact of the project in the Highlands Region in order to be consistent with the Highlands Regional Master Plan. The comprehensive management plan includes a contribution of \$18.6 million toward the acquisition or stewardship of priority lands in the Highlands Region. The application from PSE&G makes it clear that it is contingent upon approval by the Board of Public Utilities.

A major change to the proposal is a relocation of a switching station that was intended for ecologically sensitive land in Jefferson Township, a location that was of primary concern to the Highlands Council. The switching station will be moved to a site in Hopatcong Borough, and the utility has agreed to construct a smaller station utilizing Gas Insulated Switching gear technology. This relocation also means 13 fewer towers will have to be constructed. Other changes to the proposed project include new management plans, consistent with NJDEP permit requirements, for work in forested, wetlands and critical habitat areas; a restoration plan for streams and riparian habitats; and a historic and archaeological resources protection plan.

PSE&G's first proposal for the project was considered by Council staff to be inconsistent with the Highlands Regional Master Plan in December. In response, PSE&G requested additional time to work on the issues identified in the Highlands Consistency Determination.

"The Highlands Council will examine the amended application for consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan, which provides the highest standard of protection for the region," said Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan. "The Council will once again solicit public comments before making any final determination on the project."

PSE&G's amended application has been posted to the Highlands Council website's Project Review page: http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/projectreview/pseg_amended_0519.pdf.