



## Parks & Trails

NEW YORK

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April 27, 2012

Hon. Jaclyn A. Brillling, Secretary,  
Public Service Commission,  
Three Empire State Plaza,  
Albany, New York  
12223-1350

RE: Case 10-T-0139

Secretary Brillling,

As the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails in New York, we would like to ensure you are aware that between Fort Edward and Whitehall, the proposed Champlain Hudson Power Express transmission corridor closely follows the historic Champlain Canal. For more than a decade our organization has partnered with local municipalities, interest groups, and numerous state and federal agencies to develop the Champlain Canal segment of the 524-mile Canalway Trail system. According to the 2011 Champlain Canalway Action Plan, the proposed trail parallels the proposed transmission corridor for more than 20 miles between Fort Edward and Whitehall, much of it on publicly-owned land.

Considering the massive investment in the corridor, the significant environmental impact involved, and the need for maintenance access post-construction; we strongly urge the commission to require the applicant to assist in the construction of the Champlain Canalway Trail as part of their environmental mitigation. Not only will this provide a means of maintenance access for the applicant, it would also provide the region with a valuable resource that can provide safe, off-road transportation, attract additional tourism dollars, increase physical activity levels for area residents, and add to the overall quality of life. In addition, in areas such as Fort Ann where the trail is now proposed to follow Route 4, a busy two-lane highway, a safer, off-road trail could instead be built between the railroad and the canal as part of the transmission line construction project.

The construction of a trail by a power company in conjunction with a transmission corridor's development is not unprecedented. In Canada, Hydro Quebec was an integral part of the development of the popular le P'tit Train du Nord trail in 1996. Not only do portions of the trail parallel their transmission corridor, they paved the northern portion to assist with their maintenance access. Their commitment to the trail resulted in a resource that has revitalized the region. Currently the trail draws thousands of



visitors throughout the year and supports a thriving tourism industry along the corridor.

We strongly believe that such co-location is not only a strategic investment in the state's transportation infrastructure, but also an efficient use of resources. We sincerely thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robin Dropkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Robin Dropkin  
Executive Director