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Co-op Advocates for Affordable, Reliable Energy During U.S. Energy Secretary Visit

New Hampshire Electric Cooperative leaders recently had a rare opportunity to bring member concerns about energy affordability and reliability directly to the nation's top energy official.

In late August, U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright visited NHEC's Raymond district office for a discussion focused on the cost and reliability challenges facing New Hampshire and the broader New England energy market. NHEC President and CEO Michael Jennings was joined by Board Vice Chair Bill Darcy, Director of Operations Jim Horan and Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), for the meeting.

"Energy policy decisions made in Concord, Washington and across the regional market have a direct impact on what our members pay and the reliability they expect," Jennings said. "That is why NHEC needs to be part of these conversations. Our job is to make sure rural New Hampshire members are represented when major energy decisions are being made."

The discussion centered on two priorities that matter most to Co-op members: keeping electric service reliable and keeping energy costs as reasonable as possible. Jennings said resource adequacy, the ability to ensure enough energy is available when members need it most, remains one of the region's most important energy challenges.

"I want to thank Secretary Wright and NRECA CEO Jim Matheson for taking the time to visit the Co-op and discuss something we work on every day: affordability for our members," Jennings said.

"It was a valuable opportunity to advocate for practical ways to reduce energy costs in New Hampshire while maintaining the reliable service our members depend on. We appreciated the Secretary's willingness to listen, ask questions and engage in a productive discussion."

Secretary Wright discussed the importance of expanding energy infrastructure in New England, including additional natural gas pipeline capacity, as one way to help lower costs for residents and businesses and support economic development. New England continues to face some of the highest electricity costs in the country, and the region relies heavily on natural gas for power generation, especially during periods of high demand.

Wright said additional pipeline capacity could also help reduce reliability risks during peak energy demand events, particularly in the winter, when constrained fuel supplies can place added pressure on the regional electric grid.

The visit also included time with Co-op operations supervisors and line crews. Wright heard directly from employees about the challenges of working in difficult New Hampshire weather, restoring power after storms and preparing the next generation of lineworkers to enter the profession.

Wright praised the role electric cooperatives play in communities across the country, saying, "America would not be America without cooperatives." ⚡

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October 2026

STAY CURRENT



Freedom of Choice Works Only When Members Are Informed



Michael Jennings,
President & CEO

New Hampshire ratepayers are fortunate to have the freedom to choose who supplies their electricity. That choice can create savings, but only when members understand their options and periodically check whether their current supplier is still the best fit.

As electricity markets continue to fluctuate, now is a good time to look closely at your electric bill. Supply rates can have a significant impact on the total amount you pay each month.

One issue that deserves more public awareness is community power aggregation. In some towns, residents may have been automatically enrolled in a community power program unless they opted out. Community power can offer benefits for some customers,

but it is not always the lowest cost option. Some Co-op members who were switched into community power programs may currently be paying more for electricity supply than they would under the Co-op's default service.

That is why I urge members to check who supplies their electricity and compare available options. You can find your current supplier in the "Power Supplied By" section on the back page of your monthly electric bill.

Members who receive their power from a competitive supplier, including community power, can generally return to the Co-op's default supply service, known as Co-op Power, at any time, subject to the terms of any existing contract. If you were automatically enrolled through your town, you may need to opt out of that program before switching to another supplier.

This is not about promoting one supplier over another. It is about making sure members have accurate information, transparency and the ability to choose the supply option that works best for them.

The Co-op will continue to deliver reliable service and support our members regardless of which supply option they choose.

Taking a few minutes to review your electric supply arrangement could help you avoid surprises and make sure your energy dollars are working as hard as you do.



To help you compare energy suppliers, the New Hampshire Department of Energy provides up-to-date tools and resources on its website:



energy.nh.gov/consumers/choosing-energy-supplier



energy.nh.gov/engyapps/ceps/shop.aspx

For detailed information on the Co-op's current rates, visit nhec.com/schedule-of-fees-rates

For questions, please call us at (800) 698 2007 or email solutions@nhec.com. We're here to help you make an informed decision. ⚡

New Hampshire Is One of the Most Digitally Connected States in America



New Hampshire has reached a major broadband milestone, with 99% of addresses statewide now having access to high-speed internet. Combined with some of the fastest internet speeds in the country, the Granite State is emerging as a national leader in connectivity.

This achievement reflects years of investment by communities, businesses, broadband providers and state leaders committed to bringing reliable internet access to every corner of New Hampshire. NH Broadband is proud to be part of that effort, delivering 100% fiber internet service to more than 40,000 residents across the state.

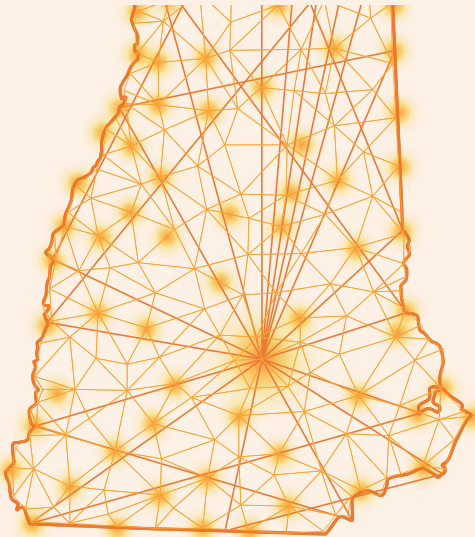
Despite New Hampshire's rural communities, mountainous terrain and hard-to-reach areas, broadband

access has expanded dramatically. Reliable internet is now essential infrastructure, supporting remote work, telehealth, education, entertainment and economic growth.

Access is only part of the story. Recent studies rank New Hampshire among the nation's fastest states for internet service. A 2026 analysis found the state third in U.S. rankings. Other reports also place New Hampshire firmly within the national top ten, highlighting the strength and consistency of broadband performance statewide.

As broadband availability approaches universal coverage, NH Broadband's focus is shifting toward enhancing network speed, reliability and redundancy. By continuing to invest in

infrastructure and innovation, we're helping ensure residents and businesses have access to the high-quality connectivity they need today and in the future. ⚡



Board Director Spotlight: Patricia Barbour



If you look at the map of the Co-op's service territory, Lee, in the southeast corner, is about as far away as you can get from headquarters in Plymouth.

Still, when Lee resident Patricia "Pat" Barbour began thinking about running for the board, she made the trek – about an hour 20 minutes – and attended meetings for a year and a half.

"I wanted to get the lay of the land. I didn't know anyone on the board," Barbour said. The meetings gave her an understanding of the issues being addressed and learning about the board.

Born in Portsmouth, Barbour went to school there through high school before doing her undergraduate studies at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). She earned a master's degree in biochemistry from the University of Colorado. Barbour returned home to New Hampshire for an MBA at UNH. Her public accounting career focused on small businesses and individuals in the seacoast region of New Hampshire.

A retired Certified Public Accountant (CPA), she has served on a variety of non-profit boards, as well as on the board of a community bank for twelve years. This June marked the beginning of her third year on the NHEC board.

During the time her accounting practice was in Portsmouth, her work on different boards "was a great way to do practice development and meet people," she said, "while also getting involved and giving back to the community." Today, her experience as a CPA and her prior service are helpful in terms of the management of the Co-op and the governance that the board provides.

Her experience also landed her the role of chairperson of the Audit Committee, which looks at risk to the organization and reviews reports provided by the external auditor, as well as by internal audit.

Keeping the power flowing at a reasonable price comes with its challenges, particularly in today's reality of rising costs across the board and in a state like New Hampshire that is heavily forested and knows its share of storms.

What also became clear with Covid was the essential need for reliable and affordable internet service. In 2020, the Co-op launched NH Broadband, our high speed fiber optic service reaching our underserved or unserved communities.

"We all need to be interested in the future of the state and the NH Broadband initiative is on the forefront of helping the state to grow," Barbour said. ⚡

Helping to Feed Area Members

Since 2006, The NHEC Foundation has given \$542K in grant money to the New Hampshire Food Bank, providing hundreds of thousands of pounds of food and helping thousands of families in the Co-op's service areas.

Over the years, the foundation's giving has supported the food bank's general food fund, which helped them buy food for distribution, as well as also donating money that the food bank applied as credits to individual pantries throughout our service territory. This funding allowed area pantries to help stock their shelves and shop at the food bank where the food cost them less, courtesy of the credits.

This year marks the 15th year in which the foundation has sponsored mobile food pantries, continuing our dedicated partnership with the food bank. This August our volunteers (photos here) worked in Holderness at the Elks Lodge loading cars for families from the greater Plymouth area. More than 300 families received boxes of fresh produce and shelf-stable goods.

Thank you to NHEC volunteers, New Hampshire Food Bank and all of our neighbors who participated and made this experience worthwhile. ⚡

