

To the Friends of Middle Road,

As you may have heard, our electric utility Eversource is proposing a major project to strengthen the Up-Island grid. This project would severely affect the scenic resource that is Middle Road. Eversource conducted an informational zoom on November 28th and have said they are gathering feedback and input. The time for discussion is now!

We all can agree that there is always a need for a strengthened and more resilient grid. Fortunately, there is **no need** to trade our *scenic heritage* for that resilience – there *are* alternatives. In fact, the solution that Eversource has presented is **not** the most resilient: underground distribution lines are 2 – 4 times more resilient than aerial lines in outages from storms, which we know will be more destructive in the future.

The current Eversource proposal will **double** the number of poles that are on the road today. Additionally, higher capacity cables that are also larger and more obtrusive will be strung, along with the many shiny diamond couplers that keep the cables together. Consider the poles and lines on Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road near the High School and the rural way of Music Street as an example of the appearance of these new poles and lines! We're sure that you would agree that such an installation along the Keith Farm stretch or many of the other bucolic sites along Middle Road would be highly unwelcome. Our road attracts not only walkers and bicyclists, but artists and photographers, as well as the strong nod to our agrarian past.

The Island energy community has worked reasonably closely with Eversource over the past several years – in fact, their input on future electricity needs and the age of the existing undersea cable set has resulted in Eversource's commitment to add a fifth cable and replace an existing obsolete cable, which should be adequate for the Island needs for the next decade or more. We all should look to continue to work with them in the future - on the Middle Road project and elsewhere - but we clearly need to add our voices to the dialogue.

That said, our community needs to be active in assuring that our unique rural character can be maintained, and insist that alternative plans be developed and shared with our community before Eversource proceeds with their current plan.

Please join us in voicing your support for our endeavors by emailing Friends of Middle Road: Elisegreen@mindspring.com. Or text at 2032734480. Please also include your mailing address for a gathering to take place in summer 2023, if not before.

Time is truly of the essence. Please do this today.

Thank you!

The FOMR executive board