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Land swap called for in Prop 1 on Election Day ballot



Syracuse (WSYR-TV) - When you go to vote next Tuesday, you won't only be asked to decide political races, you'll also be asked to vote on two constitutional amendments.

Among them: A proposal that would bring new power lines to an isolated Adirondack community – and even the agency that serves to protect the Adirondack Park is throwing its support behind the measure.

“This is one of those rare opportunities where we can do some good for the environment, and help the park at the same time,” says Adirondack Council member John Sheehan.

Sheehan is urging approval of Prop 1, which would pave the way for construction of a new power line over State Route 56 in St. Lawrence County to the community of Tupper Lake.

To do so, voters would have to approve a constitutional amendment that would allow National Grid to use forever wild land, a highway right-of-way, to complete the project.

In a lopsided land swap, National Grid would trade those six acres for 43 acres it currently holds.

“We believe that trading what amounts to a roadside ditch in exchange for river shoreline is a good one, and one that New York State residents should accept very quickly,” says Sheehan.

There’s one other element to consider: A ‘no’ vote would send the project on a lengthy detour through Old Growth Forest -- and the habitat of an endangered bird.

The Adirondack Council says the trade off makes perfect sense, but there is some concern -- namely, that voters may miss the proposal located at the top of the ballot. It's one of two you'll be asked to consider next week.

The second proposal on the ballot next Tuesday is one that would allow inmates to do work for non-profit organizations.