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JOHN M. FABRIZI  
Mayor

October 6, 2006

S. Derek Phelps, Director  
Mr. Daniel Caruso, Chairman  
Connecticut Siting Council  
Ten Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: CT Siting Council Docket No. 272  
D&M Plan for Middletown-to-Norwalk 345kV Power Line Project  
Ash Creek Crossing at Bridgeport/Fairfield Town Line

Dear Council Members:

Northeast Utilities ("NU") has submitted its proposed Development & Management (D&M) Plan on the proposed river crossings within its portion of Segment 4a to the Connecticut Siting Council in September 2006. Within this Plan, NU discusses the various means of constructing a watercourse crossing at three (3) locations, two of which are totally located within the Town of Fairfield's boundaries. One of these crossings at Ash Creek is the municipal boundary between Bridgeport and Fairfield and the subject matter of this letter.

The D&M Plan discussed three (3) options that were explored, the process used to attempt to secure the necessary approvals for these various options, and the results of their efforts. The "jack and bore" and the "horizontal directional drilling" methods have been dismissed because of high-risk construction factors, excessive additional costs to ratepayers, local business disruptions, and subsurface conditions. The option of attaching these power cables to the existing bridge has been unequivocally denied by the Department of Transportation ("DOT"). NU has therefore proposed the "utility bridge" as the only viable option. **The City of Bridgeport does not agree that this is the only viable option for crossing Ash Creek.**

Early on in the planning of this Middletown-to-Norwalk 345kV Project, the City of Bridgeport went on record as accepting only the underground placement of these cables and our stance on this issue has not changed. The placement of overhead cables along any of the routes proposed would have had a severe impact on the city in terms of property acquisitions, economic costs to ratepayers, business and quality of life disruptions to city residents and businesses, and would have been a eyesore and esthetic nightmare in the City that is working extremely hard to improve its visual image as a part of its economic resurgence.

United Illuminating ("UI") and NU have been very cooperative throughout this project's development by meeting with City staff, the City's political leadership, and neighborhood organizations to explain all aspects of the proposed project. We fully understand their position and recommendation for the utility bridge given the roadblocks placed in their way at these river crossings. These companies and their consultants are not the problem here – the State agencies are!

Although it is the only option on the table at this moment, we are opposing the utility bridge option for the following reasons:

1. The bridge structure itself would not be able to be secured sufficiently to prevent children from gaining access to its roof. The land ends are proposed to be secured with chain-link fencing with barbed-wire topping which will be totally unacceptable to the City and we have found that no amount of security fencing, regardless of the type and materials used, will stop a child from getting access to something that he or she wants to access.
2. Unlike the underground 345kV cables that will be encased in concrete at least 4-feet below an asphalt-capped roadway surface, the 345kV cables on the utility bridge will be contained within a structure that is approximately 5 feet by 8 feet with little to no insulation value. Since there is a need to access the interior of this bridge structure periodically for cable maintenance and inspections, an access panel or two will be located in this structure. Such a panel, regardless of security features, poses a potential safety issue should a non-utility person gain access to the interior of this structure and these cables. While the cables will be encased in piping, the contents of this unsecured structure would still pose a realistic safety hazard.
3. The size of the structure is a factor in the need for the power and communication cables to be spaced appropriately. There are also structural requirements of spanning the Creek, and the need for human access for inspection and maintenance. This proposed structure will block any views of the Ash Creek estuary north of State Route No. 130. Graffiti artists and paint ball enthusiasts may utilize the structure for their artwork. While the structure itself is esthetically a problem, the cleaning of the graffiti will be both a maintenance nightmare and a potential environmental hazard because the solvents used to remove said graffiti would negatively impact the Creek itself and surrounding watercourses. See attached computer-generated graphic.

None of the above is or will be acceptable to the City of Bridgeport.

The Middletown-to-Norwalk 345kV Power Line Project within Segment 4a has been designated to be totally underground and this method and only this method will be acceptable to the City and I believe that the Town of Fairfield shares this position.

We believe that the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's ("DEP") opposition to burying these cables beneath the Creek bed via the "trenching" method needs to be re-visited. This "trenching" method would continue the process of burying these cables in a safe, secure and unobtrusive manner that would not significantly disrupt

any business operations and considerably limit any additional costs that would be borne by the utility's ratepayers. The area of the Creek's eco-system impacted will be limited and can be restored sufficiently to allow nature to restore it fully in a relatively short period of time.

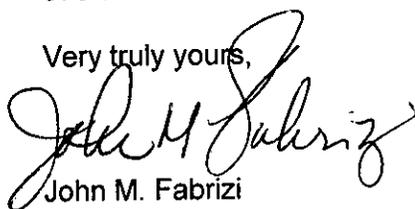
The DEP can work with NU and its consultants on a construction methodology that would further limit any impacts to the natural environment. Any requirements of the DEP in this area in support of the "trenching" method of crossing the Creek would still result in these cables being buried and therefore, protected from human contact, be esthetically pleasing, and cost effective to the ratepayers. From the information that we have received, this method of crossing the watercourse can be physically accomplished if the DEP will work in concert with the project and not just take a "can't do" position.

The City of Bridgeport stands ready to work with the State of Connecticut, NU and its consultants, the Town of Fairfield, and the various neighborhood organizations and conservation entities to resolve a subsurface solution to this issue of crossing Ash Creek. We would further request that the Connecticut Siting Council get involved with the DEP to assist in resolving any of their issues associated with an underground crossing of this and other watercourses. The Middletown-to-Norwalk Project will have a tremendous positive impact on Southwestern Connecticut, its residents, and those who do business here.

In summary, the City of Bridgeport firmly believes that the Middletown-to-Norwalk 345kV Power Line Project's crossing of Ash Creek needs to find an underground method of crossing this watercourse that works for both the Project itself as well as those associated with the preservation of the natural environment. A balance needs to be found for both sides of the issue and the Connecticut Siting Council can fill this intermediary role. The proposed utility bridge concept simply does not work and should not be approved.

If my office or the City of Bridgeport can be of any further assistance to the Council in any way, please do not hesitate to contact Associate City Attorney Melanie J. Howlett, at 203-576-7647.

Very truly yours,



John M. Fabrizi  
Mayor

Attachment: (1)

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