



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

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CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

September 21, 2015

Richard J. Reed, PM
Vice President-Engineering and Project Excellence
The United Illuminating Company
180 Marsh Hill Road
Orange, CT 06477

RE: PETITION NO. 1176 – The United Illuminating Company petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed Bridgeport 115-kV transmission line upgrade project consisting of the northern and southern sections of 115-kV lines extending from Congress Substation in the City of Bridgeport to Baird Substation in the Town of Stratford, Connecticut, and related substation improvements.

Dear Mr. Reed:

At a public meeting held on September 17, 2015, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) considered and ruled that the above-referenced proposal would not have a substantial adverse environmental effect, and pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 16-50k, would not require a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need, with the following conditions:

- UI prepare a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for this site in compliance with Sections 16-50j-60 through 16-50j-62 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The D&M Plan shall be served on the Town of Stratford and City of Bridgeport for comment and submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the commencement of Project construction;
- Unless otherwise approved by the Council, if the facility authorized herein is not fully constructed within three years from the date of the mailing of the Council's decision, this decision shall be void, and the facility owner/operator shall dismantle the facility and remove all associated equipment or reapply for any continued or new use to the Council before any such use is made. The time between the filing and resolution of any appeals of the Council's decision shall not be counted in calculating this deadline. Authority to monitor and modify this schedule, as necessary, is delegated to the Executive Director. The facility owner/operator shall provide written notice to the Executive Director of any schedule changes as soon as is practicable;
- Any request for extension of the time period to fully construct the facility shall be filed with the Council not later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of this decision and shall be served on all parties and intervenors, if applicable, the City of Bridgeport and the Town of Stratford;
- The facility owner/operator shall remit timely payments associated with annual assessments and invoices submitted by the Council for expenses attributable to the facility under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v;

- This Declaratory Ruling may be transferred, provided the facility owner/operator/transferor is current with payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v and the transferee provides written confirmation that the transferee agrees to comply with the terms, limitations and conditions contained in the Declaratory Ruling, including timely payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v; and
- If the facility owner/operator is a wholly owned subsidiary of a corporation or other entity and is sold/transferred to another corporation or other entity, the Council shall be notified of such sale and/or transfer and of any change in contact information for the individual or representative responsible for management and operations of the facility within 30 days of the sale and/or transfer.

This decision is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and is not applicable to any other modification or construction. All work is to be implemented as specified in the petition dated July 17, 2015.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the staff report on this project.

Very truly yours,



Robert Stein
Chairman

RS/RDM/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated September 17, 2015

- c: The Honorable Bill Finch, Mayor, City of Bridgeport
Parag Agrawal, Planning Director, City of Bridgeport
David Kooris, Director, Office of Planning and Economic Development, City of Bridgeport
The Honorable John A. Harkins, Mayor, Town of Stratford
Gary Lorentson, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Town of Stratford
Bruce L. McDermott, Managing Counsel-Operations, UIL Holdings Corporation



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Petition No. 1176

The United Illuminating Company
115-kV Upgrade, Bridgeport-Stratford, Connecticut
Staff Report
September 17, 2015

On July 17, 2015, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from The United Illuminating Company (UI) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for its proposed Bridgeport-Stratford 115-kV Transmission Line Upgrade Project (Project). The Project would replace transmission structures supporting two separate transmission lines between the Congress Substation in Bridgeport and the Baird Substation in Stratford, a distance of approximately 2.3 miles. Council members Larry Levesque and Robert Hannon and Council staff member Robert Mercier conducted a field review of the Project on August 21, 2015. Chris Hughes, Tony Buccheri, and Bohdan Katreczko represented UI during the field review. For the field review, Council members, staff and UI representatives met at the Congress Substation and then drove east along the route of the Project to the Baird Substation, stopping at several Project points along the way.

The Project is needed to increase the thermal capacity and reliability of the two transmission lines, a determination made as part of the 2011 Southwest Connecticut Needs Assessment Report, a study completed by UI, Eversource, and Independent System Operator New England (ISO-NE) to evaluate the reliability of the southwest Connecticut area in meeting the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, Northeast Power Coordinating Council, and ISO-NE standards and criteria. This study identified reliability transmission needs related to capacity limitations, unacceptable voltage performance and high short circuit current levels. To meet reliability needs, the existing 795-kcmil conductors between the two substations would be replaced with larger capacity 1590-kcmil conductors.

The Project would affect two existing UI transmission lines mounted on top of existing Metro North/Connecticut DOT lattice catenary structures that span the railroad. The transmission lines, one on the north side and one on the south side of the catenaries, are mounted on metal support "bonnets" that were installed during the early 1940s. Most of the catenary structures are over 100 years old and range in height from 55 feet to 102 feet. Due to their age and physical limitations, the existing transmission line support structures are structurally inadequate to support the new high capacity conductors.

UI would install the high capacity conductors on new galvanized steel monopoles installed adjacent to the railroad, 15 to 25 feet from the existing catenaries. The typical width of the railroad right-of-way is 100 feet but varies significantly depending on location. Most of the new monopoles would be located within the existing railroad right-of-way. UI would need to obtain land lease agreements for monopole locations outside of the right-of-way. Separating UI's transmission lines from the catenaries benefits both UI and MetroNorth in regards to future maintenance issues for both parties as the frequency of railroad and electric outages would be reduced.

The environmental impacts of the Project would be limited. Most of the work would occur within or immediately adjacent to the existing railroad right-of-way, which is located in a heavily developed corridor in close proximity to I-95. Six separate wetland resource areas would be impacted with a total temporary disturbance of 3,800 square feet. UI will deploy temporary wetland matting where required to minimize any long-term impacts to wetland resources. One wetland, located west of Seaview Avenue in Bridgeport and adjacent to the Metro North rail tracks, would have ten square feet of permanent impact related to the installation of a monopole foundation. This wetland is classified as a palustrine emergent persistent seasonally flooded/saturated wetland and is dominated by *Phragmites*, an invasive plant.

During construction of the Project, UI would install erosion and sedimentation controls consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. DEEP submitted correspondence to UI stating that the project would have no effect on any state listed species.

The Project is located in a heavily developed area of Bridgeport and Stratford, consisting of active and abandoned industrial sites, commercial areas, transportation corridors, and residential areas. Although some areas of the project are adjacent to residential areas, the expected visual impact will be minimal as the completed project would be similar in appearance to existing railroad infrastructure and nearby commercial uses.

UI performed a cultural resource evaluation identifying historic and archaeological sites in the Project area. No historic or archeological areas would be disturbed by the Project. The State Historic Preservation Office determined that the Project would have no adverse effects on historical properties.

Magnetic field (MF) levels associated with the relocated transmission lines would be far below health exposure standards established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and the International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety (ICES). MF Levels would generally increase by 6 to 20 milligauss (mG) under peak load conditions 100 feet from the edge of the right-of-way, depending on the section of line. The highest post construction calculated level 100 feet from the edge of the right-of-way is 25.1 mG, well below the ICNIRP recommended exposure limit of 2,000 mG, and the ICES recommended exposure limit of 9,040 mG.

UI notified local municipal officials and abutting property owners of the Project. UI also hosted a community open house in Stratford that was sparsely attended. The City of Bridgeport and the Town of Stratford both responded to UI in support of the Project, stating that a reliable electric supply is essential to their communities.

UI would have to obtain land leases for construction of monopoles outside of the Metro North right-of-way. During the leasing process, minor monopole adjustments may be required for necessary construction space, monopole clearances, underground utilities, and existing land use. Once land leases are obtained, UI intends to begin construction in 2017, completing the project in 2018. Coordination with both communities, the DOT and Metro North is ongoing to minimize community concerns, traffic concerns, and railroad outages.

Council staff recommends approval of the petition with the condition that UI prepare a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for this site in compliance with Sections 16-50j-60 through 16-50j-62 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The D&M Plan shall be served on the Town of Stratford and City of Bridgeport for comment and submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the commencement of Project construction.