



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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DATE: April 18, 2013

TO: Keith Epstein
Director of Capital Projects
Connecticut Board of Regents
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105

FROM: Karl Wagener
Executive Director

RE: Environmental Impact Evaluation for Eastern Connecticut State University
Master Plan Update

The Council on Environmental Quality has reviewed the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for this project and offers the following comments.

For some years the Council has been encouraging agencies to prepare concise EIEs, and commends your agency for adopting this concise format. The regulations of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act encourage this approach:

“An environmental impact evaluation shall be clear, concise, and to the point, and written in plain language so that it may be understood by the general public.”

and

“Summary technical data, maps and diagrams should be presented as to be understandable to the general public. An agency may incorporate material by reference into an environmental impact evaluation when to do so will cut down on bulk without impeding agency and public review of the action.”

This EIE fulfills the requirement to be concise and understandable. However, there are two points that require elaboration. First, there should be some explanation of the reasons for eliminating the 13 categories on page 4 from further evaluation. The explanation for each could be a short paragraph or a reference to specific scoping comments that led to your decision. One might infer the reasons for excluding impacts to endangered species (i.e., there is none present), but the reasons behind excluding required categories such as energy consumption are not obvious. The summary information in Appendix C is too brief to be fully understandable. Again, the reason for excluding a potential impact from evaluation should be made clear.

The second point is similar. An EIE is required to take into consideration all scoping comments. The Council has understood this to mean that an EIE should explain how the scoping comments were taken into consideration. This is especially true for comments beyond the standard comments submitted by other state agencies, such as those submitted by individuals or municipal agencies; people should be able to read how their comments were used (or not).

Finally, the Council notes that the campus is close to the Willimantic River, and any plans (such as greenway plans) for the river and its watershed should be considered.

Again, the Council commends the brevity of this EIE. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.