

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

IN RE:

DOCKET NO. 508

THE UNITED ILLUMINATING COMPANY  
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND  
PUBLIC NEED FOR THE MILVON TO  
WEST RIVER RAILROAD  
TRANSMISSION LINE 115-KV REBUILD  
PROJECT THAT TRAVERSES  
PORTIONS OF MILFORD, ORANGE,  
WEST HAVEN, AND NEW HAVEN,  
CONNECTICUT

May 17, 2022

**PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF BILL SILVER**

1   **Q.   Please state your name, position, and business address.**

2   A.   My name is Bill Silver. I am an architect of 43 years and lead a mid-size firm of  
3   Architects, Engineers, and Interior Designers in Hamden. Our practice is centered  
4   on public and institutional projects throughout the northeast. I am also a registered  
5   Historical Architect with the State of Connecticut and have directed the renovation  
6   or preservation of numerous state and nationally registered buildings or facilities  
7   throughout the state. I am pleased to serve the City as a member of the Milford  
8   Historic Preservation Commission and have served as chairman of the  
9   Commission since its inception. My CV is provided in Attachment A.

10   **Q.   On whose behalf are you testifying in this case?**

11   A.   I am testifying on behalf of the City of Milford, Connecticut (the "City").

12   **Q.   Have you reviewed the documents submitted by UI in support of its current  
13   application, as well as responses to interrogatories and other record  
14   documents in Docket 508?**

15   A.   Yes.

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1      **Q. Based on your review of the record, do you have an opinion concerning the**  
2      **proposed route and configuration of the transmission line as it relates to**  
3      **adverse impacts to historic resources in the City?**

4      **A.** Yes. The application does not adequately address the adverse impact that the  
5      proposed improvements will have on the historical character of the built  
6      environment in the City of Milford. While UI's application discusses those  
7      individual buildings within the railroad's vicinity that are listed on the National  
8      Register of Historic Places, UI completely fails to address the impact that the tall  
9      monopoles and numerous new transmission lines will have on the viewpoints and  
10     vistas of many *state-registered properties* located in close proximity to the project,  
11     both north and south of the transmission lines. The application also fails to  
12     thoroughly explore the numerous mitigating actions that can abate the visual  
13     pollution represented by the new work.

14     **Q. Based on your review of the record, do you have an opinion concerning the**  
15     **Charles Island mitigation measure proposed to mitigate the adverse impacts**  
16     **to the historic resources in the City?**

17     **A.** Yes, it has no relevance to the route or configuration of the transmission line that  
18     is proposed by UI in Docket 508. Given that the closest part of Charles Island (its  
19     tombolo) is over 1.3 miles from the nearest rail line in Devon and further obscured  
20     behind a ridge line represented by Meadowside Road, as well as the tree line along  
21     that roadway, there is no visual or societal benefit of this mitigation measure as it  
22     relates to the historic structures adversely impacted by the proposed project. Any  
23     benefit of this mitigation measure to the downtown area is even more remote as  
24     the distances and sightlines to Charles Island are much further.

25     **Q. How does UI's current proposal result in adverse impacts to historic**  
26     **resources listed on the National Register for Historic Properties (NRHP)**  
27     **within the City? Please explain.**

28     **A.** The higher monopoles and the many wires to be suspended between them will  
29     mar the clear skyline above the existing catenaries that has been preserved for  
30     over a century. The Secretary of The Interior's Standards for The Treatment of  
31     Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring &  
32     Reconstructing Historic Buildings caution to avoid changes/improvements that  
33     negatively impact the character of the historic building, including its site and/or  
34     setting.

35     With the exception of a few structures, the skyline of the City between the  
36     Schoolhouse Lane crossing and Anderson Avenue has not changed in decades,  
37     with most structures being one to three stories tall. The addition of monopoles and  
38     utility wires at heights ranging from 130 and 140 feet will dwarf the existing

1       structures and negatively impact the site and setting of numerous historic  
2       structures in the vicinity.

3       Under Special Requirements: Code-Required Work, the same Secretary of the  
4       Interior Standards also address improvements related to code conformance,  
5       stating: “[s]ensitive solutions to meeting code requirements are an important part  
6       of protecting the historic character of the building. Thus, work that must be done  
7       to meet accessibility and life-safety requirements must always be assessed for its  
8       potential impact on the historic building or district.”

9       It is not clear that UI’s proposal is code mandated as UI materials simply state that  
10      “UI concluded that the 115-kV lines must be rebuilt to meet current National  
11      Electrical Safety Codes (NESC).” This statement does not address whether the  
12      current catenaries/bonnets meet the NESC standards, or whether they can be  
13      rebuilt/reinforced to meet such standards, and UI has not provided copies of the  
14      relevant NESC sections to support UI’s position regarding the need for new, higher  
15      monopole installations.

16      **Q. In addition to the adverse impacts to historic structures listed on the  
17       National Register for Historic Properties, will any structures listed on the  
18       State Register for Historic Properties be impacted by UI’s current proposal?**

19      A. Yes, numerous properties. For example, those properties with views affected from  
20       the north side of the tracks include five (5) houses on Prospect Street, as well as  
21       the Courthouse on West River Street. State registered properties with viewpoints  
22       affected from the south side of the tracks include the Milford Railroad station, along  
23       with the Milford Green itself, which was listed on the SRHP in 2018.

24       The houses on Prospect Street were built before the electrification of the railroad  
25       and their settings will be compromised by the tall monopoles and proposed wiring  
26       crossing the bridge to the south. Similarly, the prominence of the new monopoles  
27       and circuitry will adversely impact a significant part of the backdrop to the  
28       Courthouse on West River Street.

29      **Q. In addition to the adverse impacts to historic structures listed on the  
30       National Register for Historic Properties, are there any structures in the City  
31       that are eligible for listing on the National or State Register and that will be  
32       impacted by UI’s current proposal?**

33      A. Whether a property is listed on the National Register for Historic Properties  
34       (NRHP) or State Register for Historic Properties (SRHP) is not determinative of its  
35       historic significance. They are both significant.

36       Additional historic properties with views affected from the north side of the tracks  
37       include the former factory at 33 Railroad Avenue, the Memorial Bridge and Tower

1 at the city's first mill site, Milford Cemetery bounded by Prospect, Gulf and Cherry  
2 Streets, the factory at 108 Wampus Lane (WWII), and the former US Motors Plant  
3 on Old Gate Lane (1940). The Milford Cemetery is a particularly significant  
4 landmark being “[o]ne of the oldest surviving cemeteries in the U.S.—and North  
5 America—it is the final resting place for an esteemed group of historical figures.”  
6 Since the first burial of a founding settler’s son in 1644, several hundreds of Milford  
7 residents have been buried here in this well-kept and managed property, including  
8 former statesmen and governors. All in close proximity to the proposed monopoles  
9 and high suspended circuits.

10 Those historic properties with views affected from the south side of the tracks  
11 include the Cody White Funeral Home and the former Smith Funeral Home, both  
12 located on the north side of the Milford Green, as well the original 1914 trussed  
13 catenary with 1940 bonnet structures that currently serve the railroad.

14 Furthermore, candidates for listing on CT’s SRHP must possess integrity of  
15 location which includes its viewpoints and community settings. The SRHP enables  
16 state and local agencies to consider historic properties in the early stages of  
17 planning projects; to wit, the current application in Docket 508.

18 **Q. Does the Charles Island mitigation measure proposed in UI’s application  
19 address these adverse impacts? Please explain.**

20 A. No, it has no relevance to the route or configuration of the transmission line that is  
21 proposed by UI in Docket 508. The signage placement will not change or mitigate  
22 the visual clutter represented by the numerous and higher transmission lines on  
23 the new monopoles.

24 **Q. Does the City support an alternative mitigation measure to address the  
25 adverse impacts to historic resources in the City?**

26 A. Yes, to maintain the viewpoints and skyline that form the backdrop to the historic  
27 properties on both the north and south sides of the tracks. Besides the preferred  
28 resilient alternate of direct burial, the next preference is the rebuilding of the  
29 transmission lines on rebuilt catenaries. ‘Rebuilding and repair’ is a significant  
30 element in the sustainability that has become a standard of our society, either in  
31 new installations or the preservation of historic properties.

32 **Q. How does rebuilding the portion of the transmission line that runs from  
33 Beardsley Avenue to Gulf Street on existing catenary structures mitigate  
34 adverse impacts to historic resources in the City.**

35 A. By placing the transmission lines on the same existing bonnets (or replacement)  
36 on the trussed catenary structures, (and reducing the height of the two existing tall  
37 monopoles on the south side of the tracks over the Milford Railroad station, offered

1 in Visual Simulations of 11/28/21: Existing/Proposed Photo Series 3 and Photo  
2 Series 4), the visual appearance of those lines will remain at the same elevation  
3 as they currently are, and below the sightlines of some of the properties south of  
4 the green.

5 Milford has planned effectively over the decades with the utility companies, and  
6 there are no overhead power lines along the north side of green (North Broad  
7 Street) and placing the new transmission lines on existing catenaries (bonnets) is  
8 a consistent image to that planning.

9 **Q. Other than this alternative configuration using the existing catenary  
10 structures, is there any other mitigation measure that would sufficiently  
11 mitigate the adverse impacts to NRHP-listed structures within the City?  
12 Please explain.**

13 A. Replacing like-with-like (utilize the existing bonnets or similar short poles) or  
14 running the transmission lines underground. One of the purposes (goals) stated by  
15 UI in its application is that “the upgrades will improve the reliability and resiliency  
16 of the transmission system.” Not only would underground installation preserve the  
17 historic character and setting of numerous properties (most significantly the Green  
18 which has been declared “one of the most unique in the state”), it is also a  
19 universally accepted resiliency measure to mitigate storm/weather-related  
20 concerns and outages stemming from accidental airborne incidents such as flying  
21 debris that can arc between lines, wayward kites and balloons, and the flocking  
22 migratory birds that transit the area.

23 Furthermore, UI’s justification to remove the bonnets off of the trussed catenaries  
24 because “of age-related physical limitations” has not been addressed with the  
25 alternative configuration of selective replacing/reinforcing those “age related  
26 physical limitations.” This procedure could prove to be more cost effective than  
27 installing all of the new higher monopoles.

28 From UI’s Comparison of Overhead and Underground Power Lines analysis, they  
29 state that “Exceptions (to overhead transmission installation) include densely  
30 populated urban areas and metropolitan areas...” In several locations of their  
31 application, UI admits that the project runs through such areas: “ 6.4 BIOLOGICAL  
32 RESOURCES: The Project will extend along the CT DOT railroad corridor,  
33 adjacent to densely developed urban/suburban areas....” In consideration of the  
34 nearby historic structures and overall historic character of this area, the above-  
35 noted exception supports the use of an underground alternative for the portion of  
36 the transmission line that runs through Downtown Milford.

1      **Q. Was the Milford Historic Preservation Commission contacted by UI**  
2      **regarding the project's adverse impact to the City's historic structures**  
3      **and/or measures to mitigate those impacts?**

4      A. No. Neither the Milford Historic Preservation Commission, nor any of its members,  
5      have been contacted by UI in connection with this project.

# **ATTACHMENT A**



**William R. Silver, AIA**  
principal / president

**Bill Silver** is responsible for the policy and administration of the firm as well as leading on specific projects. His experience covers the full range of building types, from residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional. Silver has managed large multi-million-dollar projects with a large design and engineering team as well as designing and producing small renovation and historic rehabilitation projects. He is also a registered historic architect in CT.

**Years with Firm:** 30

**Professional Registrations**

- ▶ Registered Architect: CT, NY, RI, MA, MD, NH, NJ, ME, PA, NCARB
- ▶ Registered Interior Designer: CT
- ▶ Historical Architect: Connecticut State Historic Commission
- ▶ 10-Hour OSHA Certificate

**Education**

- ▶ M. Arch. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- ▶ Certificate Architectural Association, London, England
- ▶ B. Environmental Design, Miami University (Ohio)

**Affiliations and Activities**

- ▶ Lecturer, Building Official Career Development Program, CT Department of Public Safety
- ▶ American Institute of Architects
- ▶ AIA Connecticut, Professional Practice Commission
- ▶ Moderator and Various Committee Chairs, First United Church of Christ, Milford
- ▶ Who's Who Among American Businessmen
- ▶ Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
- ▶ Member, Milford Historic Preservation Commission
- ▶ Building Committee, Beth-El Shelter, Milford

**representative historic experience**

- Martha Culver House (c.1858) – Historic Needs Assessment – North Haven
- Whitneyville Commons – Development Study - Hamden
- Ferguson Library (c. 1909) – Facade Restoration – Stamford
- Blackstone Memorial Library (c. 1896) – Renovation - Branford
- Historical Society Building (c. 1902) – Window Restoration – Southington
- Worthington House (c. 1774) - Historic Renovations - Berlin
- Waldo Bryant House (c. 1895) – Restoration – Bridgeport
- United Congregational Church - Facility Renovations - Bridgeport
- Staples House (c. 1732) – Window Restoration & Exterior Repairs - Farmington
- Keney Clock Tower - Historic Rehabilitation - Hartford
- Bugbee Memorial Library - Historic Restoration - Killingly
- Downs House (c. 1797) - Stabilization & Restoration - Milford
- First United Church of Christ (c. 1823) - Historic Restoration - Milford
- Stern Hall (c. 1845) - Historic Rehabilitation, Renovation & Expansion - Milford
- Yale University Film Arts Center - Total Renovation - New Haven
- Fodor Farm (c. 1802) - Historic House Renovations - Norwalk
- Middle School - Historic Window Replacement - Portland
- Baldwin Senior Center - Accessibility Renovations - Stratford
- Birdseye Municipal Center (c. 1935) - Restoration & Rehabilitative Reuse - Stratford



## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing document was electronically mailed to the following service list on May 17, 2022:

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*/s/ John W. Knuff*  
JOHN W. KNUFF, ESQ.