

Petition No. 1113
United Illuminating
New Haven, Connecticut
Staff Report
August 28, 2014

On July 29, 2014, 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 the construction, operation, and maintenance of a 2.8 MW AC fuel cell facility on a UI-owned parcel (Map 67, Block 951, Lot 13) in New Haven, Connecticut. Council member Phil Ashton and Siting Analyst David Martin visited the site on August 27, 2014 to review the proposal. Tom Judge, Jessica Overmyer, and Jimmy Morrissey represented UI at the field review.

UI's fuel cell facility would consist of one FuelCell Energy DFC3000 power plant. The power plant would be installed within a fenced compound that would be approximately 100 feet by 75 feet. The compound would be located in the southeast corner of a 2.4 acre parcel owned by UI. The parcel is currently vacant, although UI does lease a portion of the property to a firm that uses it for the storage of earth materials. A UI transmission line also runs through the property. The UI property is flat and cleared of vegetation. The proposed plant would be installed above the 500-year flood elevation.

The plant would run on natural gas which would be brought to the plant via an underground connection from Connecticut Avenue, the street at the front of UI's property. The electricity generated by the plant would be interconnected with a UI 13.8 kV distribution circuit via an underground connection. UI expects the power plant to be available 90% of the time. Water needed in the operation of the fuel cell plant would be provided through a connection with the city water system, and waste water generated by plant operations would be discharged to the city's sewage system.

UI is proposing that the fuel cell compound be enclosed with a eight-foot high chain link fence with a two-inch mesh. Council member Ashton suggested UI consider using a one-inch mesh fence to reduce the likelihood of anyone climbing the fence.

The area surrounding the UI property on which the fuel cell plant would be located is primarily industrial. The property is next to a large tank farm, and an exit ramp from I-95 runs along its northeastern boundary. Also nearby are a large power plant, a UI substation, the city's sewage treatment plant, and several industrial facilities related to the port of New Haven's operations. The noise from the fuel plant would be within regulatory limits, and there are no sensitive receptors near enough to be affected by the plant's noise.

UI has discussed its project with City of New Haven officials, who have expressed support for the project. All abutting property owners were notified by UI, and no comments have been received from any of them.

UI's fuel cell plant will help the company meet the state's renewable energy requirements. It will generate much fewer air pollutants compared to electricity generated by the burning of fossil fuels. The location of the fuel cell plant and its operations are not expected to have any substantial adverse environmental impacts.

Aerial View of New Haven; vicinity of proposed fuel cell plant



Aerial photograph taken from Google Earth