



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

September 28, 2023

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
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PETITION NO. 1593 – The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy petition for the proposed Montville Substation to North of Kitemaug Road Rebuild Project consisting of the replacement and reconductoring of electric transmission line structures along approximately 1.1 miles of its existing electric transmission line right-of-way shared by its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) 1090 and 1000 Lines between Montville Substation and approximately 1200 feet north of Kitemaug Road in Montville, Connecticut, and related electric transmission line and substation improvements.

Dear Attorney Bachman,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) offers the following comments regarding Petition 1593.

1. Best Management Practices and Documentation

The Petitioner notes that certain project activities would be done in accordance with the Petitioner's April 2022 Construction & Maintenance Environmental Requirements, Best Management Practices Manual for Massachusetts, and Connecticut (BMPs). In addition, the Petitioner notes that one state-listed species is known to occur in the proximity of the project area, as documented in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) determination letter issued in July 2022. However, neither the determination letter nor any details regarding the state-listed species, such as distance to any nests or critical habitat, time of year restrictions, etc. are included in the Petition filing. The Council recommends that the referenced BMPs, the NDDB determination letter with any recommendations, and any external environmental quality plans and/or standards, referenced by the Petitioner, be submitted to the Siting Council for inclusion in the record, consideration, and possible incorporation into permits.

2. Vegetation

The Petitioner states that "some limited tree clearing, and vegetation management will be required in select areas, which will result in the removal of 1.57 acres of trees in order to meet applicable clearance standards. Further, the Petitioner states that "in sensitive environmental and cultural resource areas (i.e., NDDB areas, state-listed species and their habitats, and cultural resources, etc.), Eversource would require the contractor to use low impact methods for vegetation clearing". Low-impact methods incorporate a variety of approaches, techniques, and equipment to minimize site disturbance, depending on the specific settings and situations": The Council recommends that such sensitive environmental and cultural resource areas designated

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for low-impact methods be depicted on the project plans and that an environmental inspector ensure that the contractor(s) conforms to using low-impact methods in the designated areas.

3. Invasive Species

The proposed work, especially in and around the temporary work pads and temporary access roads, has the potential to introduce or expand the habitat for invasive species. The Petitioner states that invasive species exist within the right-of-way and that “the Project would adhere to Eversource's BMPs to minimize the disturbance and spread of soil and/or plant matter as specified in the BMP Manual” in addition to the measures identified in the Petition materials (page 16) to control the potential spread of invasive species. The Council supports measures to control the establishment and spread of invasive species and recommends that an environmental inspector ensure that the contractor(s) conforms to the requirements of the invasive species control plan/measures.

4. Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) Controls

The Petitioner states “temporary gravel tracking pads would be installed at points of construction vehicle ingress/egress to minimize the potential for equipment to track dirt onto local roads”. The Petitioner also states that “project construction activities would conform to Eversource BMPs for E&S control, including those provided in the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control ("Connecticut Guidelines"). The Council supports the Petitioner’s efforts to minimize erosion and sedimentation and recommends that the Petitioner also consider utilizing updated methods and techniques for minimizing erosion and sedimentation, based on the best currently available technology, as identified in the draft Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Guidelines update (2023).

5. Inspections

The Petitioner states that “temporary E&S control measures would be maintained and inspected by an Eversource appointed environmental inspector on a weekly basis throughout the Project construction to ensure their integrity and effectiveness and for conformance to BMPs and Connecticut Guidelines”. The Petitioner also states that once construction is complete, “temporary E&S control measures would remain in place and inspected monthly until all disturbed areas have been deemed stabilized after which they would be removed”. The Council supports the presence of an environmental inspector and recommends that inspections also be conducted within 24 hours of the end of a storm that generates a discharge that equals or exceeds 0.5 inch. The Council also recommends that the Petitioner expand the inspector’s duties to include, but not limited to contractor(s) education and ensuring that the contractor(s) adhere to the recommended protective measures for the state-listed species, if applicable; ensuring that the use of low impact methods for vegetation management are utilized in the designated areas; and ensuring that invasive species control methods, identified in the Petition (pg. 16), are implemented to minimize the spread and establishment of invasive species.

The Council’s comments above address only certain elements of the materials provided by the Petitioner at the time of the filing. Additional information can become evident through comments offered by other parties and during the Siting Council’s administrative hearing process. The absence of comment(s) by this Council about any Petition or Application, or any aspects thereof, may not be interpreted as an endorsement of a proposed project, or its components or that this Council might not have comments or concerns on more specific issues raised during the hearing process.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council’s comments.

Sincerely,



Paul Aresta
Executive Director