

Good afternoon, Siting Council Members. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's hearing regarding the proposed tower at 222 Clintonville Rd, Northford, CT.

My name is David Palumbo. I am the Chairman of the North Branford Public Safety Communications Committee. I am here to speak on behalf of North Branford's Public Safety Services as a unified voice. Today I have with me Kevin Halloran (Chief of Police), Anthony Esposito (Interim Fire Chief), Victor Pietrandrea (Chairman, Board of Police Commissioners) and Ed Prunier (Chairman Board of Fire Commissioners).

The Public Safety Communications Committee has been charged with replacing North Branford's public safety radio communications system which is aging and at the end of life. The Town has been struggling for many years with providing a "reliable, uninterrupted" communications system, which is "critical" to the safe and effective operations of our Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Operations Center, Regional Emergency Services and life safety for North Branford residents.

Police, Fire, and EMS are the front-line response to whether it be a crime in progress, fire, medical emergency, terrorist attack, natural disaster, or global pandemic. Effective communications play a critical role in coordinating and executing the public safety response to any given incident. Land mobile two-way radios are public safety organizations primary communication tool and lifeline. During calls for service, they rely on their radios to stay connected and share and receive timely and accurate information.

As I said, our current radio system is aging and at the end of life. There are dead spots throughout the town. Street coverage is spotty in multiple locations throughout town and coverage in residential and public buildings is poor and many times non-existent.

In addition to poor radio coverage, Mutual Aid and Interoperability is a challenge with our local public safety partners. Most of the surrounding towns and State Police have moved to a modern digital radio system that allows them to easily communicate with each other. We rely on our local public safety partners in times of crisis and the ability to communicate is critical.

We will significantly benefit by moving from a conventional to a digital radio system. Digital systems create efficiencies and allow more users to operate on fewer frequencies. Most importantly, the transition from conventional to digital systems provides a pathway to full interoperability. Our new radio system will leverage the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network which will provide superior street and building coverage throughout town. Enhanced interoperability within and outside of the Town of North Branford and throughout much of the State of Connecticut are a few of the benefits of the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network

The Town secured the services of a professional radio consultant firm to ensure the best possible coverage for our new Land Mobile Radio Network. Additionally, it has been reviewed and approved by the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the radio vendor, Motorola.

The assessment of these radio experts concluded that due to topography of North Branford, a tower will be needed in the center area of Northford for maximum coverage. Numerous other sites were studied for this project; however, based on the projected radio coverage maps, the 222 Clintonville Rd location provides the best radio coverage for our first responders in the Northford section of town. Coincidentally, the center of Northford lacks adequate cell coverage, in which cell calls are consistently dropped. Society has become reliant on cell phone technology. Many people no longer have traditional land line telephones in their houses and rely on the portability of cellular technology. In the case of an emergency, people need reliable service to call 911 in the event of an emergency, whether it is from their home or while on the road.

In conclusion, the installation of a tower at 222 Clintonville Road and the ability to install radio antennas for our Land Mobile Radio Network will provide “reliable”, “uninterruptable” communications, not only for our public safety officials, but also to the public.