

**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,	:	May 17, 2022
WEST HAVEN, AND NEW HAVEN,	:	
CONNECTICUT	:	

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.

16

17

18

19

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.

37

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:

Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
siting.council@ct.gov

Bruce McDermott, Esq.
Murtha Cullina LLP
One Century Tower
265 Church Street, 9th floor
New Haven, CT 06510
T: 203-772-7787
bmcdermott@murthalaw.com

/s/ John W. Knuff

JOHN W. KNUFF, ESQ.