

1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

3  
4 DOCKET NO. 516

5 An Application from The United Illuminating  
6 Company (UI) for a Certificate of Environmental  
7 Compatibility and Public Need for the Fairfield to  
8 Congress Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild  
9 Project that consists of the relocation and  
10 rebuild of its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) electric  
11 transmission lines from the railroad catenary  
12 structures to new steel monopole structures and  
13 related modifications along approximately 7.3  
14 miles of the Connecticut Department of  
15 Transportation's Metro-North Railroad corridor  
16 between Structure B648S located east of Sasco  
17 Creek in Fairfield and UI's Congress Street  
18 Substation in Bridgeport, and the rebuild of two  
19 existing 115-kV transmission lines along 0.23 mile  
20 of existing UI right-of-way to facilitate  
21 interconnection of the rebuilt 115-kV electric  
22 transmission lines at UI's existing Ash Creek,  
23 Resco, Pequonnock and Congress Street Substations  
24 traversing the municipalities of Bridgeport and  
25 Fairfield, Connecticut

VIA ZOOM AND TELECONFERENCE

Public Comment Session held on Tuesday,  
July 25, 2023, beginning at 6:30 p.m.,  
via remote access.

H e l d B e f o r e:  
JOHN MORISSETTE, Presiding Officer

Reporter: Lisa L. Warner, CSR #061

1   **A p p e a r a n c e s:**

2   **Council Members:**

3       BRIAN GOLEMBIEWSKI, Designee for  
4       Commissioner Katie Dykes, Department of  
5       Energy and Environmental Protection

6       ROBERT HANNON  
7       ROBERT SILVESTRI  
8       DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.

9   **Council Staff:**

10       MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQ.  
11       Executive Director and Staff Attorney

12       MICHAEL PERRONE  
13       Siting Analyst

14       LISA FONTAINE  
15       Fiscal Administrative Officer

16   **For Applicant The United Illuminating  
17   Company:**

18       MURTHA CULLINA LLP  
19       265 Church Street  
20       New Haven, Connecticut 06510  
21       Phone: 203.772.7787  
22       BY: BRUCE L. McDERMOTT, ESQ.  
23       bmcdermott@murthalaw.com

24   **For Party BJ's Wholesale Club, Inc:**

25       CRAMER & ANDERSON LLP  
26       30 Main Street, Suite 204  
27       Danbury, Connecticut 06810  
28       Phone: 203.744.1234  
29       BY: JOSEPH P. MORTELLITI, ESQ.  
30       jmortelliti@crameranderson.com

31   **Also present: BRIAN RAGOZZINE, Project  
32   Manager, UI**

33   **Public speakers: JEFFREY KALAIPOS  
34   JAMES P. BOHAN**

35   **Zoom co-host: Aaron Demarest**

**\*\*All participants were present via remote access.**

1 MR. MORISSETTE: Good evening, ladies  
2 and gentlemen. This remote public comment session  
3 is called to order this Tuesday, July 25th at 6:30  
4 p.m. My name is John Morissette, member and  
5 presiding officer of the Connecticut Siting  
6 Council. Other members of the Council are Brian  
7 Golembiewski, designee for Commissioner Katie  
8 Dykes of the Department of Energy and  
9 Environmental Protection. We have Robert Hannon,  
10 Robert Silvestri and Daniel P. Lynch.

11 Members of the staff are Melanie  
12 Bachman, executive director and staff attorney;  
13 Michael Perrone, siting analyst; and Lisa  
14 Fontaine, fiscal administrative officer.

15 If you haven't done so already, I ask  
16 that everyone please mute their computer audio  
17 and/or telephones now.

18 This is a continuation of the public  
19 hearing that began at 2 p.m. this afternoon. A  
20 copy of the prepared agenda is available on the  
21 Council's Docket No. 516 webpage, along with the  
22 record of this matter, the public hearing notice,  
23 instructions for public access to this remote  
24 public hearing, and the Council's Citizens Guide  
25 to Siting Council Procedures.

1           This hearing is being held pursuant to  
2 the provisions of Title 16 of the Connecticut  
3 General Statutes and of the Uniform Administrative  
4 Procedure Act upon an application from The United  
5 Illuminating Company for a Certificate of  
6 Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for  
7 the Fairfield to Congress Railroad Transmission  
8 Line 115-kV Rebuild Project that consists of the  
9 relocation and rebuild of its existing  
10 115-kilovolt electric transmission lines from the  
11 railroad catenary structures to new steel monopole  
12 structures and related modifications along  
13 approximately 7.3 miles of the Connecticut  
14 Department of Transportation's Metro-North  
15 Railroad corridor between Structure B648S located  
16 east of Sasco Creek in Fairfield and UI's Congress  
17 Street Substation in Bridgeport, and the rebuild  
18 of two existing 115-kV transmission lines along  
19 0.23 mile of existing UI right-of-way to  
20 facilitate interconnection of the rebuilt 115-kV  
21 electric transmission lines at UI's existing Ash  
22 Creek, Resco, Pequonnock and Congress Street  
23 Substations traversing the municipalities of  
24 Bridgeport and Fairfield, Connecticut. The  
25 application was received by the Council on March

1 17, 2023.

2 The Council's legal notice of the date  
3 and time of this remote public hearing was  
4 published in The Connecticut Post on April 15,  
5 2023. Upon this Council's request, the Applicant  
6 erected signs at conspicuous locations along the  
7 route so as to inform the public of the name of  
8 the applicant, the type of facility, the remote  
9 public hearing date and contact information for  
10 the Council, including website and phone number.  
11 These locations are as follows: The train station  
12 located at 525 Water Street in Bridgeport. The  
13 train station located at 195 Unquowa Road in  
14 Fairfield. The train station located at 61  
15 Constant Comment Way in Fairfield. Ash Creek  
16 Conservation Area located at Kenard Street in  
17 Fairfield. At the Pequonnock Substation located  
18 at 1 Kiefer Street in Bridgeport. And the train  
19 station located at 96 Station Street in Southport.

20 Please be advised that the Council's  
21 project evaluation criteria under the statute does  
22 not include the consideration of property  
23 ownership or value.

24 As a reminder to all, off-the-record  
25 communication with a member of the Council or a

1 member of the Council staff upon the merits of  
2 this application is prohibited by law.

3 This remote public comment session is  
4 reserved for members of the public who signed up  
5 in advance to make brief statements. These  
6 limited appearance statements are not subject to  
7 questions from the parties or the Council, and  
8 members of the public making statements may not  
9 ask questions of the parties or the Council.

10 In accordance with the public hearing  
11 notice and in fairness to everyone who signed up  
12 to speak, these public statements will be limited  
13 to three minutes. Please be advised that written  
14 comments may be submitted by any person within 30  
15 days of this public hearing.

16 I wish to note that parties and  
17 intervenors, including their representatives,  
18 witnesses and members, are not allowed to  
19 participate in the public comment session.

20 I also wish to note for those who are  
21 listening and for the benefit of your friends and  
22 neighbors who are unable to join us for this  
23 remote public comment session that you or they may  
24 send written statements to the Council within 30  
25 days of the date hereof by mail or by email.

1           Please be advised that any person may  
2 be removed from the remote public comment session  
3 at the discretion of the Council.

4           We ask that each person making a  
5 limited appearance statement in this proceeding to  
6 confine his or her statements to the subject  
7 matter before the Council and to avoid  
8 unreasonable repetition so that we may hear all  
9 the concerns you or your neighbors may have.

10           Please be advised that the Council  
11 cannot answer questions from the public about the  
12 proposal.

13           A verbatim transcript will be made of  
14 this hearing and will be deposited at the  
15 Bridgeport City Clerk's Office and the Fairfield  
16 Town Clerk's Office for the convenience of the  
17 public.

18           At this time, I request the applicant  
19 to make a brief presentation to the public  
20 describing the proposed facility.

21           Mr. Ragozzine, please.

22           MR. RAGOZZINE: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Morissette, and good evening. Thank you to the  
24 Siting Council, esteemed guests, members of our  
25 community. And thank you for this opportunity.

1 I'm happy to present this to you, UI's  
2 Fairfield to Congress Project. And it extends  
3 from Sasco Creek -- can everybody hear me?

4 MR. MORISSETTE: Yes, we can hear you  
5 fine. Thank you.

6 MR. RAGOZZINE: It extends from Sasco  
7 Creek in Fairfield right on the Westport border  
8 7.3 miles, and it comes up to our Congress Street  
9 Substation in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

10 This project is a continuation of a  
11 previously approved Milvon to West River project.  
12 It's very similar in nature and in the same  
13 Metro-North corridor as that Milvon to West River.  
14 So we're working right along the train tracks.  
15 Our 115-kV conductors are currently on the train  
16 catenaries, and they are deteriorated to the point  
17 where they're unsafe, and it makes our network  
18 unreliable.

19 So UI performed a structural  
20 evaluation, and they determined that the  
21 structures are overstressed based on wind and ice  
22 criteria loading. So similar to this Milvon to  
23 West River project, it was determined that the  
24 best option for the reliability of the network is  
25 to install new monopoles and remove our conductors



1 from the rail line catenaries. So they extend up  
2 above the catenaries on metal structures called  
3 bonnets is the correct term.

4 There are over 100 monopoles that we  
5 want to put in, and we're looking at this being  
6 close to a four-year project. A majority of the  
7 7.3 mile corridor extends through urban areas, so  
8 we have to be very cognizant of the community.

9 So in an effort to bolster the  
10 reliability of the network while also giving UI  
11 much better access to the structures for  
12 maintenance and/or emergency repair in the future,  
13 these stand-alone monopoles will greatly enhance  
14 this ability. And additionally, with the new  
15 structures we'll get back in compliance, and we'll  
16 also have capacity for future upgrades should  
17 there need to be any based on the public needs of  
18 power.

19 The construction sequence is laid out  
20 in four main phases which are very dependent on  
21 both CT DOT and MNR and their authorization of us  
22 to do work in their corridor. This has been  
23 thought out in great extent to maximize the  
24 construction effort while minimizing the  
25 construction time frame while keeping safety and

1 reliability in mind.

2 We coordinate with Eversource,  
3 Metro-North Railroad and CT DOT on a biweekly time  
4 frame so that everyone is aware of our design, we  
5 can talk through things, and all parties are  
6 comfortable with what we are proposing.

7 And that's the gist of our project. So  
8 thank you, Mr. Morissette.

9 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you,  
10 Mr. Ragozzine.

11 We'll now call on Jeffrey Kalapos to  
12 make a public statement, followed by Mr. James  
13 Bohan.

14 Mr. Kalapos.

15 JEFFREY KALAPOS: Thank you for your  
16 time. Can you hear me okay?

17 MR. MORISSETTE: Yes, we can. Thank  
18 you.

19 MR. KALAPOS: Wonderful. As you  
20 mentioned, my name is Jeff Kalapos. My family and  
21 I live in Southport, Connecticut on South Gate  
22 Lane. It's a neighborhood that runs directly  
23 along the proposed United Illuminating project.

24 We moved into our home in October of  
25 2020, drawn by the unbelievable neighborhood full

1 of children and young families. We needed to  
2 extend ourselves financially to move here, but  
3 felt this is what our family needed in the midst  
4 of the global pandemic. We couldn't have been  
5 more excited and were blown away by how welcoming  
6 the community of Southport was to us. This  
7 neighborhood has become our extended family, and  
8 our backyard has become the main hangout for  
9 children ranging from ages 2 all the way to 17.

10 We were startled, to say the least,  
11 when we received the postcard in our mail  
12 announcing the proposed project running along our  
13 backyard line. Obviously, this brought about tons  
14 of questions, but most importantly, it brought  
15 about fear and frustration. First and foremost,  
16 we're concerned about the safety of having  
17 high-voltage wires so close to our property.  
18 While there are wires currently in place, as you  
19 mentioned, the project is calling for the wires to  
20 be moved nearly 20 feet closer to our home.

21 From our research, the results are  
22 inconclusive with regards to the connection  
23 between childhood leukemia and exposure to  
24 electrical powerlines. According to Cancer.Gov,  
25 the interpretation of the finding of increased

1 childhood leukemia risk among children with the  
2 highest exposures is unclear. Unclear is the  
3 concerning conclusion. And as a parent of two  
4 children under the age of 9, I'm responsible for  
5 protecting them. I ask that the committee please  
6 consider this data before making a decision.

7           Second, we are a young family who in  
8 2020 purchased our dream home. Like most people,  
9 our home is our most valuable financial asset we  
10 possess. Having high-voltage lines and poles so  
11 close to our property will likely devalue our home  
12 enormously. A 2018 study from the Journal of Real  
13 Estate Research found that vacant lots near  
14 high-voltage powerlines sell for nearly 17.9  
15 percent less.

16           There are alternative options here, but  
17 I just feel like UI is simply transferring the  
18 costs of this project onto us. This is wrong, and  
19 we're standing here today to stand up against it.

20           There are two solutions that can work  
21 for everyone living in our neighborhood and most  
22 of Southport. On the other side of the tracks  
23 nearly 100 feet from the proposed location and  
24 further from our neighborhood there are no homes  
25 and, most importantly, no families. After

1 speaking with the Town of Fairfield, I found that  
2 UI had run lines on other side several years ago.  
3 There is plenty of room to run another set of  
4 lines parallel to the current poles. This would  
5 avoid exposing our neighborhood to this project,  
6 its potential dangers and financial strain. I  
7 have little doubt this isn't being considered  
8 because of the cost to cross the tracks, which I  
9 am told is the main consideration here. Again,  
10 this feels like UI is shifting the cost to us  
11 through the potential increased exposure to  
12 electromagnetic fields and the potential reduction  
13 of value to our homes.

14 The second option, have the wires run  
15 underground for the length of our neighborhood or  
16 further. Based on the resources provided by UI,  
17 this is the safest option. (TIME ELAPSED)

18 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Mr.  
19 Kalapos. Unfortunately, your time has run out.  
20 If you have additional comments, please do provide  
21 them in writing to the Council. Thank you.

22 We'll now call upon James P. Bohan.  
23 Mr. Bohan? Mr. Bohan, you're still muted.  
24 Mr. Bohan, unfortunately you are still muted. Mr.  
25 Bohan, you are muted.

1           JAMES KELLY: Why don't you give Jeff  
2 back the time that Mr. Bohan is not able --

3           JAMES BOHAN: Unmute, okay.

4           MR. MORISSETTE: There you go. You're  
5 with us now.

6           MR. BOHAN: Thank you. Thank you very  
7 much. So we live practically adjacent to the  
8 tracks at the eastbound Southport Station. It's a  
9 very special, beautifully preserved station square  
10 in the heart of the Southport Historic District.  
11 Twenty years ago, Fairfield's Mark Finlay, the  
12 architect, he restored the old Jelliff Hardware  
13 buildings adjacent to the tracks on that station  
14 square and gave us practically a brand new late  
15 19th Century set of buildings that are iconic.  
16 They were the site where Sturm Ruger opened for  
17 business in 1948. A rare one was heated with a  
18 Franklin stove.

19           This station square is the gateway to  
20 iconic Southport Village, and that was a major  
21 basis of my successful campaign to have Station  
22 Street designated a State of Connecticut Scenic  
23 Road which we did about 25 years ago. So it's a  
24 very special place.

25           In particular, my concern is Volume 1A,

1 Appendix C, Photo 25, which I believe is an  
2 after-image of the effect of Docket 516, shows  
3 what appears to be new powerlines directly over  
4 that station square and directly over that Jelliff  
5 Hardware Sturm Ruger building. I see no image in  
6 the docket of structures supporting these new  
7 powerlines. These are powerlines south of the  
8 tracks right over that Southport station square,  
9 an iconic Southport station square. Are these  
10 structures and new powerlines historically  
11 appropriate for the historic district in which  
12 they are proposed?

13           Once again, many thanks for your work  
14 this afternoon. And I'd appreciate your help on  
15 this. I don't know what this is going to do. I  
16 can't see from the material in the docket what  
17 this is going to do to Southport square other than  
18 new powerlines suspended right over it. What are  
19 they being held up by? Where is the next west  
20 one? Where is the next east one? And that's what  
21 I'd like to see. Thank you very much.

22           MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Mr. Bohan.  
23 Thank you for coming out this evening.

24           With that, that concludes our public  
25 statements for this evening. The Council

1 announces that it will continue the evidentiary  
2 session of this public hearing on Tuesday, August  
3 29, 2023, at 2 p.m. via Zoom remote conferencing.  
4 A copy of the agenda for the continued evidentiary  
5 hearing session will be available on the Council's  
6 Docket 516 webpage, along with the record of this  
7 matter, the public hearing notice, instructions  
8 for public access to the remote evidentiary  
9 hearing session, and the Council's Citizens Guide  
10 to Siting Council Procedures.

11 Please note that anyone who has not  
12 become a party or intervenor but who desires to  
13 make his or her views known to the Council may  
14 file written statements with the Council until the  
15 public comment record closes.

16 Copies of the transcript of this  
17 hearing will be filed with the Bridgeport City  
18 Clerk's Office and the Fairfield Town Clerk's  
19 Office.

20 I hereby declare this hearing  
21 adjourned. Thank you, everyone, for your  
22 participation this evening. Thank you. Have a  
23 good evening, and stay dry.

24 (Whereupon, the above proceedings  
25 adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)



1 CERTIFICATE FOR REMOTE HEARING

2  
3  
4 I hereby certify that the foregoing 16 pages  
5 are a complete and accurate computer-aided  
6 transcription of my original stenotype notes taken  
7 before the CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL of the  
8 REMOTE PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION IN RE: DOCKET NO.  
9 516, An Application from The United Illuminating  
10 Company (UI) for a Certificate of Environmental  
11 Compatibility and Public Need for the Fairfield to  
12 Congress Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild  
13 Project that consists of the relocation and  
14 rebuild of its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) electric  
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18 miles of the Connecticut Department of  
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20 between Structure B648S located east of Sasco  
21 Creek in Fairfield and UI's Congress Street  
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23 existing 115-kV transmission lines along 0.23 mile  
24 of existing UI right-of-way to facilitate  
25 interconnection of the rebuilt 115-kV electric  
transmission lines at UI's existing Ash Creek,  
Resco, Pequonnock and Congress Street Substations  
traversing the municipalities of Bridgeport and  
Fairfield, Connecticut, which was held before JOHN  
MORISSETTE, PRESIDING OFFICER, on July 25, 2023.

22 

23 -----  
24 Lisa L. Warner, CSR 061  
25 Court Reporter