



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

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**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

August 29, 2023

The Honorable Sarah Keitt  
State Representative - 134th Assembly District  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106  
[Sarah.Keitt@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Sarah.Keitt@cga.ct.gov)

RE: **DOCKET NO. 516** – The United Illuminating Company (UI) application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Fairfield to Congress Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild Project that consists of the relocation and rebuild of its existing 115- kilovolt (kV) electric transmission lines from the railroad catenary structures to new steel monopole structures and related modifications along approximately 7.3 miles of the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s Metro-North Railroad corridor between Structure B648S located east of Sasco Creek in Fairfield and UI’s Congress Street Substation in Bridgeport, and the rebuild of two existing 115-kV transmission lines along 0.23 mile of existing UI right-of-way to facilitate 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.

Dear State Representative Keitt:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is in receipt of your correspondence dated August 29, 2023 concerning the above-referenced application. Thank you for taking the time to provide the Council with your comments.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §16-50(b), a copy of each application is required to be submitted to each member of the legislature in whose assembly or senate district the facility is to be located for review.

Before reaching a final decision on an application, the Council must carefully consider all of the facts contained in the evidentiary record that is developed by the Council, the applicant, parties and intervenors in the proceeding, and consider all of the concerns received from members of the public who speak at the public hearing or submit written statements to the Council.

Please note that you can view all of the documents related to this proceeding on our website at [portal.ct.gov/csc](http://portal.ct.gov/csc) under the “Pending Matters” link. You may also keep apprised of Council events on the website calendar and agenda.

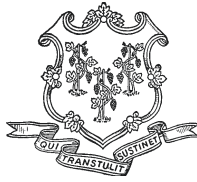
Thank you for your interest and concern in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Melanie A. Bachman  
Executive Director

MAB/MP/laf

c: Service List, dated August 29, 2023  
Council Members



State of Connecticut  
House of Representatives

**Representative Sarah Keitt**  
134th Assembly District

Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
(860) 240-8585  
Sarah.Keitt@cga.ct.gov

Assistant Majority Leader  
Vice Chair Children's Committee

**Member**  
Human Services Committee  
Public Health Committee

August 29, 2023  
Melanie Bachman, Executive Director  
Connecticut Siting Council  
10 Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 06051

**Re: Testimony for Docket No. 516 – The United Illuminating Company (UI) application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Fairfield to Congress Street Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild Project**

Dear Executive Director Bachman and Members of the Siting Council:

For the record, my name is Sarah Keitt, State Representative for Connecticut's 134<sup>th</sup> District, representing Fairfield, Southport, and Trumbull. Please accept this written testimony for **Connecticut Siting Council Docket No. 516** – for the environmental compatibility and public need of extending an electric transmission line across the CT DOT Metro North Railroad corridor in the vicinity of Sasco Creek in Fairfield and UI's Congress Street substation in Bridgeport.

While I understand the need to strengthen and protect our aging utility infrastructure, I feel strongly that this project will be detrimental to individual property owners who will be forced to give up 19.25 acres of primarily privately-owned land. This project also necessitates the removal of 5.5 acres of vegetation which is essential to area homeowners as a natural site and sound barrier to the train. The loss of land, combined with the increased noise and diminished views will have a negative impact on property values as well as quality of life for these residents.

Beyond property owners, this project will have significant impacts for the entire community as the historic Southport Village and Fairfield's main street commercial districts along the Post Road will be disrupted for the duration of construction. Many of these businesses are still recovering from the pandemic and may not be able to withstand any loss of foot traffic during construction. Further, the landscape of Southport and Fairfield will be forever changed by the 95-145' monopoles which will tower over mostly 2-3 story buildings – including a historic, nationally-recognized library directly in the path of this work.

These concerns do not even include the environmental destruction that will result from this project. Please refer to the Town of Fairfield's Conservation Commission's comments describing how this project will infringe on conservation easements that were put in place to protect our wetlands and vegetation from existing environmental threats. Southport and our main street corridor are prone to flooding and any threat to our conservation efforts could have a devastating effect on the area.

I am respectfully asking that UI and the Siting Council reevaluate the proposal to underground this line. At a time when weather patterns are more unpredictable and destructive than before, it is incumbent on us to ensure that we are following those practices that will have the best long-term outcomes. I believe that moving this line underground will better serve to protect the integrity of our grid. Florida, for example, has found that underground lines perform 85% better in hurricanes and 50% better in general conditions than above-ground lines. With the increasing frequency and severity of coastal storms, it is only a matter of when, not if, we will be forced to move these lines underground. The longer this work is delayed, the more expensive it will be. Now is not the time to be penny-wise and pound-foolish when it comes to protecting our electrical grid.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I look forward to working with UI, the town of Fairfield, and the Connecticut Siting Council on a resolution that will help balance the needs and interests of all parties and the communities of Bridgeport and Fairfield.

Respectfully,



Sarah Keitt  
State Representative, 134<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Serving Fairfield & Trumbull

