

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

IN RE:

THE UNITED ILLUMINATING COMPANY (UI) :
 APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF :
 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC : DOCKET NO. 516
 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 MILES 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 : NOVEMBER 2, 2023
 FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT :

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF STEPHANIE J. COAKLEY,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PEQUOT LIBRARY

Q1. Please state your name, profession and position with your employer.

A1. My name is Stephanie J. Coakley. I am the executive director of the Pequot Library, located at 720 Pequot Avenue, Southport, Connecticut (“Pequot” or the “Library”). I reside at 25 Sport Hill Parkway, Easton, Connecticut, 06612.

Q2. Have you ever previously testified before the Connecticut Siting Council (the “CSC”)?

A2. No.

Q3. Why are you testifying before the CSC in this proceeding?

A3. I am providing testimony on behalf of the Pequot Library to address the Library's initial concerns regarding the subject application (the "Application").

Q4. What is your role with Pequot?

A4. I am the executive director of Pequot Library.

Q5. Can you please tell me about Pequot?

A5. Pequot Library is a community public library that was founded in 1889 and consists of over four hundred (400) members and on average welcomes over forty-five thousand (45,000) visitors throughout the year. Pequot Library's mission is to enrich lives by serving the cultural, educational, and intellectual needs of the entire community. The library collects, preserves, and makes accessible a collection of rare books, manuscripts, and archives; provides public library services; organizes engaging programs about history, literature, and the arts; curates Special Collections exhibitions; and hosts community-wide gatherings in a historic setting. The services and programming provided by Pequot Library extend far beyond most traditional lending libraries. Pequot Library regularly welcomes a significant number of children each week for a variety of on-site programs. A lot of the children's programming is provided for the benefit of Bridgeport public school students. Some of those programs also take place outside to utilize the expansive outdoor natural space of the library.

Q6. Can you please tell me about the history of Pequot?

A6. Pequot Library is revered for its historic setting and Special Collections of rare books, manuscripts, and archives and widely considered more than a traditional public lending library. Founded in 1889, Pequot Library was the gift of Southport residents Virginia Marquand Monroe (1837 – 1926) and her husband, Elbert B. Monroe (1836 – 1894). The Monroes intended the library to stand as a monument to Virginia's uncle and adoptive father, Frederick Marquand, who had left her his Pequot Avenue property and other assets "to use and distribute in the cause of education...and in encouraging and aiding good works". Frederick Marquand had been a successful silversmith and an investor in railroads and New York real estate. His success enabled him to become a noted philanthropist, donating to religious and charitable institutions. Following his legacy, Virginia set out to generously establish an institution that would provide a center of culture and knowledge for the entire community, "free as air to all." The library was erected directly behind Frederick Marquand's mid-19th century home and leveled upon the opening of the library, effectively creating the expansive great front lawn/open space.

Q7. Can you please tell me about the historic significance of Pequot's property and building?

A7. First opening its iconic double front doors in 1894, Pequot Library was designed by noted New York architect Robert H. Robertson (1849-1919) in the "Richardsonian Romanesque" style. Robertson was a popular architect who was devoted to the design manner of his day, beginning with the Victorian Gothic and "Queen Anne" styles, achieving great success with Romanesque, and ending his career pioneering some of New York's early skyscrapers, like the Park Row Building. Robertson received his architectural training through working with Henry A. Simms in Philadelphia and George B. Post in New York. By the time he began work on Pequot Library, Robertson had already designed several churches, the Mott Haven Railroad Station, the YWCA building located at East 15th St, and a number of other notable structures throughout the east coast.

In the 1880s, Robertson was at the height of his Romanesque phase, which produced many of his most notable designs. Pequot Library reflects the characteristic elements of his work, from the inviting front portico to the harmonious combination of light and dark shades of pink granite stonework to the pitch of the roof line, which gives the library its intimate interior. Around 1897, a second benefactor, Mary Catherine Hull Wakeman commissioned Robertson to build an extension onto the library. Mrs. Wakeman's donation, which included several rare books, expanded the stacks to accommodate an additional 50,000 items, and gave the library its magnificent Tiffany stained-glass windows, which are an architectural highlight of the stacks wing. The spectacular stained-glass windows were commissioned in memory of Mrs. Wakeman's deceased daughter and feature pioneers in the history of printing and the coats of arms of famous authors.

Above the arches at the library's main entrance, the Monroes specified that there should be two dates: 1637 and 1887. Recognizing the first cornerstone of the library is the year 1887 and 1637 marked the year of the Battle of Pequot Swamp. In July 1637, members of the Pequot Native Americans, who were fleeing from the Mystic Massacre, encountered English soldiers from Massachusetts and Connecticut in battles that occurred in the areas near where the library stands today. The inclusion of the year 1637 alongside the library's building foundation date was perhaps meant to memorialize the Pequot and their allies and the tragic period in perpetuity.

The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was entered into the Historic American Building Survey in 1965. The library's interior restoration project received a Historic Preservation Award from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation in 2007. Most recently, the library received the 2018 "Connecticut Treasures" Award, sponsored by the CT Chapter, American Institute of Architects, a state-wide initiative involving voters from well beyond Fairfield. The property is located within the Southport Historic District.

Q8. Does UI propose to take any of the Pequot property?

A8. Yes. On Pequot Library's property at 720 Pequot Avenue in Southport, CT, UI proposes to take an additional easement along the north edge of the library's property ranging in width from approximately twenty-five feet (25ft) at the northeast corner to approximately forty feet (40 ft) in depth at the northwest corner.

Q9. Does UI propose to construct any poles on the Pequot property?

A9. Yes. UI proposes to construct a pole (P655S) that is approximately one hundred and fifteen feet (115 ft) in height and roughly located in the midpoint of the additional easement about twenty feet (20ft) east of the stream on the property.

Q10. Is Pequot opposed to granting the easement to UI and the proposed construction of the pole?

Q10. Yes, Pequot Library is adamantly opposed to granting the proposed additional easement to UI. Furthermore, Pequot is adamantly opposed to allowing UI to construct the pole on its property.

Q11. Is Pequot going to voluntarily grant the easement(s) to UI or is UI going to need to exercise eminent domain to take the proposed property rights from Pequot?

Q11. Pequot Library will not voluntarily grant the additional easement(s) to UI and UI will need to exercise eminent domain in order to take the proposed property rights from Pequot.

Q12. What is Pequot's position with regard to UI's Application?

A12. Pequot Library is vehemently opposed to the Application because the Application as proposed will adversely affect the historic integrity, use and potential expanded use of Pequot Library's property. The Application will specifically limit Pequot Library's parking, programming, services and fundraising. The Application will result in the clear cutting of the substantial mature landscaped buffer between the train corridor and the Pequot Property.

Q13. How will the adversely affect the historic integrity of Pequot's Property?

A13. The proposed one hundred- and fifteen-foot (115ft) monopole will tower over the library and is seventy-five feet (75ft) higher than the highest point on our newly restored red-tiled roof. Incongruous to the park-like setting that we believe our founders intentionally created, towering industrial monopolies and transmission lines will impede our ability to remain a serene and picturesque New England village library. Since 2018, Pequot Library has been in the process of obtaining National Historic Landmark status. The

library's application will be adversely impacted by the proposed 115ft monopole and transmission lines directly behind its historic auditorium gable.

Q14. How will the Application adversely affect the parking at Pequot's property?

A14. There is already limited on-site parking at the property for our major events, which are absolutely critical to the success of Pequot Library's operation. These events take place throughout the year. The parking that we will lose from the Application will hinder our potential success at these events, and may even result in us not being able to run certain events that we have done in the past.

Q15. What would be the financial impact on Pequot from the impact of the Application on its major events throughout the year?

A15. Pequot Library's operations are mostly paid for by private support. Taxpayer support currently amounts to around twenty percent (20%) of Pequot Library's annual operating budget. A major part of the private support is raised from fundraising associated with our major events. These events include one of the largest annual used book sales in New England.

Q16. How would Pequot's plans for its future use of the property be impacted by the Application?

A16. Pequot Library spent considerable time and effort to develop a previous major renovation and expansion plan that was approved by the Town of Fairfield. For a few reasons, this Application will prevent Pequot Library from being able to go through with its prior renovation and expansion plan. First and foremost, the Fairfield Planning Director, recently confirmed that the proposed easement that UI is going to take on the Pequot Library property will result in the property no longer having the available land coverage for Pequot Library's proposed renovation/expansion plan to comply with the coverage requirements set forth in the Fairfield Zoning Regulations. Second, the impacts from the gigantic monopole on the property and transmission wires across the property will prevent Pequot Library from moving forward with the earlier renovation/expansion plan as it is currently composed.

Q17. Are there any other significant negative impacts that the Application will have on Pequot's use of its property.

A17. Yes. The location of the monopole will severely limit access to Pequot Library's garage, displace the library's garbage and recycling receptacles and create further challenges for major events. High voltage transmission lines will be placed directly adjacent to Pequot Library's rear entrance which also serves as an entryway to the children's library. I believe the location of these transmission lines will directly impact the use of the library by families with children.

Q18. Does this conclude your testimony?

Q18. Yes.

I, Stephanie J. Coakley, Executive Director of the Pequot Library, duly sworn, hereby verify that this statement was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and is believed to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Stephanie J. Coakley
Stephanie J. Coakley, Executive Director

November 2, 2023
Date

The above signed, Stephanie J. Coakley, personally appeared before me and verified that the above pre-file testimony for the Connecticut Siting Council is true and accurate and that she adopted it by her free act and deed on this 2 day of November, 2023.

Luanne M. Ryan
Luanne M. Ryan
Commissioner of Superior Court
Notary Public/
My Commission expires 8/31/2027

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:
PEQUOT LIBRARY**

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