

**Middlebury Bridle Land Association**  
c/o Nancy Vaughan, Secretary  
61 Sandy Hill Road  
Middlebury, CT 06762

**RECEIVED**  
JAN 28 2014

Connecticut Siting Council  
Ten Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 06051

**ORIGINAL**

CONNECTICUT  
SITING COUNCIL

ATTN: Melanie A. Bachman, Acting Executive Director

Re: Docket #192B – Towantic Energy, LLC Motion to Reopen and Modify June 23, 1999  
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need

Dear Members of the CT Siting Council:

On behalf of the Middlebury Bridle Land Association, I urge you to reject this motion to allow CPV to construct a larger power plant at the proposed location. The area in which this proposed plant would be situated is primarily rural/suburban in nature, with many homes, farms and land set aside for enjoyment as open space. Although the proposed location itself is part of an industrial zone, this particular parcel is within several hundred feet of the town line with Middlebury and located adjacent to a section of homes, farms and open space.

MBLA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the region's bridle trails for horseback riding. We currently have 60 members who enjoy the scenic beauty provided primarily by the Larkin State Bridle Trail, the Middlebury Land Trust, and the Larkin family land. This area includes trails located near or on Longmeadow Road, South Street, Shadduck Road, Sandy Hill Road and Bioski Road, all in Middlebury, with the Larkin State Bridle Trail intersecting and serving to expand the reach of this area to Naugatuck, Oxford and Southbury. A description of the park on the Connecticut State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection website states: "Stretching across four towns, this long and narrow state park trail combines enough remarkable history, geography and aesthetics to rate its 110

acres as one of the biggest and prettiest parks in Connecticut's system. Originally designated as a trail for horses, for which it is still popular, Larkin's ten miles now also serve walkers, joggers, bikers and hikers."

The State of Connecticut has a thriving horse industry that contributes to the state economy. A report by Jennifer Nadeau, Assistant Professor, and Farhed Shah, Associate Professor, Department of Animal Science, University of Connecticut, "Horses in Connecticut: Size and Value of the Industry," notes the following:

- Connecticut ranks third in the density of horses nationwide.
- A 2002 survey of veterinarians who treated horses in Connecticut reveals there may have been as many as 51,000 horses residing in the state that year, with a more conservative estimate of 43,000.
- Horse ownership in the state is best described as a personal recreational activity, with the average annual household income listed as \$100,000 (largest income group is \$50,000 to \$74,900 with half of all owners reporting an income between \$50,000 and \$99,999).
- Over half of owners in Connecticut (53%) keep their horses on privately owned land, as opposed to boarding. The average area of land is thirteen acres.
- Businesses directly related to horse ownership include boarding, training, lessons, and breeding, as defined by the report.

Other businesses related to horses not cited by the report include farriers, veterinarians, and feed and tack store owners and employees. One local college, Post University, located on the Waterbury / Middlebury town line, offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Equine Studies.

Horse ownership in Connecticut also contributes to the state's appeal as a tourist destination. A quick glance at the state's official tourist destination website shows "quaint New England towns and villages" alongside hiking trails and winter sleigh rides. One can certainly imagine that Connecticut's farms are part of the attraction for those looking at fall foliage and those looking for a relaxing getaway in the country. As noted above, over half of all owners keep their horses on privately owned land. The University of Connecticut report noted that the average area of land used for that purpose was 13 acres.

To this end, MBLA has worked diligently to preserve the rural environment of the Middlebury / Woodbury / Oxford / Naugatuck / Southbury area, which includes much land that has been formally preserved as open space for the enjoyment of all residents. Such enjoyment would be greatly compromised by the construction of the CPV Towantic Hill energy plant. This plant's smokestacks would be visible for miles around and would have a negative impact – both visually and environmentally – on land that has been preserved as open space for enjoyment by horseback riders, hikers, mountain bikers, skiers, and those riding through the state to enjoy its beautiful surroundings. We feel strongly that large industrial buildings with smokestacks that tower 150 feet up into the air on one of the highest hills in the area do not belong in a rural environment. This view is shared by others in the region: for example, the town of Middlebury has limited its industrial/manufacturing zone to “light industry” or office use only. The proposed power plant would sit just 500 feet from the Middlebury town line and hundreds of acres of current open space and farm land.

The MBLA hosts annual rides and hunter paces, where riders from throughout Connecticut and adjoining states (New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts) gather together to enjoy the vistas available from the Larkin State Bridle Trail and the adjoining Larkin farm. Last year, about seventy riders competed in the 2014 Hunter Pace, held in September. The MBLA event is part of an Associated Bridle Trails Fall Pace Series, which includes paces in Newtown, Greenwich and Middlebury, CT, as well as Lewisboro, Katonah, Pawling, Putnam and Sleepy Hollow, NY. Money raised from these events are not only used to support association activities and to preserve the local trails but have also been donated to charitable organizations, such as St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Riders attending these events in the past have often spoken about the wonderful trails and the views afforded to participants and have mentioned how lucky we are as a region to have such unspoiled views. Once this plant is built, these views and the rural open space that is spoiled will never be returned to these and future generations of Connecticut residents.

Most of the towns and residents in this area value open space and have goals to preserve undeveloped land for the enjoyment of future generations. Right now, for example, the town of Woodbury is considering acquiring a 248 acre parcel near its town line with Middlebury.

Middlebury Land Trust has preserved several hundred acres of land, and the town of Middlebury has also created a widely used Greenway that stretches from its border with Waterbury to its border with Woodbury (approximately). Flanders Nature Center has additional holdings in Woodbury close to the Middlebury town line.

This rural / open space is not the place to locate a power plant, along with its possible pollution and large stacks. While there may be a need for additional power plants in the New England region, the costs to the local community in terms of pollution and the despoliation of a pristine rural environment are not offset by the few jobs that may be generated or by the few cents it may save on our electric bills. Further, only one town will see any economic gain while the adjoining towns (and residents) pay the price. It is too high a price to pay. As members of the Middlebury Bridle Land Association, we ask that you rule against this motion.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Vaughan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Nancy Vaughan, Secretary