



COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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MAR 23 2010

Barbara C. Wagner  
Chair

DATE: March 12, 2010

M. Howard Beach

TO: S. Derek Phelps, Executive Director  
Connecticut Siting Council

CONNECTICUT  
SITING COUNCIL

Janet P. Brooks

FROM: Peter Hearn, Environmental Analyst

Bruce R. Fernandez

RE: Proposed Telecommunications Facilities in Niantic (East Lyme) at  
49 Brainerd Rd. (Docket # 396)

Karyl Lee Hall

In response to the request for consultation regarding the above referenced telecommunication facility, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has reviewed the application. The CEQ has found the geographic situation of this proposed tower to be similar to sitings proposed for three towers in Old Lyme: 232 Shore Rd. (Docket # 391), 387 Shore Rd. (Docket # 392) and 61-1 Buttonball Rd. (Docket # 393). Consequently the CEQ wishes to re-affirm its comments with regard to the siting of communication towers that are very close to the shoreline of Long Island Sound and for towers that are also close to coastal wetland bird habitats.

John M. Mandyck

Richard Sherman

Ryan Suerth

Norman VanCor

**1. The visual impact of a proposed tower that will be very close to the shoreline of Long Island Sound cannot be fully assessed without a virtual simulation of its appearance when viewed from the waters of this major recreational resource.**

Karl J. Wagener  
Executive Director

When a proposed facility will be visible from a water body with recreational importance, applicants should be requested to provide a visual representation of the proposed structure(s) as viewed from the water.

The Long Island Sound is a recreational and scenic resource of regional significance. Its waters and shore are protected under the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CGS 22a-90). For the Siting Council to fulfill its obligation under CGS 16-50p(3)(B) to determine the "*probable environmental impact of the facility*" including "*conflict with the policies of the state concerning .... scenic, historic and recreational values....*" [emphasis added] the applicant should provide the Siting Council with the information needed to determine the visual effect of these towers on the recreational experience of the boaters and sportsmen who currently enjoy the Sound.

**2. The proximity of a tall telecommunication structure to coastal marshes raises the question of its potential impact on resident and transient bird populations.**

In addition to scenic and recreational concerns, the above referenced CGS 16-50p (3) (B) directs the Siting Council to consider "*the nature of the probable environmental impact of the facility including specification of every adverse effect ... on and in conflict with the policies of the state concerning, the natural environment, ecological balance, ... and wildlife;*" [emphasis added]

Bird strikes on communication towers in flyways are a documented occurrence. The construction of towers along the shoreline raises questions that have not been addressed in the application. Aside from the general problem of migratory birds striking towers when visibility is low, there is concern regarding the regular movement of waterfowl, shorebirds and other water birds from feeding spots along the shore to roosting areas in and near marshes. Typically, flocks of these birds fly at low altitude, often to time their feeding with the tides. The CEQ urges the Siting Council to request of the applicant an estimate of the avian populations that could be at risk from the proposed tower. Where applicable, the applicants should report on the most recent research on mitigation techniques to protect bird populations. If studies have identified possible mitigations they should be included in the design of this tower and of other towers similarly situated.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about these comments.

CC: Amey Marrella, Commissioner of Environmental Protection