

An application of the Department : Docket 123  
of Public Safety, Division of :  
State Police, for a Certificate of : Connecticut  
Environmental Compatibility and Public : Siting  
Need for the construction, operation, : Council  
and maintenance of a telecommunications :  
tower and associated equipment in the :  
Town of Westport, Connecticut. : March 29, 1990

OPINION

The Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police (State Police), applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) on September 28, 1989, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, maintain, and operate a telecommunications tower, associated equipment, and building in the Town of Westport, Connecticut.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has recognized a need for effective public safety communications and has therefore established a National Plan for frequency allocation in the 800MHz spectrum. The State Police with other public agencies from New Jersey, New York, and New England states, cooperated in designing plans through both the Tri-State and the New England region for application of FCC licenses.

The State Police plan to replace their existing outdated, overburdened two-way radio system with a modern arrangement using point-to-point microwave and a 800 MHz two-way mobile telecommunications system. This system would be able to support mobile data terminals, voice encryption, higher transmission speed for computer operation, operation of 2000 mobile units, and future expansion of the system which could not be addressed or upgraded in the current two-way radio system.

The proposed application primarily addresses the implementation of a point-to-point microwave telecommunications system linking centers of dispatch of existing troops, district commands, headquarters, and other fixed locations. Presently, these locations are served by leased telephone landlines which provide their point-to-point communication system. The proposed system would allow the State Police to operate an independent, efficient, and more reliable communications network than the existing landline system which is susceptible to a greater number of potential outage risks.

The proposed tower would replace an existing tower and antennas. The 180-foot tower is needed to establish a clear path over existing topography and vegetation to meet Connecticut Telecommunications System (CTS) point-to-point criteria and to improve the present 960 MHz radio transmission. No alternate locations with existing towers that would be

suitable to provide this point-to-point microwave link are available. Additionally, development of a new tower at an alternate site would likely have a greater visual presence than the construction of the proposed tower at the Troop "G" barracks which is an existing telecommunications tower site.

Furthermore, the development of an alternate tower at a different site would not alleviate the Troop "G" tower, which, in one form or another, would be necessary for dispatch of barrack's communications.

The proposed Troop "G" tower would be constructed within a commercially developed area which is zoned for general business. An established access road presently serves this site. The wetlands that are located nearby would not be affected by the construction of this tower. The fall zone of the proposed tower would be within property owned by the State of Connecticut.

The Council generally prefers monopole type towers which have a thinner appearance and are less visually obtrusive. However, the Council believes the proposed lattice tower in this application is appropriate to support the proposed microwave dish antennas including the possible sharing of the tower by federal, State, local, and private entities.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a public health and safety concern of the Council. However, at the base of the tower the calculated power density level would be approximately 10 times below the American National Standard Institute safety standard as adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection as the State standard, and it would become much lower as distance from the tower increased.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction and operation of a telecommunications tower and associated equipment at the proposed site, including effects on the natural environment; ecological integrity and balance; public health and safety; scenic, historic, and recreational values; forests and parks; air and water purity; and fish and wildlife are not significant either alone or cumulatively with other effects, are not in conflict with the policies of the State concerning such effects, and are not sufficient reason to deny this application.

The Council will require the State Police to submit a Development and Management (D&M) plan for approval prior to the commencement of any construction or clearing at the proposed Westport site. This D&M plan shall include detailed plans for the site's preparation including the tower and building foundation, site access, and erosion and sedimentation controls.