

DOCKET NO. 58

AN APPLICATION OF HARTFORD CELLULAR COMPANY FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION OF FACILITIES TO PROVIDE CELLULAR SERVICE IN HARTFORD, TOLLAND AND MIDDLESEX COUNTIES.

CONNECTICUT SITING  
COUNCIL

July 11, 1986

O P I N I O N

- 1) Hartford Cellular Company applied to the Connecticut Siting
- 2) Council (Council) for a certificate of environmental
- 3) compatibility and public need for the construction,
- 4) maintenance, and operation of telecommunication towers and
- 5) associated equipment in the towns of: Bloomfield; Glastonbury;
- 6) Haddam; Hartford; Middlefield; Portland; Rocky Hill; Somers;
- 7) and Willington. The application was subsequently amended to
- 8) include proposed sites in the towns of Vernon and Windsor.
- 9) This application, which includes that portion of the state
- 10) designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as
- 11) the Hartford NECMA, is the second NECMA in the non-wireline
- 12) competitor's plan to provide cellular telephone coverage to
- 13) Connecticut. The Hartford NECMA coverages are planned to
- 14) overlap with coverages from those sites already certificated by
- 15) the Council in the New Haven NECMA to provide continuous mobile
- 16) telephone coverage along the major highways of Connecticut.
- 17) The geologic characteristics of Connecticut include a
- 18) Central Lowlands, a Coastal Plain and Western and Eastern
- 19) Highlands. Most of the major thoroughfares of Connecticut
- 20) follow paths of least resistance through the Central Valley and

1) along the coastal plain. Running north and south parallel to  
2) the Central Valley are Connecticut's ridgelines, which are  
3) both impediments to cellular telephone service and leading  
4) candidates for tower sites providing extensive coverage.

5) Just as the development of Connecticut has been closely  
6) tied to its geological formations, so apparently are its  
7) cellular telephone sites and coverages. Conflicts between  
8) those who wish to see natural ridgelines and broadcasters  
9) seeking broad coverage therefore become inevitable. The FCC  
10) having declared a need for cellular service, the Council is  
11) faced with the difficult choice between sacrificing ridgelines  
12) to a few conspicuous towers or placing more towers in less  
13) visible areas of lower elevation, where most of the state's  
14) population resides. Exposure to electromagnetic radiation at  
15) the levels described in this application is not now considered  
16) a threat to human health by most United States scientists at  
17) the present time.

18) Since the radiation standards are currently under federal  
19) review the Council will order that the certificate holder  
20) shall comply with any new EPA RF standard, even if  
21) existing facilities are not subject to any such standard when  
22) and if it is promulgated.

23) Tower visibility is the other environmental issue of major  
24) concern here. The placement of towers on exposed ridgelines  
25) renders such towers more visible to the valleys below the

1) ridgelines. The Council is concerned about the incremental  
2) effects of placing more and more towers on ridgelines, which as  
3) a group represent one of the last undeveloped portions of  
4) Connecticut and which serve as important migration corridors  
5) and habitat for a variety of wildlife. Historically, the  
6) Council has encouraged the siting of towers which it found to  
7) be of public need within already developed areas, such as  
8) commercial and industrial zones where people work, rather than  
9) recreational or residential areas where people tend to spend  
10) their leisure time.

11)         Sharing existing towers is an option highly encouraged  
12) by the Council. Another favorable solution is the siting of  
13) towers on the rooftops of tall urban buildings. Such sites  
14) tend to provide high elevation, low visibility, and distance  
14) from residences.

15)         Given the prominence of ridgelines and the clear intent  
16) of both local and state government to protect Connecticut  
17) ridgelines, the Council assessed very carefully the need for  
18) the proposed Bloomfield and Middlefield tower sites to  
19) determine if such need outweighs the environmental effects of  
20) the towers. The proposed Bloomfield site is near a state park,  
21) an educational facility, and residences. As originally  
22) proposed, a 180' lattice tower would be clearly visible over a  
23) wide area from all points of the compass. A 100' tower, as the  
24) revised application proposes, would still be visible from the

1) surrounding area. It would be added to thirteen towers and an  
2) earth station facility within three miles of the proposed  
3) site. This, however, is not sufficient evidence in favor of  
4) this proposed site. The Council would prefer the further  
5) exploration of the option of siting towers on either side of  
6) Talcott Mountain ridge and of the potential for sharing one or  
7) more existing towers or tower sites on Talcott and Rattlesnake  
8) Mountains. The proposed Bloomfield site is therefore rejected  
9) without prejudice.

10) The proposed Middlefield site on Beseck Mountain offers a  
11) somewhat different set of circumstances to those found  
12) in Bloomfield. Although it is on a prominent ridgeline, this  
13) proposed site is not near a state park or an educational  
14) facility. However, it would be clearly visible from  
15) a wide area encompassing several towns, major highways, and  
16) several homes nearby.

17) The proposed site is near a Southern New England  
18) Telephone (SNET) monopole. Although the applicant reported  
19) that SNET refused permission to share their tower at this site  
20) it does believe some sharing as with the State Police, will be  
21) possible at this site to eliminate the need for some additional  
22) towers. The Council urges the applicant to continue  
23) negotiating with the State Police regarding a shared tower in  
24) the Middlefield area and to reopen negotiation with SNET to  
25) seek a means of consolidating facilities at this location, as

1) is apparently contemplated for a cell site in Southbury.  
2) The Council at this time has no information from the State  
3) Police regarding their requirements as to tower height, type,  
4) alignment, or antennas. To certificate the applicant's  
5) proposed tower at this time could lead to the construction of  
6) two new substantial towers atop Beseck Mountain, instead of  
7) the consolidation of one shared facility. The Council will  
8) therefore reject the proposed Middlefield tower without  
9) prejudice, pending further development of a tower sharing and  
10) consolidation plan.

11) The proposed Glastonbury site is on an existing tower, a  
12) consolidation strategy the Council strongly encourages. The  
13) proposed Haddam tower site raised some visibility questions,  
14) but it is not on a prominent ridgeline, nor is it near many  
15) residences or any recreational areas. The site will also  
16) provide needed coverage along Route 9.

17) The proposed Hartford site is on the rooftop of an existing  
18) building; only two antennas might be visible from the streets  
19) below.

20) The proposed Portland site is not in the immediate  
21) vicinity of any homes, but would be visible from Old  
22) Marlborough Turnpike. The visibility of a tower at this site  
23) would be lessened if a monopole structure were used and the  
24) Council will approve the site for a monopole structure only.

1) In Rocky Hill, the applicant proposed a monopole, which  
2) will resemble the pole structures on a nearby electric  
3) transmission line. There are no residences in the vicinity of  
4) the Rocky Hill site which is within a relatively isolated  
5) area. The proposed Somers site is in a level agricultural area  
6) and well removed from most homes and roads.

7) The proposed Vernon tower would be constructed near an  
8) existing well-screened water tank which will aid in shielding  
9) the lower portion of this tower. Although there are many  
10) residences in the area, few would have a direct view of the  
11) tower due to the topography of the area. The proposed  
12) Wellington tower is well removed from any nearby homes and  
13) roads, and the substantial number of trees in the area would  
14) add further screening.

15) The proposed Windsor tower would be placed within an  
16) industrial area of that town, which has few homes in the  
17) immediate vicinity. The tower might also be shared with the  
18) Town of Windsor, a relationship the Council encourages.

19) One salient point noted by the Council in these proceedings  
20) was that those tower sites which were proposed for developed  
21) areas such as an existing tower, a rooftop, and an industrial  
22) zone, received virtually no opposition. Those which were  
23) proposed in exposed areas such as residential neighborhoods and  
24) ridgelines provoked a substantial negative response from nearby  
25) residents and town officials. The Council assumes that the  
26) applicant has also noted such responses.