

DOCKET NO. 84 - AN APPLICATION OF SNET : CONNECTICUT SITING  
 CELLULAR, INC., FOR A CERTIFICATE OF :  
 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC : COUNCIL  
 NEED FOR A CELLULAR TELEPHONE ANTENNA :  
 TOWER AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT IN THE : February 5, 1988  
 TOWN OF HADDAM, CONNECTICUT.

O P I N I O N

SNET Cellular, Inc. (SNET) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) on September 15, 1987, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a cellular telephone antenna tower and associated equipment building in the Town of Haddam, Connecticut. The proposed facility would provide cellular telephone service as an addition to the Hartford New England Metropolitan Area (Hartford NECMA).

The proposed Haddam site would complete the final link in the chain of existing tower sites covering Route 9 from locations in Middlefield, East Lyme, and Old Saybrook. Route 9 in this area lies within a valley. This topography necessitates the use of a nearby hill to provide continuous cellular coverage to vehicles travelling through this valley. Much of the land surrounding Route 9 in Haddam lies within various portions of the Cockaponset State Forest and Higganum Reservoir State Park, which narrows the choice of sites available to the prospective cellular telephone provider. Privately-owned properties of adequate elevation exist in the

area, but they are remote and would entail the construction of lengthy steep access roads with extensive tree clearing. SNET investigated the use of several existing towers in the area, a policy favored by the Council because of its minimal environmental impact. The towers investigated in this case would, however, provide inadequate coverage or result in coverage gaps along Route 9, and were therefore rejected by the applicant.

The tower site proposed by SNET is on a hill east of Route 9, off of Morris Hubbard Road. This proposed tower site is near an existing transmission line which lies between the proposed site and Route 9. The structures which support this line resemble the monopole proposed tower and are only slightly lower in height. The placement of the tower in this location would reduce its visual impact from Route 9 more than would be the case if it were placed in an area without any structures standing above the treeline. As for nearby residences, the existing trees in the area would shield all but the top of the tower from view, especially during the summer months. Minimal clearing of mature trees in the area by SNET during its construction of the access road and tower site would further lessen the visual impact of this tower. The single-story equipment building and security fence, could be screened by the judicious placement of evergreens in the area by the applicant.

The proposed site contains no wetlands and would have no significant impact on rare or endangered species or areas of unique historical significance. The Council considered the minimal electromagnetic radiation levels the facility would produce, and concluded that based on the best available scientific evidence, such power densities at the indicated frequencies are not of significant concern.

The Council concludes that the need for the proposed facility outweighs its potential environmental impacts. Such impacts would be largely confined to the visual effects of the tower, as the effects of the facility on such environmental components as air, water, forests, and wildlife would be minimal. These measures could be more specifically addressed in a development and management plan, which the Council will require. The Council will therefore issue a Certificate for the tower site on Morris Hubbard Road in Haddam, Connecticut.

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