

DOCKET NO. 145 - An application of the : CONNECTICUT  
Department Public Safety, Division of State :  
Police, for a Certificate of Environmental : SITING  
Compatibility and Public Need for the :  
construction, operation, and maintenance : COUNCIL  
of a telecommunications facility to be :  
located at the former West Haven toll :  
stop, I-95 eastbound, in the City of :  
West Haven, Connecticut. : April 21, 1992

### OPINION

The State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police (State Police), applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) on October 24, 1991, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, maintain, and operate a telecommunications tower, associated equipment, and building in the City of West Haven, 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 800 MHz spectrum. The State Police with other public safety agencies from New Jersey, New York, and New England States, cooperated in designing plans through both Tri-state and New England regions 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The State Police plan to replace their existing outdated, overburdened two-way radio system with a modern arrangement using point-to-point microwave and an 800 MHz two-way mobile telecommunications system.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 1,000-plus mobile units, and future expansion of the system which could not be addressed or upgraded in the current two-way radio system. Presently, existing troops, district commands, headquarters, and other fixed 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 application primarily addresses the implementation of a point-to-point microwave telecommunications system linking the proposed 120-foot, self-supporting, lattice tower and future State Police operation center in West Haven with an existing tower on West Rock Ridge, New Haven which would provide radio broadcast for West Haven and the surrounding region. We are pleased that the applicant submitted this proposal in sequence

prior to the development of a future State Police operation center, even though the Council has no jurisdiction over the siting of State Police barracks. While it is not clear what type of State Police operation center would be developed in West Haven, it is clear that any type of State Police operation center would require a telecommunications tower for radio dispatch and communication. However, because of the uncertainty of the State Police operation center, we will order that the proposed tower be constructed only after construction starts for the State Police operation center.

Although the proposed tower is within a residentially-zoned area, this State property was formerly used as a toll station along Interstate 95, and the use of this property as a telecommunications tower site would not substantially effect adjacent landuses. While the fall zone of the proposed tower encompasses six properties of which five are adjacent residences, neither Interstate 95 nor adjacent residential structures would be within the fall zone of the proposed tower.

The proposed tower site is on the eastern end of the State of Connecticut property within a small wooded area and the last remaining natural area on the property. Presently, this natural area serves as a buffer for residential homes abutting the highway and possible future State Police operation center. To avoid degradation of this buffer area, we will direct the applicant to develop a comprehensive site plan for a State Police operation center and telecommunications facility, with adjustments for both tower location away from this wooded area and tower height to establish a clear microwave path.

Nonetheless, such final site plan shall be confined to design the tower at the lowest height possible and in no event higher than 20 feet above the proposed tower height of 120 feet, and to maintain the tower fall zone away from all residential structures and Interstate 95. To further reduce visual effects of this facility, the site plan shall have provisions for architecturally-treated fencing and landscaping.

The Council generally favors monopole type towers which have a thinner appearance and are visually less obtrusive. However, the proposed lattice tower in this application is appropriate to support the proposed microwave dish antenna including any future expansion by the State Police and/or possible sharing of the tower by federal, State, local, and private entities.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a concern of the Council; however, at the base of the tower the calculated power density level would be well below the State standard and it would become much lower as distance from the tower increases.

Based on its record in this proceeding, we find 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 disproportionate either alone or cumulatively with other effects when compared to need, are not in conflict with the policies of the State concerning such effects, and are not sufficient reason to deny this application. Therefore, we will issue a Certificate for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a telecommunications facility at the proposed West Haven site. Such certification will be conditioned upon the Certificate holder submitting a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for approval by the Council prior to commencement of any construction at the facility site. This D&M Plan shall include a comprehensive site plan for the entire parcel including the a State Police operation center with provisions for tower location, tower foundation, tower height, antenna placement, architecturally-treated fencing, and landscaping.

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