



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

THE CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER : DOCKET NO. 272  
COMPANY AND THE UNITED :  
ILLUMINATING COMPANY APPLICATION :  
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL :  
COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR :  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 345-KV :  
ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE AND :  
ASSOCIATED FACILITES BETWEEN THE :  
SCOVILLE ROCK SWITCHING STATION IN :  
MIDDLETOWN AND THE NORWAL :  
SUBSTATION IN NORWALK, INCLUDING :  
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF PORTIONS :  
OF EXISTING 115-KV AND 345 KV ELECTRIC :  
TRANSMISSION LINES, THE CONSTRUCTION :  
OF BESECK SWITCHING STATION IN :  
WALLINFORD, EAST DEVON SUBSTATION :  
IN MILFORD, AND SINGER SUBSTATION IN :  
BRIDGEPORT, MODIFICATIONS AT :  
SCOVILL ROCK SWITCHING STATION AND :  
NORWALK SUBSTATION, AND THE :  
RECONFIGURATION OF CERTAIN :  
INTERCONNECTIONS : March 16, 2005

**WOODLANDS COALITION  
FINAL BRIEF**

The Woodlands Coalition respectfully submits this brief in response to evidence presented during the hearings on Docket No. 272.

Introduction

The Woodlands Coalition represents more than 5000 citizens, state-wide, who advocate protection for Connecticut’s natural environment against permanent damage associated with an upgrade to the electric transmission system from Middletown to Norwalk. Our effort throughout these proceedings has been to build the record on underground cable technology with the goal of maximizing the length of underground installation along the entire 69-mile route.

We urge the Council to approve 24 miles of underground XLPE cable from East Devon to Norwalk, routed per the preferred option in the original application (October 2003). As demonstrated in the proceedings, this is the length of underground that would appear to be feasible. It also provides the maximum protection for the environment. We add that, since the preferred routing avoids outright takings of homes, it satisfies the principle of fairness region-wide, a principal of concern to our broad membership.

Further, for the overhead portion of the route, from Scovill Rock to East Devon, per the original application, where PA 04-246 applies, we favor the establishment of a flexible 6-milligauss (mG) buffer zone, with the design options to meet this guideline left to negotiations between individual municipalities and the companies during the D&M phase—the Council serving as referee.

In connection with the D&M phase, we also recommend that the Council order an update to the companies' protocols for maintaining the right-of-way, so as to provide greater protection for the environment.

### Undergrounding and Environmental Balance

I. Twenty-four miles amount of undergrounding with XLPE cable would be feasible, in terms of reliability and operability. The “ROC Report” (December 2004), along with subsequent reports and testimony regarding its conclusions, have established the feasibility of the 24-mile XLPE underground routing from East Devon to Norwalk. Any further mileage underground has been evidenced infeasible. Furthermore, “assignment” of the 24 underground miles to segments of the route north of East Devon, either in whole or in part, has been evidenced infeasible. The record does not substantiate the reliability of undergrounding beyond 24 miles, routed per the preferred option in the original application.

II. Undergrounding per the preferred route from East Devon to Norwalk in the original application would provide maximum protection to the environment. Undergrounding per the preferred route would put the line under streets. This type of underground solution is best for the environment, as has been not only thoroughly evidenced and argued in Docket 272, but already accepted in Docket 217.

III. A flexible 6-mG buffer zone, with designs to be worked out between individual municipalities and the companies during the D&M phase, would be the best way to balance public health and environmental concerns. In order to protect the public health, PA 04-246 legislates a buffer between transmission lines and certain statutory facilities. The Act has occasioned debate on the record about the nature of the buffer, the precise definitions of the statutory facilities, and the advisable level of protection for public health. Given these uncertainties, it would be advisable to make a buffer-zone guideline that is flexible. A 6-mG guideline satisfies public health concerns, per testimony of the DPH, and it is inherently more flexible than a simple distance specification.

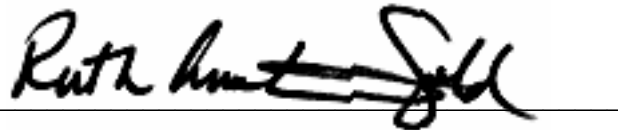
A 6-mG guideline can be met by various design options, or “engineering controls”, per the Council’s “Best Management Practices” document (December 2004). Since individual municipalities have different numbers and types of statutory facilities affected by the proposed transmission line, and since they have different terrains, which implies different environmental impacts, their choice among design options will be determined by different interests. On that

account, basic fairness indicates the municipalities should be able to negotiate for their individual choices separately, during the D&M phase, with the Council assisting as a referee.

IV. Updating maintenance protocols would provide greater protection for the environment. At several public hearings, witnesses went on record to describe maintenance practices by company sub-contractors that caused apparently unjustified damage to the environment. The three most commonly-cited problems had to do with pesticide misuse, the spread of invasive plants along Rights-of-Way, and improper tree-clearing. The companies argue they are scrupulously following NEPOOL guidelines. However: 1) those guidelines themselves need up-dating to incorporate current ecological knowledge; and, 2) the companies' ability to monitor and enforce their maintenance procedures needs attention.

In the application for Party status on this Docket, the Woodland Coalition clearly stated, "*Woodlands believes that the transmission line facility should be put underground to the maximum feasible extent after considering the reliability of the electric system and the many impacts of overhead construction.*" That was our goal for the record, and it remains the basis for this brief.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Ann Wiesenthal-Gold", written over a horizontal line.

Ruth Ann Wiesenthal-Gold  
President,  
Woodlands Coalition for Responsible Energy, Inc.

cc: Service list.