

May 28, 2004

Pamela Katz
Chairperson
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: Docket No. 272-Supplemental Comments of the City of Bridgeport in response to proposed alternative overhead route along railroad right of way.

Dear Chairperson Katz:

This letter supplements the comments filed on May 25, 2004 by Michael Nidoh, Director of Planning for the City of Bridgeport (City) and Mayor John M. Fabrizi, regarding the impact on the City of rerouting the proposed 345kv line to an overhead route along the railroad Right of Way within the downtown area of Bridgeport. As you are already aware from these initial comments, the proposed rerouting would have a detrimental impact on the economic development of the City.

The purpose of these supplemental comments are to apprise the Siting Council of the enormous amount of state and federal funding that has been spent to date redeveloping properties in the vicinity of the proposed overhead route and the commitments of additional funds from those entities. We have spent \$20 million purchasing and clearing properties and relocating residents from 1998 to 2002. In addition, \$23 million of local, state and federal funds have been committed to the proposed Intermodal Transportation Center. If the proposed overhead route is approved this project would have to be redesigned and is in jeopardy of being cancelled. In addition, \$12.5 million in local, state

and federal funds were spent from 1999 to 2002 to refurbish the Port Authority along the waterfront in Bridgeport in anticipation of the other economic development programs discussed herein. An additional \$8 million is committed from federal, state and local funds, including Homeland Security funds, for additional work at the Port Authority site. The Juvenile Courthouse project, which will bring a new facility to the City, has already expended \$9 million from 2002-2003 in acquiring and preparing a site which abuts a portion of the railroad route and would therefore be directly impacted by the proposal to put overhead lines along the railroad Right of Way. There is an additional \$45 million in state funds committed and budgeted for the courthouse project. Finally, the state has spent \$8 million in removing old railroad tracks and creating a bike path that runs through the City, which would also be directly impacted by the proposed overhead route.

As representatives of the people of Bridgeport we strongly oppose any proposal that would allow the 345kv lines to travel overhead within the City. As explain in greater detail in the initial comments filed on May 25, 2004, the negative impact to the downtown area of the largest City in the State of Connecticut would be irreversible.

In addition, let us remark how inappropriate it would be to pit the communities where lines are currently planned over ground against those where they are planned to be underground. Connecticut communities already have enough of a problem with regional planning; we must avoid creating such a firestorm. Such an approach would be irresponsible. We ask that any proposal creating fights over the “underground” benefits be immediately withdrawn because of its destructive consequences.

Thank you for your consideration in this most serious matter, which affects the economic future of all the residents of the City of Bridgeport.

Sincerely,

Bill Finch
State Senator 22nd District

Ernest Newton, III
State Senator 23rd District