



STATE OF CONNECTICUT *CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL*

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CITIZENS GUIDE TO SITING COUNCIL PROCEDURES

APPLICATIONS FOR ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE FACILITIES

1. The Connecticut Siting Council

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) consists of nine members from all over the state. Five members are appointed by the Governor and four members are designees of the Senate, the House, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Chairman of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. At least two members are experienced in ecology and not more than one member has an affiliation, past or present, with any utility or governmental utility regulatory agency. The Council reviews applications on the need for and placement of cell towers, power plants, power lines and other energy and telecommunications infrastructure.

2. Nature of Siting Council Proceedings

The Council's proceedings are very different from a local planning and zoning hearing or a town meeting. Council proceedings are governed by state statute: specifically, the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act. This means that the hearing is conducted in a manner similar to a courtroom proceeding. Public hearings must be held in an orderly fashion to ensure the transcriptionist is able to record every word. Hearings are held via remote Zoom conferencing with instructions for public access to the remote public hearing posted to the project webpage prior to the event. The Council maintains web pages that contain record materials for each proceeding that is pending before the Council.

3. Participants in Siting Council Proceedings

The participants in a Council proceeding consist of the following:

- a. Applicant:** The applicant is the company proposing to build an energy facility, such as an electric transmission line, fuel transmission line, electric generating facility or electric substation, on a particular site or along a particular right-of-way and is a party in the proceeding. The applicant files evidence with the Council before the hearing and presents witnesses at the hearing for questioning by the Council and other parties and intervenors in the proceeding. Questions from the Council and other parties and intervenors in the hearing are limited to the subject matter that is filed before the hearing. The applicant may ask questions of other parties and intervenors on evidence that was submitted by those parties and intervenors before the hearing.
- b. Parties and Intervenors:** Parties and intervenors are participants in the proceeding who requested party or intervenor status from the Council before the hearing and were granted such status. Both parties and intervenors file evidence with the Council before the hearing and present witnesses at the hearing for questioning by the Council and other parties and intervenors in the proceeding. Parties and intervenors may ask questions of the applicant and other parties and intervenors on evidence that was submitted by the applicant and other parties and intervenors before the hearing. Parties and intervenors are not allowed to make their own case by giving oral testimony directly at the hearing. They must make their case in writing and, in exchange, they may cross-examine the applicant and other parties and intervenors and their witnesses.
- c. Limited Appearance:** Limited appearance statements are made by residents and other interested persons who would like to express their comments and concerns about the proposed electric generating facility site by providing an oral limited appearance statement during the public comment session of the hearing or by submitting a written limited appearance statement to the Council before, during or up to 30 days after the last hearing held on a matter. They may not ask questions of the petitioner, parties and intervenors, or the Council and the petitioner, parties and intervenors or the Council may not ask questions of persons making limited appearance statements.

The 6:30 PM public comment session of the hearing is reserved for oral limited appearance statements. In order for the public to participate in the 6:30 p.m. public comment session by computer, smartphone or tablet, you **must** send an email to siting.council@ct.gov or leave a voicemail message at 860-827-2935 with **your name, phone number or email address and mailing address** by the day before the scheduled hearing.

No person who is a party or intervenor in the proceeding may also make an oral limited appearance statement during the public comment session of the hearing or submit a written limited appearance statement to the Council before, during or after the hearing.

The Council requests that oral limited appearance statements are brief (limited to 3 minutes) in order to ensure all concerned persons have an opportunity express their concerns at the hearing.

4. Council Review of Electric Transmission Line Facilities

Companies present the Council with an application for an electric transmission line facility route. The Council does not select routes for electric transmission line facilities that are not proposed by the applicant. Also, the Council does not have powers of eminent domain. This means that the Council may not take property from a private owner for the purpose of siting an electric transmission line facility there.

The applicant has the burden of proving to the Council that there is a public need for the proposed facility and that its construction and operation would not result in a significant adverse environmental impact. The role of the Council is to review the applicant's evidence of public need for the electric transmission line and evidence of environmental impact for the selected route.

The Council is responsible for balancing the need for adequate and reliable public utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers with the need to protect the environment and ecology of the state.

After balancing the public need against the environmental impact, the Council makes a decision to approve or deny the application as proposed, or approve the application with modifications. The decision is made at a Council meeting held at least 30 days after any public hearings. Council meetings are typically held via Zoom Remote Conferencing, and all agendas are publicly noticed. Regular meetings are not public hearings for which the opportunity for public comment is provided. During regular meetings, the Council deliberates and votes on matters that are on the meeting agenda. The public is welcome to join and listen to remote regular meetings, but there is no provision for public comment during regular meetings.