



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council  
(CEEJAC) Energy & Technology Subcommittee**

**Wed, Aug 28, 2024; 3:00-4:30pm**

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

**Meeting Notes**

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

CEEJAC Energy & Technology Subcommittee Members:

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Organization</b>
Jayson Velazquez (Chair)	Acadia Center
Adrienne Farrar Houel	Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprise
Theresa Hopkins Staten	Eversource
Rahiem Eleazer	Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Adrian Huq	New Haven Climate Movement
Kendall Keelen	Conservation Law Foundation
Desen Ozkan	University of Connecticut

**Link to Public Stakeholder Survey on CT Siting Council Study:**

<https://forms.office.com/g/Te2uGEZcGj>

- I. Jayson started the meeting with introductions:
  - a. DEEP staff first, then energy subcommittee members
- II. Jayson introduced the topic for today’s meeting: Connecticut Siting Council, responsibilities, and study
- III. Annie Decker started the presentation with an overview of the siting council
  - a. CT legislature showed interest in reforms for siting council – what it does, proposals that conflicted with each other.
  - b. Diego Merizalde started with an overview about the siting council study that is required
  - c. Link to Public Act - <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2024/ACT/PA/PDF/2024PA-00144-R00HB-05507-PA.PDF>; and [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_277a.htm#sec\\_16-50j](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_277a.htm#sec_16-50j)
  - d. Shared timeline with conversations with other state agencies. Siting Council interacts with a lot of state agencies – some have members on the council.
  - e. Shared high-level early comments from state agencies:
    - i. Need to make public input opportunities easier to understand what the process is about and how they can participate

- ii. Good communication with community is reliant on project proponents – the developers to lead the conversations, so you have varying results on the project
- iii. All siting council meetings are being held remotely now, so there is no site visit or ability to facilitate local community engagement
- iv. Offer an ombudsman and funding for EJ community involvement that could be helpful.

IV. Open Discussion & Questions

- a. **Gary Therrien**, former OPM employee and work with Siting Council in the past with projects near my house. Why are you waiting until the end of this period for public comment. By then, your study is complete. You're going to the agencies who work with Siting Council – there is a lot of interest on this subject, maybe request public comment before that?
  - i. Diego – we are using a survey to collect feedback. The public comment session is about the draft of the study. We do have a survey to start getting input on this.
- b. **Rachel Briggs**, CLF – what does the survey cover? What are you planning for broader public comment process so draft report is available to communities before then. Encourage transparency
  - i. Diego – public comment session is hybrid, at DEEP and on Zoom. Want to have first draft 2-3 weeks before that to share broadly
  - ii. Annie – will send out a scoping notice for public comments ahead of the draft
- c. **Jelani Fletcher** - Were any of the regions Native American Tribes contacted or included in this survey/study?
  - i. Annie – yes, we should be doing that outreach
  - ii. Jelani – Maybe a tentative date for consultation?
  - iii. Annie – identify a consultation date
- d. **Anstress Farwell** – would there be a chance that you could schedule a follow-up after we've reviewed the survey, bill, and slides? Is there a definition of a transmission line vs. Power line? Concern about lines, wires that have a derelict look to it. What is subject to this bill? Is there a map of likely locations for powerline/transmission expansion?
  - i. [Answered in the Chat] from the existing definition: Sec. 16-50i. Definitions. As used in this chapter: (a) "Facility" means: (1) An electric transmission line of a design capacity of sixty-nine kilovolts or more, including associated equipment but not including a transmission line tap, as defined in subsection (e) of this section; . . . (the full definition can't fit in here)
  - ii. Annie - We don't have a map, we hear about projects as they are being proposed.
- e. **Anstress Farwell** - Approval between Siting Council and PURA for Peaker plants, 4 of the 5 landed in EJ communities because the infrastructure was already there. There are ways that these decisions get reinforced – why not Fairfield? One of the key questions is not just if they are going through an EJ community, but are they enabling the continued expansion of unclean energy in EJ communities. How are we relieving the burden on EJ Communities?
- f. **Jayson** - I'll share this verbally as well but if folks also have suggestions about feedback on what ideal engagement from the Siting Council could look like, and

what folks ideas are on how to improve the Siting Council that could support the development of the study as we have folks here from DEEP who can take that feedback and utilize it as part of their public comment engagement! Some questions to answer: what are some barriers to participating in public comment at the Siting Council? Would stakeholder compensation be beneficial for engagement? Who needs to be consulted?

- i. **Rachel Briggs** - I think notice is a huge preliminary issue. Many communities aren't aware of projects until it is too late for them to participate fully in the siting council process. A fund/compensation only helps if folks receive timely notice. I think both! For folks that are not professional advocates that are tracking these things it would be helpful to have a more generous time allocated for notice. And to provide that notice in a greater diversity of media, through community groups, web and print, multi-lingual, etc. And perhaps evaluating the level of formality in proceedings which can be confusing and time consuming for community members to navigate.
- ii. **Tayarisha Batchelor** - Based on the answer to the question about reaching diverse populations, such as Native American Tribes, have you considered other voices that you need to capture through other means, what steps will be taken to mitigate the potential for bias in the survey responses if there are disparities in response rates among different groups?
- iii. **Desen Ozkan** - Is there opportunity to build a sort of participatory map through the survey, something that asks people to identify transmission/generation in their communities (also via blackouts) that folks want to see upgraded? I'm thinking along the lines of community benefits via transmission?
  1. CEBA's could be relevant here; procedural equity
- g. **Kate Shanley** - There was proposed outreach language in one of the earlier drafts of the bill that was later removed and was tailored to mirror the greater outreach to diverse populations that are in the current EJ regulations, which are based on air quality. Unfortunately, the language was later removed during legislative review,
- h. **Gary Therrien** - To answer the question of the different definitions of "power lines"; a transmission line is 115 kw or more and distribution lines are the power lines along the street. They are regulated very differently and it is important to identify these lines clearly. Calling both "the grid" is misleading and has caused confusion for the public as to what is regulated and by who, including the Siting Council.
- i. **Aaron Goode** - Are above-ground and below-ground transmission infrastructure treated the same under the statute as possible affecting facilities? And are 115kV switching stations considered transmission here?
- j. **Jayson** – what is the accountability in the process?
  - i. Annie: Increased penalties for complying with certificate for the utility. Goal here would be to make sure that the certificate meets the expectations. Legislature added some general framework on accountability.

- k. **Anstress** – Fairfield line, expansion was on city property. The only question that came to board of alders was whether the amount of money offered was enough. No public conversation about the expansion and impact of the expansion. Not until board of alders conversation, they had to approve the \$\$\$. That's the aspect of the notice – early notice needs to go to ppl beyond city officials. Dual thing – because you get expanded powerline, does that mean to expand power production near the powerline? Concern about sidewalks and ADA issues.
- l. **Gary Therrien** - The biggest concern for myself concerning how energy projects such as transmission infrastructure projects is there is no clear responsibility for environmental oversight. The Siting Council has regulatory authority to ensure the environment as a result of a project is protected, but they apparently have no authority or resources to monitor whether the project proposer actually implements what is promised, no is the any penalties implemented to the utilities in particular. Why is the Siting Council approving virtually all petitions for major maintenance work as not requiring environmental impact studies or public hearings when they are not monitoring or enforcing agreements made for this purpose? Check out Petition 1293 and the hundreds of sub-petitions that have been approved with conditions that were never checked on.
  - i. Gary elaborated on this comment above – We are approving these as petitions so they don't need an EIS or public hearing. Petition 1293 – in talking with ED, she didn't think it was their responsibility to follow up on promises from Eversource to inform landowners to have these paths removed. They didn't tell us. Now have parking lots, having issue getting these removed. Siting Council is responsible for env'l impact. But not responsible for monitoring and enforcing it. We assume that utilities are doing this work, but they are not. Oversight has been lost in the distribution of power of DPUC to PURA, DEEP, Siting Council.
- m. **Alycia Jenkins** – What is the update on CAS Loop and CEEJAC engagement? Follow up with DAS to see if they are able to schedule a meeting

V. Announcements:

- a. Tenaya Taylor – rally at Eversource on Sept 12, speak up about utility hikes, not a large representation of community members.  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/879732317351591/>
- b. EJ Regs Kick Off Meeting – Sept 10
  - i. Registration Link:  
<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqcemsqDMqGd1f1Ag23Su-ARB5wuOecNI->
- c. CEEJAC Quarterly Meeting – Sept 16
  - i. Registration Link:  
[https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrfumurjopHtfjoX3Z3g2cwK9Z\\_K-OknZc](https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrfumurjopHtfjoX3Z3g2cwK9Z_K-OknZc)

**Participants**

Dana M

Deb Roe

Jocelyn Phung

Jon Schaefer  
Ken Baldwin  
Caitlin Daddona  
Lisa Wahle  
Rachel Briggs  
Julianna McVeigh  
Yiran He  
Paul Aresta  
Kallysia Raymond  
Donna Carroccia  
Adrienne Houel  
Keyana White  
Lisette Andino  
Almariet Roberts  
Alex Rodriguez  
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Raymond Collins  
Jonathan Harris  
Kellie Kingston  
Kathy Czepiel  
Helen Zincavage  
Tayarisha Batchelor  
Alycia Jenkins  
Kate Shanley  
Marc Gonzalez  
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Mercedes Pt partners

Alice Osborne  
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Meghan Portfolio  
Emma Cimino  
Hank Webster  
Aaron Goode  
Doris Johnson  
Justine Phillips-Gallucci  
Lidia Ruppert (CT DEEP)  
Lisa Perrone  
Maggie Favretti  
Adrian Huq  
Sharon Huttner  
Bruce Wittchen  
Jillian Kara  
Sean Cardwell  
Becca Dahl  
Dana Walker  
Omar Green  
Terry Adams  
Kendall Keelen  
Annie Decker  
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Ian McDonald  
Joseph DeNicola  
Anstress Farwell  
Julianna Larue  
Tenaya Taylor  
Maisa Tisdale  
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