

THE CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL
DOCKET NO. 272

Application of Northeast Utilities Service Company
for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility
and Public Need for a new 345-kV Electric Transmission Line Facility
between Scovill Rock Switching Station in Middletown
and Norwalk Substation in Norwalk

Testimony Of Alan V. Wunsch

On Behalf of

Congregation B'nai Jacob

June 7, 2004

Q. Mr. Wunsch, please state your name, position and business address.

A. My name is Alan V. Wunsch. I am the Executive Director of Congregation B'nai Jacob. My business address is 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut, 06525.

Q. Has Congregation B'nai Jacob previously submitted testimony in this proceeding?

A. Yes. Drs. Suzanne Hecht and Kalman Watsky submitted testimony on February 9, 2004 at the Connecticut Siting Council meeting in Woodbridge, Connecticut on behalf of Congregation B'nai Jacob.

Q. What is Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. Congregation B'nai Jacob is one of the oldest synagogues in Connecticut, it was founded in 1882. Congregation B'nai Jacob is a regional synagogue, with members residing in 27 towns throughout New Haven and Fairfield Counties: Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Brookfield, Cheshire, Danbury, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Meriden, Milford, Naugatuck, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Northford, Orange, Seymour, Shelton, Southbury, Stratford, Wallingford, Waterbury, West Haven, and Woodbridge. Congregation B'nai Jacob is the second largest conservative synagogue in Connecticut, serving 697 member families. In addition to providing to its' members the normal activities of a synagogue, such as religious services, weddings, b'nai mitzvahs and funerals, Congregation B'nai Jacob functions as a vital community campus: There are many schools, social activities and community events that take place in the building and on its campus.

Q. What is the location of the Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. Congregation B'nai Jacob is located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut. Since 1961, Congregation B'nai Jacob has been in its present location of 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge.

Q. What activities and operations does Congregation B'nai Jacob conduct involving children?

A. Among the members of Congregation B'nai Jacob there are four hundred sixty-two (462) school age children. Two Hundred Fifty-Six (256) children participate in regularly scheduled educational activities at the synagogue. One Hundred Seventy-Four (174) of the member children regularly attend after-school religious school. Eight (8) of them participate in a Boy Scout troop, a regional program that meets at Congregation B'nai Jacob. Fifty-nine (59) children participate in

Gan Hayeled, Congregation B'nai Jacob's licensed accredited preschool, and Fifteen (15) children attend camp on the campus during the summer. Many children attend religious services at the synagogue on a regular basis.

Q. What is the location of the power lines in relation to Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. The current power lines traverses through the campus of Congregation B'nai Jacob. The power lines are approximately Sixty (60) feet from the library and certain classrooms and offices located therein. A description of the easement on which the current power lines are located is recorded in Volume 61, Page 110 in the Town of Woodbridge, attached hereto and made a part hereof as Exhibit "A".

Q. Do you have any maps that illustrate the site plan for Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. A site plan mapping out the Congregation B'nai Jacob campus, showing the approximate locations of the building, power line easement and playgrounds, basketball courts, nature trails and recreation areas is annexed hereto and made a part hereof as Exhibit "B".

Q. In addition to its classroom facilities, do children use any other part of the grounds of Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. In addition to the building, Gan Hayeled nursery school and summer camp use the playgrounds and nature trails, all of which are in extremely close proximity to the power lines. Further use of the outside campus is described in testimony of Sydney Perry, Shelley Krieger and Ronny Siegel.

Q. What is the relationship between Congregation B'nai Jacob and Ezra Academy?

A. Since 1968, Ezra Academy has leased a portion of the building from and shares the campus with Congregation B'nai Jacob located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge. Additionally, Ezra Academy has also made substantial capital improvements to the building, including the construction of a gymnasium, additional kitchen, library, science lab, additional classrooms, offices and new entrances.

Q. What is the relationship between Congregation B'nai Jacob and Makom Community Hebrew High School?

A. For over 16 years, Makom Community Hebrew High School has leased a portion of the building from and shares the campus with Congregation B'nai Jacob located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge.

Q. In addition to the potential health impacts of the proposed transmission lines on these children, what impact would construction of the transmission lines as proposed by the Applicant have on Congregation B'nai Jacob?

A. Congregation B'nai Jacob is dependent on dues, tuitions and contributions from its members and supporters and rent from Ezra Academy and Makom Community Hebrew High School to survive. Because of the health issues surrounding EMF, we are concerned that 460kV of power lines running over the B'nai Jacob campus would deter people from sending their children to school at Gan Hayered, B'nai Jacob Religious School, Ezra Academy and Makom Community Hebrew High School. A significant decrease in enrollment at B'nai Jacob Religious School or Gan Hayered would adversely affect the financial viability of Congregation B'nai Jacob. Additionally, a significant decrease in enrollment in our tenants' Ezra Academy or Makom Community Hebrew High School, would adversely affect the financial ability of each of these institutions to pay rent to Congregation B'nai Jacob, which in turn would affect the financial viability of Congregation B'nai Jacob. If the transmission lines are constructed as proposed by the Applicant, the very survival of Congregation B'nai Jacob would be at stake.

