

PETITION NO. 548 - Yankee Gas Services Company petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a distribution line in Southington, Berlin, and Meriden, Connecticut.	} } } }	Connecticut Siting Council July 11, 2002
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Opinion

On March 11, 2002, Yankee Gas Services Company (Yankee Gas) submitted a petition to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need would be required from the Council for the construction of a natural gas pipeline through the towns of Southington, Berlin and Meriden, Connecticut, to deliver natural gas to the Meriden Gas Turbines (MGT) plant now under construction in Meriden. The Council subsequently held a public hearing on this petition in the Town of Berlin on May 20, 2002. The Council seeks to ensure that the pipeline is constructed and operated in an environmentally acceptable manner without undue significant long-term ecological effects. To assure that the construction of the pipeline would not pose undue hazard to persons or property along the pipeline route, strict mitigation measures within the Decision and Order would be required. With proper conditions, safeguards, limitations and mitigation measures, the Council believes this pipeline can be constructed and operated in a safe and acceptable manner, especially in view of the fact that a substantial portion of the pipeline would be installed adjacent to an existing CL&P right-of-way (ROW).

However, in order to achieve this goal specific conditions and limitations would be required, including the use of controlled blasting; installation of proper erosion and sediment controls; directional boring through the Metacomet Ridge; limitations on the timing and width of vegetative clearing; limitations on the type and use of equipment in wetlands; a mitigation plan for the route through the Southington YMCA property; detailed plans for the placement, construction, operation and maintenance of the two gate stations in Berlin and Southington; scheduling of work and testing procedures; and a good faith effort on the part of Yankee Gas to keep the public notified about all aspects of the construction, operation, maintenance, and health and safety concerns surrounding this project.

The Council will require a detailed D&M Plan for this project, including a final construction plan which identifies the location of the final route, right-of-way requirements, blasting procedures and locations, proposed hours of construction activity, and locations of all access roads. An environmental inspector should provide weekly construction progress reports to the Council. To limit any unnecessary tree removal, any unique trees along the route should be identified and marked. All staging areas and trench spoil areas should be located and identified on the plans. In response to the concerns of citizens regarding any necessary blasting, a notification plan to alert landowners to blasting will be required, and a dedicated telephone number made available to both the public and the Council to address complaints and concerns.

The crossing of John Hall Brook and Stocking Brook should be addressed in detail in the D&M Plan, including the proposed method of crossing, timing of construction, and employment of erosion and sediment controls. To move the pipeline route farther away from an existing residence, the proposed interconnection point with the Tennessee Gas Pipeline should be moved to a location approximately 75 feet farther from this residence off of Pin Oak Drive in Southington. Screening and revegetation of the pipeline should alleviate some of the effects caused by clearing during construction and the use of native species should be encouraged due to their adaptability and usefulness to wildlife.

The Council will hold a public hearing on the D&M plan to allow residents living in the area of the pipeline route an opportunity to learn further details of the project and a forum to voice their concerns to the Council and Yankee Gas.