



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

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CERTIFIED MAIL

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

March 3, 2017

Kathleen Shanley
Manager-Transmission Siting
Eversource Energy
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141-0270

RE: **PETITION NO. 1287** - Eversource Energy petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed Redding to Wilton Project that includes structure and conductor replacements of approximately 5 miles of its existing No. 1470 115-kilovolt electric transmission line within existing Eversource electric transmission line right of way between the existing Peaceable Substation located at 520 Peaceable Street in Redding, Connecticut and the existing Wilton Substation located at 53 Old Danbury Road in Wilton, Connecticut, and related substation and transmission line structure improvements.

Dear Ms. Shanley:

At a public meeting held on March 2, 2017, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) considered and ruled that the above-referenced proposal would not have a substantial adverse environmental effect, and pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 16-50k, would not require a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need, with the following conditions:

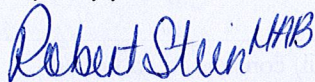
1. Approval of any minor project changes be delegated to Council staff;
2. Unless otherwise approved by the Council, if the facility authorized herein is not fully constructed within three years from the date of the mailing of the Council's decision, this decision shall be void, and the facility owner/operator shall dismantle the facility and remove all associated equipment or reapply for any continued or new use to the Council before any such use is made. The time between the filing and resolution of any appeals of the Council's decision shall not be counted in calculating this deadline. Authority to monitor and modify this schedule, as necessary, is delegated to the Executive Director. The facility owner/operator shall provide written notice to the Executive Director of any schedule changes as soon as is practicable;
3. Any request for extension of the time period to fully construct the facility shall be filed with the Council not later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of this decision and shall be served on all parties and intervenors, if applicable, and the Towns of Redding, Weston and Wilton;
4. Within 45 days after completion of construction, the Council shall be notified in writing that construction has been completed;
5. The facility owner/operator shall remit timely payments associated with annual assessments and invoices submitted by the Council for expenses attributable to the facility under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v;

6. This Declaratory Ruling may be transferred, provided the facility owner/operator/transferrer is current with payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v and the transferee provides written confirmation that the transferee agrees to comply with the terms, limitations and conditions contained in the Declaratory Ruling, including timely payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v; and
7. If the facility owner/operator is a wholly owned subsidiary of a corporation or other entity and is sold/transferred to another corporation or other entity, the Council shall be notified of such sale and/or transfer and of any change in contact information for the individual or representative responsible for management and operations of the facility within 30 days of the sale and/or transfer.

This decision is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and is not applicable to any other modification or construction. All work is to be implemented as specified in the petition dated January 26, 2017 and additional information received on February 3, 2017.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the staff report on this project.

Very truly yours,



Robert Stein
Chairman

RS/RDM/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated March 2, 2017

- c: Honorable Julia Pemberton, First Selectman, Town of Redding
- Aimee Pardee, M.A., Zoning Enforcement Officer, Town of Redding
- Honorable Lynne Vanderslice, First Selectman, Town of Wilton
- Robert Nerney, Director of Planning and Land Use Management, Town of Wilton
- Honorable Nina Daniel, First Selectman, Town of Weston
- James Pjura, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Town of Weston
- Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator, Town of Weston
- David A. Ball, Esq., Cohen & Wolf P.C.
- Helen M. Taylor, Eversource, Project Siting Specialist



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Petition No. 1287

Eversource Energy

1470 Line Upgrade Project – Redding, Weston, Wilton

Staff Report

March 2, 2017

Introduction

On January 26, 2017, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition (Petition) from The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for proposed modifications to a portion of transmission line no. 1470, traversing the Towns of Redding, Weston, and Wilton. Although Eversource indicated in the Petition that it provided notification to appropriate agencies, entities and abutting landowners prior to submission of the Petition to the Council, on January 31, 2017, the Council deemed the Petition incomplete because notice to certain abutting property owners corresponding to the line list provided by Eversource was unclear. On February 3, 2017, Eversource provided supplemental information to the Council indicating that all abutting property owners were properly notified on January 25, 2017.

Council member Larry Levesque and Council staff member Robert Mercier conducted a field review of the proposed project on February 15, 2017 with Eversource representatives Helen Taylor, Fred Mattioli, Chris Soderman, and Devleena Ghosh-Brower. Town of Weston representatives, Tracy Kulikowski, Land Use Director, and Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator, attended the field review of a Project segment along Upper Parish Drive in Weston.

Proposed Project

The purpose of the proposed project is to eliminate potential transmission system thermal and voltage criteria violations identified in the June 2014 Southwest Connecticut Area (SWCT) Needs Assessment performed by ISO New England (ISO-NE). To resolve the identified issues, ISO-NE developed the SWCT Solutions Study in February 2015 that listed the proposed Project as necessary to maintain grid reliability. The Project is currently identified in the October 2016 ISO-NE Regional System Plan Project List as a reliability upgrade with an expected in-service date of December 2017.

The proposed Project would replace the conductors on Line 1470, a 115-kV transmission line that was installed in 1943, to increase line capacity by 43 percent to accommodate future load growth as well as to carry load during outages elsewhere on the transmission system. To support the new conductors, several transmission structures would need to be replaced and others strengthened.

The work would occur in existing Eversource right-of-way (ROW) between the Wilton Substation in Wilton and the Peaceable Substation in Redding. Land use in the ROW area includes residential, commercial and undeveloped land. The ROW was acquired in 1941 and varies in width from 40 to 125 feet with the maintained portion at a width of 40 feet to 80 feet. The existing transmission structures within the ROW consist of a mix of double-circuit steel lattice towers that support one transmission line and one distribution line, single-circuit three-pole guyed structures and single-circuit wood H-frame structures. Wood distribution poles are also located in portions of the ROW.



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Specifically, the Project entails the following components:

- a. Replacement of an existing single-circuit wood H-frame dead-end structure (structure 2936) with a single-circuit H-frame weathering steel dead-end structure on a new foundation outside the Peaceable Substation;
- b. Replacement of an existing single-circuit wood three-pole guyed angle structure (structure 2944) with a direct-embedded single-circuit weathering steel three-pole guyed angle structure;
- c. Replacement of an existing single-circuit wood H-frame structure (structure 2964) with a direct-embedded single-circuit weathering steel three-pole strain structure;
- d. Replacement of the existing single-circuit wood H-frame suspension structures (structures 2963 and 2965) with direct-embedded single-circuit weathering steel H-frame suspension structures;
- e. Replacement of the three existing double-circuit lattice dead-end structures (structures 2977, 2988, and 2989) with double-circuit galvanized steel strain - monopole structures on new foundations;
- f. Installation of weathering steel cross bracing and cross-arms to 23 existing wood suspension H-frame structures and the installation of guy wires to 10 of these structures;
- g. Replacement of the existing 556 kcmil ACSR (aluminum conductor, steel reinforced) conductor with new 795 kcmil ACSS (aluminum conductor, steel supported) conductor;
- h. Replacement of the existing shield wire with a new fiber optic ground wire; and
- i. Relocation of the existing 27.6-kV distribution line on transmission structures 2977, 2988, and 2989 to the new proposed transmission structures.

The existing structures in the Project area range in height from 53 feet to 84 feet above ground level (agl). In general, the new proposed structure heights would be approximately 10 to 18 feet taller than the existing structures in order to comply with the 2012 National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) conductor to ground clearance requirements, phase to phase clearance requirements and Eversource's Overhead Transmission Line Standards. One structure, #2964, would increase in height by 36 feet to account for NESC requirements as well as OSHA clearance requirements to facilitate the safe operation of heavy machinery at the existing Wilton Transfer and Recycling Center.

Project Construction and Work Procedures

Construction areas would be isolated by establishing erosion and sedimentation controls (E&S controls) in accordance with the *2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control* and Eversource's Best Management Practices (Eversource BMPs). Typical E&S controls include, but are not limited to, the use of hay bales and silt fence, check dams, berms, swales, and sediment basins. Following the completion of construction, seeding and mulching would occur to permanently stabilize previously disturbed areas. Temporary E&S controls would remain in place until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.

Construction along the ROW would utilize existing access roads that may need to be graded, widened, and/or improved in order to be used safely and effectively during construction. Improvements would include clearing adjacent vegetation and establishing a 16 to 20-foot wide gravel travel surface. In areas where existing access roads traverse streams or wetlands, temporary construction mats would be utilized to reduce disturbance to underlying soils.

At each transmission line structure site, a 60-foot by 60-foot (typical) work pad would be established to accommodate construction materials and equipment. Some work pads would be larger depending on the structure type and if the structure is being replaced. Work pads located in upland locations would be composed of gravel and left in place unless removal is requested by the underlying landowner. Larger pull pads would be constructed in certain locations in the ROW to facilitate line pulling activities. Work/pull pads located in wetland areas would be constructed of temporary matting or temporary gravel.

New structures would be delivered in sections by truck and stored at a nearby staging area along with other project materials and hardware. Eversource would consult with town officials when staging areas are identified. Structure sections would be assembled by crane at each work pad. Insulators and connecting hardware would be installed on most structures at this time.

The installation of the overhead conductors would require the use of special pulling and tensioning equipment, which would be positioned at the work/pull pad locations. Helicopters may be used for conductor pulling activities. Once the new lines are energized, the old structures and associated equipment would be removed and either recycled or disposed of in accordance with Eversource BMPs and applicable regulations. Lattice tower foundations in upland areas would be removed to a depth of six inches below grade. Wood pole structures would be cut six inches below grade, leaving the pole butts in place.

The Project would traverse some maintained lawn areas, driveways and parking lots that exist in the ROW. Eversource would coordinate with affected property owners to maintain necessary access as well as restore disturbed areas upon completion of construction. Road crossings would be coordinated with the Department of Transportation and/or the municipalities.

Eversource anticipates beginning construction during the first quarter of 2017 with completion by December 2017. Normal work hours would be Monday through Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sunday work hours or hours beyond normal work hours may be required for time sensitive work or during scheduled line outages.

Environmental Considerations

Removal of mature/shrubby vegetation would be minimal (4,083 square feet) as most work would occur within a maintained ROW that varies in width from 40-80 feet. All clearing within work zones would be conducted in accordance with Eversource's BMPs. Off-ROW clearing and/or tree trimming would be required to widen access roads. Eversource would coordinate with affected property owners to provide replacement plantings in areas where existing landscaping or visual buffers are removed during construction.

The Project ROW contains 25 wetland areas and 7 vernal pools. Permanent impacts to wetlands include 50 square feet of filling at one structure location (#2983) and 42,125 square feet of temporary impacts associated with construction mats. Temporary wetland matting would be removed upon completion of construction and disturbed wetland areas would be restored in accordance with Eversource BMPs. No vernal pools would be directly affected and Eversource would employ BMP's to mitigate disturbance to areas around the vernal pools. To avoid temporary matting disturbance to one vernal pool envelope near existing Structure 2986, Eversource would climb the structure to install new line rather than establish a work pad around the structure.

Three watercourses would be crossed using stream-crossing techniques detailed in Eversource's BMPs. Two floodways occur in the work area and temporary matting would be used to minimize flood displacement. No public water supply reservoirs are located in the vicinity of the proposed project. The Project is not located within an aquifer protection area.

The Project area contains records of one species listed on the Natural Diversity Database. To reduce potential impacts to this species during construction, Eversource would follow DEEP protection measures specific for this species.

The visual impact of the re-conductoring portion of the Project would be negligible as there is little change to the existing structures with the exception of new H-frame cross braces and/or new support arms. The visual impact of the eight replacement structures would be minimal given that the existing ROW has extensive woodland on either side offering visual buffers from residential and commercial areas. Additionally, new replacement structures would be in the same general location as the existing structures. One lattice structure (#2977) is located in the Cannondale Historic District and would be replaced with a monopole structure. This structure is adjacent to the Metro-North Railroad and is surrounded by woodland. Other structures within the historic district were initially proposed to be replaced; however, upon further study, Eversource determined these existing structures can remain.

Initial cultural resources surveys identified three potential archeological sites within the Project area with moderate to high archeological sensitivity. Subsequent investigations in these three areas did not find any cultural deposits. Eversource submitted the archeological reconnaissance report to State Historic Preservation Office for comment but no comment was received.

Construction-related noise is exempt per DEEP noise regulations. Notwithstanding, any construction-related noise would be short-term and localized in the vicinity of work sites. There would be no permanent changes to the existing sound levels along the transmission ROW after completion of the project.

Changes to magnetic field (MF) levels associated with the Project would be negligible at the edge of the ROW. Directly under the new conductors, there would either be a slight increase or decrease in MF levels, depending on location.

Municipal and Abutter Notice

Eversource began Project consultation with the affected municipalities and property owners along the route in February 2016 and September 2016. Formal notice of the Petition was provided on or about January 25, 2017. During the development of the Petition, the Town of Wilton requested taller structure heights to provide additional conductor clearance at the Wilton Transfer and Recycling Center for the safe operation of equipment. Eversource accommodated this request within the Petition.

On March 1, 2017, the Town of Weston submitted the following comments:

1. Notice deficiencies;
2. Easement and title information regarding Upper Parish Drive, a road which may be used to access the existing right-of-way to avoid wetland impacts;
3. Referral of the project to the Weston Conservation Commission for review and evaluation of environmental impacts; and
4. Delay of the project for the Weston Planning and Zoning Commission to issue a report on the use of town property for easements.

With reference to comment no. 1, Eversource commenced project consultation with the municipalities traversed by the existing electric transmission line in February 2016 and September 2016. Formal notice of the petition was provided on or about January 25, 2017, which was confirmed by Eversource in a letter dated February 3, 2017. By letter dated January 30, 2017, the Council notified the municipalities traversed by the existing electric transmission line of receipt of the petition. On February 6, 2017, Eversource held a meeting with Town of Weston officials. Town of Weston officials attended the field review that was held on February 15, 2017. The Town of Weston submitted comments on the project on March 1, 2017. Therefore, there are no notice deficiencies.

With reference to comment nos. 2 and 4, the Council has no jurisdiction or authority over the establishment of temporary or permanent utility easements. However, with reference to comment no. 3, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §16-50x, the Council has exclusive jurisdiction over the evaluation of environmental impacts from the proposed project and preempts local planning, zoning, wetland and conservation commission regulations.

Recommended Conditions

If approved, staff recommends including the following condition:

- a) Approval of any minor project changes be delegated to Council staff.

Figure 1: Project Location Map

