



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

Phone: (860) 827-2935 Fax: (860) 827-2950

E-Mail: siting.council@ct.gov

www.ct.gov/csc

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

June 8, 2018

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

RE: **PETITION NO. 1343** – The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed PSEG Bridgeport Harbor Unit 5 Line Reconductoring Project consisting of conductor replacements on its existing No. 1670 115-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line extending approximately 5.2 miles within existing Eversource electric transmission line right-of-way between the Southington Substation located at Belleview Avenue in Southington, Connecticut and Reservoir Junction located at Reservoir Road in New Britain, Connecticut, and related substation and electric transmission line structure improvements.

Dear Ms. Shanley:

At a public meeting held on June 7, 2018, 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 Berlin, Southington, and the City of New Britain;
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/transferor 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 April 18, 2018 and additional information received on May 14, 2018.

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

Sincerely,



Robert Stein
Chairman

RS/RDM/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated June 7, 2018

- c: The The Honorable Mark H. Kaczynski, Mayor, Town of Berlin
Jack Healy, Acting Town Manager, Town of Berlin
Maureen Giusti, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Town of Berlin
The Honorable Erin Stewart, Mayor, City of New Britain
Sergio Lupo, Director of License and Permit Inspections, City of New Britain
The Honorable Christopher Palmieri, Chairman, Town of Southington
Mark J. Sciota, Town Manager, Town of Southington
Robert Phillips, Director of Planning and Community Development, Town of Southington
Andrew Lord, Esq., Eversource



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Petition No. 1343

The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy

1670 Line Reconductoring Project

New Britain, Berlin and Southington

Staff Report

June 7, 2018

Introduction

On April 18, 2018, 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 the proposed 1670 Line Reconductoring Project on its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line extending approximately 5.2 miles within existing Eversource electric transmission line right-of-way (ROW) between the existing Southington Substation and Reservoir Junction in New Britain, Connecticut. On May 14, 2018, Eversource submitted a Project vernal pool assessment that was conducted in late April 2018.

On May 15, 2018 a field review of the project was conducted that was attended by the following: Council member Larry Levesque, Council staff member Robert Mercier, and Eversource representatives Andrew Lord, Esq., Dalesa Holgerson, Ian Cole and Joel Szarkowicz.

The reconductoring project is proposed to address ISO-NE identified overloads on the 1670 Line upon the addition of the 485 megawatt output from the Power Connecticut LLC (PSEG) Bridgeport Harbor Station dual fuel combined cycle electric generating facility that was approved by the Council in 2016 in Petition 1216. ISO-NE determined that the long-term emergency (LTE) rating of the 1670 Line would need to be upgraded from its existing rating of 234 megavolt/amps (MVA), to a minimum of 243 MVA. The commercial in service operation date for the PSEG facility is June 1, 2019.

Under ISO-NE's Large Generator Interconnection procedure, Eversource is obligated to facilitate the interconnection by installing necessary transmission system components for power generator entities that directly or indirectly interconnect with Eversource's transmission system. To meet ISO-NE's LTE criteria, Eversource proposes to upgrade the 1670 Line between Eversource's Southington Substation to Reservoir Junction by replacing the existing 556 kcmil steel reinforced aluminum conductor (ASCR) with 556 kcmil steel supported aluminum conductor (ACSS). The reconductoring of the line would increase the LTE line rating to 331 MVA. ACSS conductors can operate at much higher temperatures than ASCR conductors, thereby increasing the ampacity of the transmission line. The ACSS conductors maintain their strength at high temperature so existing transmission structure clearances can be maintained.

Proposed Project

All reconductoring work would be performed within existing Eversource ROW. The ROW, generally 150 feet to 190 feet wide, is occupied by two sets of double circuit steel lattice structures except in the area of the Southington Substation and at Reservoir Junction. The western set of structures supports the 115-kV 1820 and 1830 circuits whereas the eastern set of structures supports the 115-kV 1670 and 1771 circuits. The 1670 Line is the inner circuit on the structures.

Specifically, the project consists of the following components:

- a. replacing 5.2 circuit miles of 556 kcmil ACSR conductor with 5.2 circuit miles of 556 kcmil ACSS conductor;
- b. replacing the 556 ACSR substation conductor with 2 sub-conductor bundle 1272 ACSR conductor, to connect the new 556 kcmil ACSS overhead conductor to the line disconnect switch within the Southington Substation;
- c. replacing 5.2 miles of copper shield wire with 5.2 miles of optical ground wire;
- d. replacing bolts on four structures (4135, 4141, 4145, and 4148) with high-strength bolts to provide additional strength necessary to support the new conductor and a fifth structure (4119) to support the load of the new conductor and existing AT&T cellular telecommunications equipment;
- e. reinforcing foundations for six structures (4138, 4139, 4140, 4141, 4142, and 4145) by adding gravel fill around the foundations; and
- f. installing lightning arrestors on every other structure.

Construction Methods

Construction staging and laydown areas would be located on Eversource-owned property adjacent to and north of the Southington Substation and accessed by Peters Circle in Southington.

No expansion of the existing, managed area of the ROW is required. Vegetation removal would occur where necessary to establish work and pull pads, access roads, and to maintain conductor clearance zones. Vegetation removal would be performed in accordance with current ROW vegetation management methods such as mowing, trimming and removal of non-compatible tree species. Tree trimming would occur as necessary to establish a minimum clearance of 20 feet between vegetation and the conductors. If trimming alone cannot meet clearance requirements, the offending tree would be removed.

Erosion and sedimentation control measures (E&S controls) would be installed in accordance with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control and Eversource's Best Management Practices Manual for Massachusetts and Connecticut, September 2016 (BMPs). Typical E&S controls include, but are not limited to, the use of hay bales and silt fence, check dams, berms, swales, sediment basins, seeding, mulching, and straw blankets. Temporary E&S controls would remain in place until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.

The project would utilize existing access roads to the extent possible. Where existing access roads are degraded, they would be improved by grading, widening travel surfaces to 16 feet or 20 feet at turning locations, and placing compacted gravel material in upland areas. In several upland locations, new gravel roads would be constructed in accordance with Eversource access road standards for site access. Where access roads traverse streams, wetlands and maintained lawn areas, temporary construction matting would be used to avoid significant disturbance to underlying surfaces and soils.

In some locations, Eversource is negotiating with adjacent landowners to obtain ROW access from off-ROW areas that are preferable to in-ROW locations. Some of the in-ROW areas are constrained by wetlands and watercourses, and difficult topography.

Typical transmission structure work pads would measure 50 feet by 50 feet to provide a large, level work surface for reconductoring. At several structures, work pads would measure 100 feet by 100 feet to facilitate conducting as well as structure modifications (i.e. bolt replacements and foundation fill). Larger pull pads, typically measuring 50 feet wide by 250 feet long, would be used to stage cable pulling equipment and to facilitate wire stringing activities. Helicopters may also be used for conductor and shield wire pulling activities.

All work pads and pull pads located in upland areas would be comprised of gravel, temporary construction mats, or an equivalent substitute, depending on location. All work and pull pads in wetland areas would be comprised of temporary construction mats, or a suitable equivalent, to limit disturbances to these resources. Where practicable, typical work pad and pull pad dimensions would be reduced or reconfigured to avoid sensitive areas and to prevent work in out of ROW locations.

After completion of the work, construction debris or materials would be removed and disposed of or recycled per applicable regulations and in accordance with Eversource policies and procedures. Restored and new access roads and work pads in upland areas would be left in place to facilitate future transmission line maintenance, unless directed to be removed by the underlying landowner. Temporary construction mats and bridging would be removed and any areas of disturbance would be restored/stabilized to minimize the potential for soil erosion or the flow of sediment into adjacent resource areas. Work site restoration would include seeding with native seed mixes, mulching, and use of erosion control blankets. E&S controls would remain in place until stabilization is complete.

Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

Eversource's review of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) Natural Diversity Database identified State-listed endangered, threatened, or special-concern species in the vicinity of the proposed project area. Eversource is consulting with DEEP regarding potential project impact to listed species and would adhere to DEEP recommended species protection measures. Such measures would be incorporated into the project BMP's during construction.

A total of 20 wetland areas were identified along the Project ROW. Approximately 1,500 square feet of wetlands would be permanently filled to install a 40-foot by 40-foot pad to strengthen the foundations of two of structures in Berlin (Structure 4142 and 4145). Temporary wetland impacts may total approximately 63,210 square feet, associated with the use of construction mats in the existing ROW. If off-ROW access rights are obtained in certain areas, the amount of temporary wetland impact could be reduced up to approximately 15,000 square feet.

A vernal pool analysis was performed in all wetlands that would be temporarily disturbed by construction matting, a total of nine locations. Most of the wetlands surveyed were connected to and/or fed by a hydrologic connection such as a stream. Evidence on inundation was not visible in three wetlands but saturated soils were present. A spotted salamander egg mass was identified in Wetland 12, approximately 200 feet from Structure 4142. This wetland may not be suitable for egg mass development as it is densely vegetated and contained approximately 4 inches of standing water. With the exception of Wetland 12, no other evidence of vernal pool breeding habitat was identified during the survey.

Portions of the Project occur within 100-year flood zones and Eversource has designed the Project to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to flood zones by locating access roads, work areas and pull pads in upland areas where feasible.

Eversource would utilize BMPs, such as temporary matting, to reduce potential construction impacts to wetlands, watercourses and flood zones areas.

The Project would require a DEEP General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities. The permit includes requirements for monitoring and inspections for the duration of the Project. Environmental monitoring for the Project would be conducted by qualified personnel as may be required by any DEEP permits and approvals.

The Project crosses over a portion of the Wassel Reservoir, a surface water supply that is classified as AA under the established DEEP Water Classification system. Class AA designated uses are drinking water supplies; habitat for fish and other aquatic life and wildlife; recreation; and water supply for industry and agriculture. The Project also crosses land in New Britain with a ground water classification of GAA, consisting of existing or potential public water supply suitable for drinking without treatment. The Project is not expected to affect any of these water resources. No effects to surface, or groundwater resources or public drinking water supply/private wells or aquifers are anticipated.

Eversource performed an assessment of archaeological and historical resources along the Project route including previously identified archaeological sites, properties listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places, and historic standing structures within 500 feet of the proposed project corridor. The assessment identified three previously recorded historic buildings within 500 feet of the Project route and numerous areas with the potential for having moderate/high archaeological sensitivity. The reconductoring activities would not have an adverse effect on the three listed historic properties. A subsequent field evaluation of the potential archaeological sites determined these areas contained no archaeological significance. Eversource provided the cultural assessment to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO has not commented to date.

The Metacomet section of the New England Trail, a national scenic trail, crosses the transmission line ROW northeast of Structure 4144 in Berlin using part of an existing ROW access road. Eversource would post signage on the trail near the edge of ROW during construction to alert trail users of ongoing construction activities. The trail would remain unobstructed during the project.

The reconductoring project would have a negligible effect on electric and magnetic field (EMF) levels at the edges of the ROW. EMF levels would remain far below recommended public exposure guidelines established by both the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection.

Noise associated with project construction is exempt from DEEP noise control regulations. Once the project is completed and operational, there would be no changes to the existing sound levels along the ROW after completion of the project.

The project would not change views along the ROW, as no ROW expansion clearing is required and no new structures would be installed. Vegetation would be removed within the managed ROW as necessary to accommodate the construction work, including, but not limited to shrubs and trees within the ROW that may be associated with residential properties.

Construction Schedule

The planned in-service date of the Project is November 21, 2018, however confirmation on outage schedule dates are still pending which could alter the schedule. Construction activities are planned to commence in the summer of 2018.

Due to the residential nature of significant portions of the Project route, construction work hours would be limited to 7 AM to 7 PM Monday through Saturday, when feasible. Work hours may vary depending on the construction phase, weather, and season. Additionally, Sunday work may become necessary at times to maintain the Project schedule.

Municipal and Abutter Notice

Eversource consulted with the Towns of New Britain, Southington, and Berlin prior to submission of the petition to the Council. On April 12, 2018, Eversource provided formal notice to each town as well as to 219 abutters along the Project route. The Council has not received any comments to date.

Recommendation

Staff recommends including the following condition:

1. Approval of any minor project changes be delegated to Council staff.

Project Location

