

May 10, 2018

Robert Stein, Chairman
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

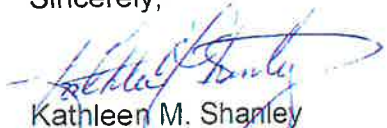
Re: Petition No. 1343: PSEG Bridgeport Harbor – 1670 Line Reconductoring Project

Dear Chairman Stein:

Attached are an original and fifteen (15) copies of a memorandum reporting on a vernal pool survey on the 1670 line in Southington, Berlin and New Britain, Connecticut conducted by BSC Group on behalf of The Connecticut Light and Power Company doing business as Eversource Energy (“Eversource”).

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Kathleen M. Shanley
Manager, Transmission Siting

To: Paul Knapik, Sr. Project Manager, BSC Group **Date:** April 30, 2018
From: Alexandra Echandi, CESSWI, BSC Group **Proj. No.** 89563.36
Re: Eversource Line 1670 Reconductoring Project, Vernal Pool Surveys
Berlin, Southington and New Britain, CT

As requested by Eversource, on April 26, 2018, BSC Group completed a vernal pool survey within wetlands along the 1670 Line Right of Way (ROW) where matting is proposed for utility reconductoring activities. Weather conditions were favorable for vernal pool surveys with skies clearing after the early morning fog, temperatures in the 60's and low wind velocity (approximately 6-mph winds). Despite the previous day's rain event which provided 1-inch of additional precipitation, water within the wetlands surveyed was clear with full visibility to depth where inundation was present.

Vernal pool surveys were completed following a combination of vernal pool assessment protocols including the:

- Connecticut Associated of Wetland Scientists (CAWS) Vernal Pool Monitoring Program Protocol and Vernal Pool Data Sheet
- Connecticut DEEP Vernal Pools: Best Management Practices for water quality while harvesting forest products
- Massachusetts Guidelines for the Certification of Vernal Pool Habitat

Vernal pools are defined by CT DEEP as a small depression that contains water for approximately two months during the spring, lacks a permanent outlet, lacks fish, and usually dries out by late summer. In addition to searching for these physical landscape features during the survey, BSC Ecological Scientists searched and listened for biological evidence of vernal pool habitat including the presence or absence of obligate vernal pool species such as: wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) calls and egg masses, salamander (*Ambystoma* sp.) spermatophores and egg masses, marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) larvae, and fairy shrimp (*Anostraca: Eubranchipus*). Facultative species monitoring including frogs and turtles were also completed during the survey.

Due to the high volume of rain that the project area has received in the past month¹ and the likelihood of an isolated depression overflowing as a result, all wetlands within the project area proposed for matting were surveyed for possible vernal pool breeding habitat. BSC Ecological Scientists entered the wetlands and carefully searched for the biological species using polarized sunglasses, a dip net, and rubber boots. Surveys were completed within the following wetland series and 1670 Line Structures:

- Wetland Series W4, Structure 4126
- Wetland Series W4, Structure 4127
- Wetland Series W6, access road between Structures 4127 and 4128
- Wetland Series W6, access road between Structures 4128 and 4129
- Wetland Series W7, pull pad, Structure 4130 and access road
- Wetland Series W8, pull pad, Structure 4131 and access road
- Wetland Series W11, Structure 4140
- Wetland Series W12, Structure 4142
- Wetland Series W15, Structure 4145
- Wetland Series W19, access road

During the survey it was noted that all of the wetland series except for Wetland Series W8 and portions of Wetland Series W6 were connected to and/or fed by a hydrologic connection such as a stream. Wetland Series 8 appears to be isolated but may be fed by a stream outside of the utility ROW. In addition, evidence of inundation was not visible within Wetland Series 4, 6 and 8, but saturated soils were present. The average water levels within the inundated wetlands, excluding

¹ Past Significant Rainfall Data, Weather Underground Meriden CT Weather Station: 4/3: 0.58"; 4/15: 0.34"; 4/16: 3.08"; 4/19: 0.32" and 4/25: 1.0"

stream channels, was observed at 5-inches. However, water levels varied ranged between 4-inches and 3-feet of water with the highest depth of inundation observed within Wetland Series W7.

Survey Results/Conclusion:

One spotted salamander (*A. maculatum*) egg mass was observed within wetland series W12: approximately 200-feet to the southwest of Structure 4142. However, Wetland Series W12 may not be suitable for egg mass development as it is a densely vegetated shallow wetland with approximately 4-inches of water. No other biological evidence of vernal pool breeding habitat was heard or observed during the ROW survey. No turtles were located during the survey.

Please find enclosed with this memo photographs of the vernal pool survey including photographs of the spotted salamander egg mass observed within Wetland Series W12. Please refer to the Line 1670 Reconductoring Project Environmental Resources Maps that were included in siting petition 1343 for the areas surveyed.

cc:



Photo #1: View of Structure 4127 and wetland series W4. Areas within wetland series W4 proposed to be matted were not inundated during the assessment. *Facing southeast*



Photo #2: View of Wetland Series W8 and the proposed access and pull pad for Structure 4131 reconductoring work. *Facing northeast.*



Photo #3 : View of Wetland Series W12 where a single *Ambystoma maculatum* egg mass was located approximately 200-feet from Structure 4142. Facing northeast.

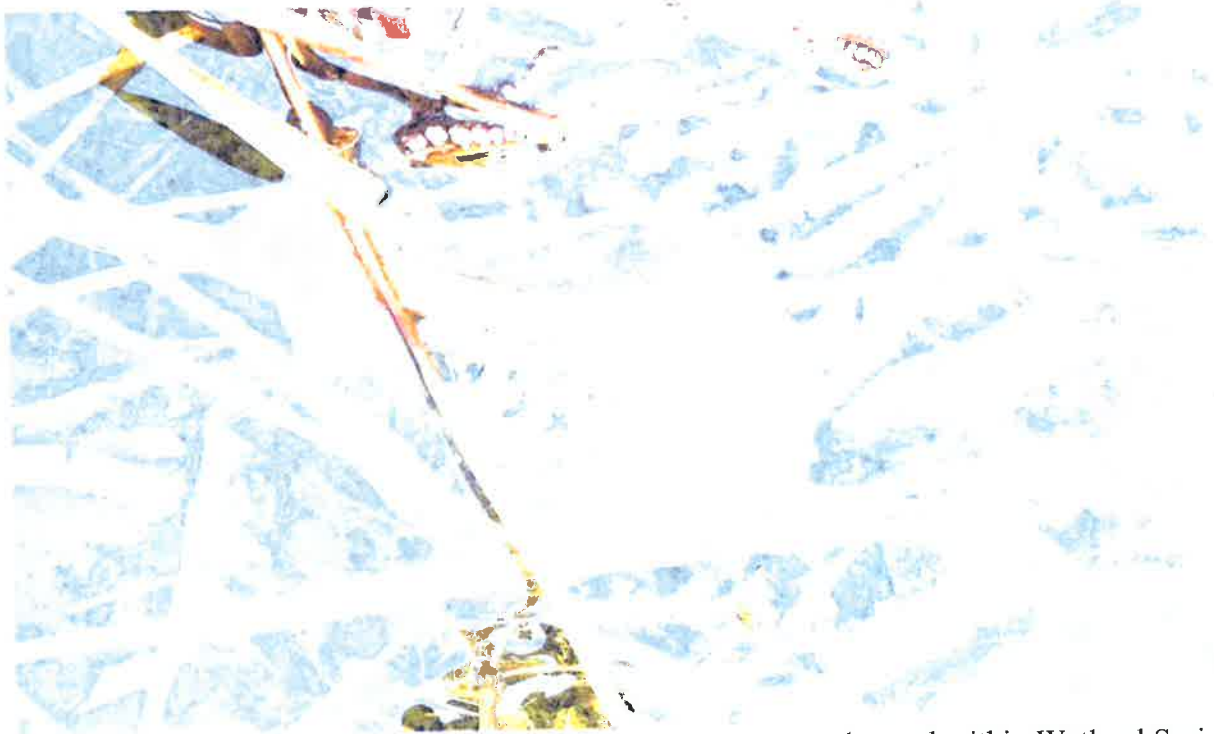


Photo #4: View of the single *Ambystoma maculatum* egg mass located within Wetland Series W12. This wetland is very shallow and will likely not sustain this egg mass to full development.