

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

**NORTHEAST UTILITIES SERVICE  
COMPANY APPLICATION TO THE  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL  
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY  
AND PUBLIC NEED ("CERTIFICATE")  
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A  
NEW 345-KV ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION  
LINE FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED  
FACILITIES BETWEEN SCOVILL  
ROCK SWITCHING STATION IN  
MIDDLETOWN AND NORWALK  
SUBSTATION IN NORWALK, INCLUDING  
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF PORTIONS  
OF EXISTING 115-KV AND 345-KV  
ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINES,  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF BESECK  
SWITCHING STATION IN  
WALLINGFORD, EAST DEVON  
SUBSTATION IN MILFORD, AND  
SINGER SUBSTATION IN BRIDGEPORT,  
MODIFICATIONS AT SCOVILL ROCK  
SWITCHING STATION AND NORWALK  
SUBSTATION, AND THE  
RECONFIGURATION OF CERTAIN  
INTERCONNECTIONS**

**DOCKET NO. 272**

**MAY 18, 2004**

**THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE'S COMMENTS RE: ROUTE 15 ALTERNATIVE**

The Town of Woodbridge ("Woodbridge") submits the following comments in response to the request of the Connecticut Siting Council for parties to review and comment on the underground / overhead feasibility of Wilbur Cross Parkway (Route 15), points B1 through C1, as a potential route.

The Town fully supports routing the proposed 345-kV line beneath the Wilbur Cross Parkway in these areas. Burying the transmission line would be consistent with the policy of this State which favors the undergrounding of

transmission lines. This policy was again enacted in the recent legislation amending Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 16-50l, 16-50p, 16-50o, and 16-50t, which creates a statutory presumption in favor of the burial of high powered transmission lines.

If the line is buried along this route it will completely bypass hundreds of children who would otherwise be exposed to the dangers of electromagnetic fields caused by the new line at B'Nai Jacob / Ezra Academy and the Jewish Community Center. Burying the line beneath the Wilbur Cross Parkway would also avoid approximately 80 homes that are otherwise directly impacted by the line under the Applicants' proposed overhead route in Woodbridge alone. Further, burying the new line will greatly lessen the significant environmental impacts to the Town that would otherwise be caused by the proposed overhead route, including impacts to acres of wetlands, five vernal pools, species of special concern, and watershed lands.

While the Town of Woodbridge clearly prefers an underground routing of the line beneath Route 15, if for some reason the Council chose not to adopt that route -- and the Applicants could meet their burden of proving that undergrounding is not feasible -- the Town would not oppose the construction of the new line overhead between points B1 and C1. If this option is considered, the Town urges that the line be constructed to the South of Route 15, to minimize the number of homes that would be impacted by the line. Specifically, in the area of Route 15 that lies in the most Easterly portion of Woodbridge, there is a dense section of homes on Merritt Avenue, Manila Avenue and Miles Avenue. In this area, there are more than 40 homes situated on lots ranging from 1/10<sup>th</sup> to 1/4 acres each. If the new line is situated North of Route 15, these homes will be

directly impacted. Conversely, the impact will be much less as long as the line remains South of Route 15.

The Town of Woodbridge is concerned about the removal of trees and other aesthetic impacts of constructing the line overhead along Route 15. However, if the line is constructed to the South of Route 15, 22 homes would be impacted. By contrast, the Applicants' current proposal impacts approximately 80 homes that are immediately adjacent to the existing right of way, as well as the hundreds of young children who attend schools, day care facilities, and day camps in the Woodbridge institutions along the right of way. Taking this into consideration, the Town would view an overhead line along Route 15 as the lesser of two evils.

The Town of Woodbridge further suggests that if the new 345-kV line is constructed along Route 15, then the existing 115-kV line in Woodbridge should be buried beneath public streets. The applicants' recent EMF figures now show levels that are unacceptably high for the residents of Woodbridge, particularly in areas where children congregate for many hours a day, and often at times of peak load. The Town stresses that the risk to the health of the residents of Woodbridge far outweighs the relatively minimal effort involved in burying the existing 115-kV line -- as well as the new 345-kV line.

## Summary

In sum, the Town of Woodbridge supports the burying of the new 345-kV line beneath Route 15 as a reasonable alternative to the primary overhead route that the Applicants propose, and which Woodbridge strongly opposes. If the Applicants are able to meet their burden of proving that it is not possible to bury the new line, the Town would then not oppose an overhead routing of the new 345-kV line along the South of Route 15. Regardless of whether the new line is underground or overhead along Route 15, the Town of Woodbridge urges that the existing 115-kV line be buried beneath public streets.

Respectfully submitted,

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2004, a copy of the foregoing was mailed, postage prepaid, to:

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