

An application of The Department of Transportation for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction of a telecommunications tower and associated equipment in the City of Hartford, Connecticut. : Docket No. 109
: Connecticut Siting Council
: 25 July 1989

OPINION

The Department of Transportation (DOT) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council), on March 9, 1989, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a telecommunications tower and associated equipment at its new operations and maintenance garage in the City of Hartford, Connecticut.

Construction of the new Connecticut Transit bus operations and maintenance garage has resulted in a need to erect a new telecommunications facility. Since the DOT dispatches vehicles from its operation and maintenance building it would be expensive and reduce the reliability of the State's mass transit system to use an alternate remote location. Radio communication is essential to the general operation, maintenance, and safety needs of this mass transit system. The mass transit operations and maintenance center is necessary to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to the citizens within the Hartford region and throughout the State.

The proposed telecommunications tower site would continue to work in conjunction with existing DOT tower sites at Talcott Mountain in Bloomfield, John Tom Hill in Glastonbury, and Vinegar Hill in Ledyard. The heavy duty lattice tower would support nine various antennas. The three channels of radio communication for bus, maintenance, and supervisory personnel would increase reliability, efficiency, and safety to this transit system. Also, these three channels could provide emergency service during area wide disasters.

Previous approval has been granted, by the State Department of Environmental Protection and the City of Hartford, for the construction of the DOT Connecticut Transit operations and maintenance building which is located in a zone classified for industrial use. A 5.6 acre wetland, on this 23.3 acre site, was filled beneath the building; but is not in the vicinity of the proposed tower site. The proposed tower site has no existing records of federally endangered or threatened species or Connecticut 'species of special concern.' The construction of the proposed telecommunications tower would not have significant effect on historic or archaeological resources.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a public health and safety concern of the Council. However, at the base of the tower, the power density level would approximately be 50 times below the American National Standard Institute safety

standard as adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection as the State standard, and it would quickly become much lower as distance from the tower increases. The record does not suggest that the proposed telecommunications tower and associated equipment would cause adverse health impacts.

Based on the record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a telecommunications tower and associated equipment at the proposed site, including effects on the natural environment; ecological integrity and balance; public health and safety; scenic, historic, and recreational values; forests and parks; air and water purity; and fish and wildlife are not significant either alone or cumulatively with other effects, are not in conflict with the policies of the State concerning such effects, and are not sufficient reason to deny the application, and therefore, the Council will issue a Certificate for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed DOT telecommunications tower and associated equipment in the City of Hartford.

The Council will require the DOT to submit a Development and Management (D&M) plan for approval prior to the commencement of tower construction. This D&M plan shall include details of the tower base pad and fencing to be erected.