

DOCKET NO. 12

AN APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY NORTHEAST
UTILITIES SERVICE COMPANY, AS AGENT
FOR THE CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER
COMPANY AND THE HARTFORD ELECTRIC LIGHT
COMPANY FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED WITH RESPECT
TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN OVERHEAD 345KV
ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE BETWEEN THE
MILLSTONE POINT GENERATING STATION, IN
WATERFORD, AND THE MANCHESTER SUBSTATION,
IN MANCHESTER. :
: POWER FACILITY
: EVALUATION COUNCIL
: MAY 17, 1978

D I S S E N T I N G O P I N I O N

We are of the firm belief that a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need should be granted by the Council for a 345kv line between Millstone Point generating station and Manchester substation. Although we concur with the point-of-view expressed in the majority opinion that the need for the line is contingent upon completion of Millstone Unit No. 3, we feel moved to dissent from that opinion. To prolong inquiry into the merits of the proposal is not in the public interest and does not benefit either the utility ratepayer or the environment which is this Council's charge to consider.

The record and common sense confront the Council with an unusual set of circumstances. It is clear that construction of Millstone Unit No. 3 has commenced, continues, and that the applicant is committed to its completion. The record clearly shows that on the 47 mile long proposed route, right-of-way widening is required along only four-fifths of a mile due to prior acquisition and transmission line construction. The record presents an anomalous situation in which, despite the length of the route and the rolling, generally undeveloped terrain which it traverses, the line can be constructed and maintained with minimal disruption to the environment, assuming submission of and adherence to an adequate right-of-way development and management plan. Compared to the alternates evaluated by the applicant, the one proposed is clearly preferable. Finally, the record clearly demonstrates to us that the proposed 345kv line is necessitated by the generation of electricity at Millstone Unit No. 3 to maintain stability with reasonable operating procedures and to substantially reduce line losses.

The proceeding did not elicit from the parties involved including the general public, state agencies, or the Council's consultant, any substantial evidence to dispute our contention that the environmental effects of the line would be minimal and that there was a public need for the facility.

In addition, the applicant has demonstrated, and we concur, 1) that the facility conforms to a long-range plan for expansion of the electric power grid serving the state and interconnected utility systems and will serve the interests of electric system economy and reliability, and 2) that the facility conforms to the Federal Power Commission "Guidelines for the Protection of Natural Historic Scenic and Recreational Values in the Design and Location of Rights-of-Way and Transmission Facilities".

What the record cannot show us is the ultimate in-service date of Millstone Unit No. 3. Although the applicant has tentatively indicated a May 1986 in-service date, it has stated and subsequently demonstrated that it is vigorously pursuing remedies to advance that date in order to reduce cost of the unit, reduce the need for consumption of imported oil and reduce the risk that oil-fired generating units must be converted to coal.

The proposed line has been undergoing route reviews intermittently since 1972, a period of six years. Whether Millstone Unit No. 3 goes on line in 1982 or 1986, we do not feel another review is warranted. We cannot appreciate the concept, nor does the record support it, that technological development, land use changes or cost factors may obviate the need for the line or otherwise preclude its development in the intervening years prior to construction. In fact, certification at this time would help to insure that land use conflicts do not surface during that time. The sole criterion for approval or denial of the application in this proceeding should not, in our opinion, rest on the completion date of Millstone Unit No. 3.

It would have been appropriate, in this proceeding, as conditions to certification of the line, to require that construction of the line not be commenced earlier than is reasonably necessary to ensure its completion prior to fuel loading of Millstone Unit No. 3, and that it not be energized except for testing, unless and until Unit No. 3 comes on line. We feel such conditions would have satisfied the concerns expressed by the majority.

The failure to consider these conditions and the Council's subsequent denial of the application may put the applicant under a severe time constraint if the completion date of Millstone Unit No. 3 is advanced.

Should the Council postpone making a decision of a facility for which a need has been demonstrated and for which no significant adverse impacts have been identified? Our answer is no.