

AN APPLICATION OF VALLEY CABLE VISION, : CONNECTICUT SITING
INCORPORATED, FOR A CERTIFICATE OF :
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC : COUNCIL
NEED FOR A MODIFICATION TO ITS EXISTING :
CATV TOWER. : November 5, 1982

O P I N I O N

Valley Cable Vision (VCV) applied for a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need for the modification of its existing head-end facility on Great Hill Road in Seymour, Connecticut. The modification is proposed to improve the quality of service and allow microwave interconnection with the Area Nine CATV franchise. It will consist of replacing the existing 200-foot tower with a 250-foot tower, relocating and possibly replacing three satellite microwave receive antennae with one new antenna, and possibly installing a new generator.

Following the issuance of due notice, Council members inspected the proposed site on September 23, 1982. The Council held a public hearing on the application at the Center School, 100 Bank Street, Seymour, Connecticut on the evening of September 23, 1982.

The applicant presented testimony and exhibits to support its claim that the facility was necessary, that adverse environmental effects would be minimal, and that alternative technologies were not appropriate. Testimony and exhibits in favor of and against the proposal were presented by members of the public and representatives of the town of Seymour and of public service agencies.

The Council considered the potential adverse environmental effects of the proposed head-end modification and concludes that they are not sufficient to outweigh the applicant's need to make the modifications. Extension of the tower by an additional fifty feet will increase its

visibility somewhat. However, even if a 43.3 foot antenna is attached at the top, raising the overall height nearly one hundred feet above the existing tower, the increase is incremental to a facility already visible from a wide area. Other than the increased height, the appearance of the structure from a nearby vantage should not change appreciably, in fact the new tower may have a cleaner appearance since reinforcing hardware, now seen on the existing tower, will not be necessary.

The Council also finds no basis for significant concern for potential tower collapse. Engineering design for such structures is such that any tower collapse should be upon itself and not straight as a falling tree. Nonetheless, the Council will require in its order a three-guy wire support system instead of a two-guy system, in the interest of assuring maximum safety.

The relocation of the applicant's earth stations will not have any substantial adverse environmental effect and in fact their appearance, from the limited area that they are visible, will be improved if the expected consolidation is possible. By its order, the Council will also approve the addition of a new generator for the facility, if it is found necessary, with the stipulation that no increase in noise levels will occur at the property line.

Calculated power densities at 500 feet from the tower base, for the proposed VCV equipment, are nearly 2000 times lower than the OSHA occupational exposure limit of 10 milliwatts per square centimeter. If additional equipment is added, as discussed, the power densities at the property border will still be far less than the OSHA 10 milliwatt standard and less than any known or proposed standards. The most stringent of which in this country is the proposed Environmental Protection Act (EPA)

standard of 0.1 milliwatt. The Council's CATV regulations will apply to any future additions, equipment, or power density increases, although the Council will require prior notice of any equipment additions.

Because the General Assembly and the Department of Public Utility Control have determined a public need for CATV service to Connecticut residents, the Council confines its considerations of need to that for a proposed facility or modification to meet that state-mandated need. In this case the modification is necessary for the applicant to improve service by the increased elevation of the antennae which are oriented toward New York City and to provide for additional interconnections with other cable franchise areas. This interconnection grid is an important component of statewide CATV service, allowing greater diversity of programming to CATV subscribers and wider distribution of public service programming. A trunk cable alternative to a microwave interconnection to connect CATV Area Nine was discussed, but would be over too great a distance to provide acceptable quality reception. Because of the area's topography, the use of the existing tower for a microwave interconnection would require two intermediate relay towers, in addition to the terminal connection in Area Nine, to complete the connection. The replacement tower is also expected to provide improved reception of broadcast signals.

While this interconnection is not planned immediately, and the applicant has not included the necessary microwave antenna at the Seymour site as part of the application, the Council recognizes the applicant's opportunity to make site modifications at this time. Additionally, as discussed above, the anticipated environmental effects are not sufficient to outweigh the applicant's need to make the proposed site improvements.

The Council also acknowledges the applicant's willingness to share tower space, as a community service, with local and regional fire, police, and ambulance agencies. The potential sharing of this tower with commercial entities is also recognized as a means of reducing tower numbers, and thus their economic and environmental costs. However, the Council notes that all construction must be in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and municipal laws and ordinances.