

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

Phone: (860) 827-2935 Fax: (860) 827-2950

E-Mail: [siting.council@ct.gov](mailto:siting.council@ct.gov)

Internet: [ct.gov/esc](http://ct.gov/esc)

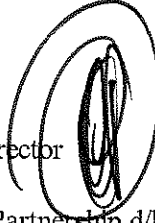
*Daniel F. Caruso*  
Chairman

July 30, 2008

TO: Parties and Intervenors

FROM: S. Derek Phelps, Executive Director

RE: **DOCKET NO. 362** - Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction, maintenance and operation of a telecommunications facility located at 165 Elmwood Hill Road, Putnam, Connecticut.



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Comments have been received from the Council on Environmental Quality, dated July 23, 2008. Copies are attached for your review.

SDP/RM/jb

c: Council Members

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# COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

ORIGINAL RECEIVED  
JUL 28 2008

CONNECTICUT  
SITING COUNCIL

Thomas F. Harrison  
*Chairman*

DATE: July 23, 2008

M. Howard Beach

TO: S. Derek Phelps, Executive Director  
Connecticut Siting Council

Bruce R. Fernandez

FROM: Thomas F. Harrison, Chairman

John M. Mandyck

RE: Putnam Telecommunications Facility (Docket No. 362)

Earl W. Phillips, Jr.

In response to your June 27, 2008 request for consultation regarding the above referenced project, the Council on Environmental Quality has reviewed the applicant's submission with regard to its effect on environmental and scenic resources in the region and has the following concerns.

Richard Sherman

The visual intrusion of this proposed communications tower would be predominantly on Quaddick Reservoir, a reservoir adjacent to a state park with a public boat launch that offers ready access to the reservoir for boaters and anglers. The Council recommends that additional observations be made from the reservoir to fully assess the impact of the tower at its proposed height and design.

Norman VanCor

Barbara C. Wagner

Wesley Winterbottom

Another concern is the presence of a state designated "scenic road" at the crest of a valley directly across from the proposed tower. Although balloon flight observations were made near the scenic road, none were made from Chase Road, the state designated "scenic road." Chase Road rises up a hill only two miles away, directly across a valley from the proposed tower. Clearly the impact of the tower on the views from the state scenic road will need to be evaluated before the Siting Council can make an informed decision.

Karl J. Wagener  
*Executive Director*

The valley referred to is the Five Mile River valley. The Town of Thompson has just received a state grant for study of its portion of the Five Mile River as a possible Connecticut Greenway. The viewshed map of the application identifies the Putnam portions of this river corridor as the area of second greatest visual impact. A walk or canoe trip along this scenic resource to evaluate the visual impact is an appropriate precaution in this circumstance.

This location potentially presents an extraordinary confluence of scenic and recreational amenities of statewide significance. A poorly placed or designed tower would detract from the public's enjoyment of a boating and fishing resource adjacent to a state park, a state-designated scenic road and a river valley being considered as a state-designated "greenway". Therefore a reevaluation of the location is recommended with serious consideration given to an alternative location or to changes in height or design to minimize any detraction this tower will have on those resources.

Beyond the circumstances of this particular proposal, the Council is concerned that this project is one in a series of proposals where the visual impact of a project would have been borne predominantly by state recreational areas and scenic attractions. This was the case in the Black Pond siting proposal in Woodstock (since withdrawn). It is evident in New Fairfield where a communications tower was located (despite Siting Council preference for a less intrusive location) where it is visible predominantly from the waters of Candlewood Lake and Squantz Pond as well as from the shoreline of the Squantz Pond State Park and Pootatuck State Forest. Other locations with similar potential impact on recreational and scenic treasures are on the Siting Council's agenda for this year.

Section 16-50p(b)(1) of the Public Utility Environmental Standards Act states clearly that the Siting Council may deny an application for such a facility if it "would substantially affect the scenic quality of its location and no public safety concerns require the proposed facility to be constructed in such a location."

The Council urges the Siting Council to use the highest level of scrutiny in situations where public resources bear the brunt of the scenic impact.

CC: Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of Environmental Protection

For the purpose of disclosure, I wish to note that CEQ Executive Director Karl Wagener did not participate in the discussion of this memo. He currently is an intervenor in another CSC docket. Although this memo does not mention or address the docket in which Mr. Wagener is an intervenor, he is refraining from participation in dockets of a similar nature until such time as he is no longer an intervenor. The staff work was done by CEQ Environmental Analyst Peter Hearn.