



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

July 24, 2025

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PETITION NO. 1679 – The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (Petitioner) petition for a declaratory ruling for the Scovill Rock Switching Station to East of Hurd State Park 1772, 376, and 362 Lines Rebuild Project: consisting of the replacement and reconductoring of electric transmission line structures along approximately 2.4 miles of its existing electric transmission line right-of-way shared by its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) 1772 Line and 345-kv 376 and 362 Lines between Scovill Rock Switching Station in Middletown and to a point southeast of Hurd State Park in Haddam, traversing the municipalities of Middletown, East Hampton, and Haddam.

Dear Attorney Bachman,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) offers the following comments regarding Petition 1679.

Best Management Practices

The Petitioner notes that certain project activities including, but not limited to: vegetation removal work, management of excess soils, project work in or near water resources areas, right-of-way (ROW) restoration, work activities in wetland areas, control of invasive species, erosion and sedimentation control measures, discharge of groundwater, etc. would be done in accordance with the Petitioner's April 2022 Construction & Maintenance Environmental Requirements, Best Management Practices Manual for Massachusetts, and Connecticut (BMPs). The Council recommends that the referenced BMPs; the preliminary Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)'s Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) determination received by the Petitioner in September 2023 and the final NDDDB determination letter, once received; and any external environmental quality plans and/or standards referenced by the Petitioner, be submitted to the Siting Council for inclusion in the record, consideration, and possible incorporation into permits.

Watercourses, Wetlands and Vernal Pools

The Petitioner identified 16 watercourses, 22 wetlands, and four vernal pools that are located within the project area. The Council recommends that the Petitioner assess the proposed placement of structures, work pads/pull pads, and access road to minimize the potential temporary and permanent impacts on streams, wetland resources and vernal pools to the greatest extent practicable. The Petitioner notes that construction activities would occur within the vernal pool envelope (VPE) of VP1 and VP4. Additionally, the Petitioner notes that within the VPE for VP4, there "will be approximately 9,767 square feet of temporary and permanent habitat disturbance in the VPE necessary to establish a gravel work pad. This will also require

2,285 square feet of tree removal within the VPE. Of that, approximately 6,603 square feet will be restored post-construction, leaving approximately 1,239 square feet of permanent impact within the VPE in the form of a gravel maintenance pad.” The Council recommends that best development practices¹ be utilized in addition to the proposed protective measures identified Attachment H of the Petitioner’s Vernal Pool Assessment and Recommended Protection Measures, dated May 15, 2025, and that high visibility fencing/signage be installed around the wetlands and vernal pool to avoid any unintentional encroachment.

Vegetation

The Petitioner states that the proposed project would result in “approximately 0.78 acres of trees removed within the ROW.” The Petitioner also states that “in limited areas, as applicable, Eversource would require the Project civil contractor to use low impact methods to remove brush vegetation to protect wetlands, vernal pools, watercourses, and state-listed species and their habitats.” The Council supports the use of “low impact” methods, identified in section 5.2, for vegetation management and recommends that those areas to be designated for “low impact” methods be depicted on the project plans and that the environmental inspector ensure that the contractor(s) conforms to using such low impact methods in the designated areas.

Spill Prevention

The Petitioner states that “Eversource would require its contractors to employ best management practices for the proper storage, secondary containment, and handling of diesel fuel, motor oil, grease, and other lubricants, to protect water quality within the Project Area.” The Council supports efforts to protect water resources and recommends that the Petitioner develop and implement a Spill Prevention Plan that could include, but is not limited to: 1) requiring that refueling and/or servicing of vehicles and machinery be done on an impervious surface and at least 100 feet from wetlands, 2) properly storing fuel and other hazardous materials on the proposed site, and 3) providing a fuel spill kit(s) onsite for construction contractors and training the contractors on its proper use. The Council also recommends that the best management practices and Spill Prevention Plan be implemented at all staging areas.

Inspections and Education

The Petitioner states that a “qualified inspector would be responsible not only for performing the inspections described above (i.e., routine weekly inspections and after major rain events), but also for monitoring active Project work sites (at a minimum of weekly) to confirm compliance with applicable provisions of all Project approvals and permits”. The Council supports the presence of an environmental inspector who would be available onsite during construction and recommends that the Petitioner expand the environmental inspector’s duties to include, but not be limited to ensuring that the contractor(s) 1) use low impact vegetation management methods in the designated areas; 2) employ measures for a) the protection of vernal pools, VPEs, b) state-listed species, and c) prevention of stormwater pollution and spills/releases; and 3) that invasive species control methods are implemented to minimize the spread and establishment of invasive species.

The Council suggests that the Petitioner 1) consider the possibility of installing the electric transmission line(s) beneath the Connecticut River, and 2) assess the potential impacts to the environment.

The Council’s comments above address only certain elements of the materials provided by the Petitioner at the time of the filing. Additional information can become evident through comments offered by other parties and during the Siting Council’s administrative hearing process. The absence of comment(s) by this Council about any Petition or Application, or any aspects thereof, may not be interpreted as an endorsement of a proposed project, or its components or that this Council might not have comments or concerns on more specific issues raised during the hearing process.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council’s comments.

¹ Calhoun, A. J. K. and M. W. Klemens. 2002. Best development practices: Conserving pool-breeding amphibians in residential and commercial developments in the northeastern United States. MCA Technical Paper No. 5, Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Aresta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director