



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Testimony of State Representative Christine E. Canavan
Energy Facilities Siting Board Meeting
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South Station, DPU, Hearing Room A

I first want to extend my appreciation to the Board for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Today, as the State Representative for the 10th Plymouth District and a limited participant in this case, I join my colleagues, local elected officials from Brockton, West Bridgewater and number of surrounding communities, area stakeholders and many of my constituents to once again outline that I stand with my constituents in strong opposition to the siting of the proposed power plant in Brockton's Ward 4. Also, I should note that Senator Brian Joyce, who also represents West Bridgewater, East Bridgewater and Easton, has another commitment at the State House today. I am submitting testimony on his behalf, and he asked that I convey to the Board his opposition to this project as well. West Bridgewater Selectman Matt Albanese is also unable to attend today but in his capacity as the Chairman of the Regional Task Force on the Siting of the Power Plant he shares our grave concerns.

I understand that today – and in the coming weeks – the Board will be making a number of decisions with regard to various issues surrounding this proposal. I do want to touch upon a few of these issues, (1) the proposed site for the power plant – a site that Brockton Power even acknowledged “is within a half mile or less” of an environmental justice designated area in the City of Brockton – and the real environmental and air quality threats from such a power plant to these and surrounding areas; (2) the proposed water sources for the plant, (3) the zoning exemptions that have been an issue throughout this process, and (4) the inherent public safety and infrastructure concerns which have yet to be addressed¹.

¹ Energy Facilities Siting Board. Memorandum dated December 4, 2008 regarding EFSB 07-7/D.P.U 07-58/D.P.U 07-59, Brockton Power Company LLC, pg.4.

First, I want to mention that throughout the siting and permitting process at both the state and local level, and at many grassroots meetings held on this issue over the past year and a half, there has been a genuine effort made by local officials and citizens alike to learn about the real effects of Brockton Power's proposed energy plant, and whether it would be a good fit for the City of Brockton and the surrounding region.

As you are probably well aware, Brockton – like many communities throughout the Commonwealth – is currently facing unprecedented fiscal challenges. As one of the Commonwealth's 11 Gateway Cities, the city and local leaders have been working tirelessly to attract new, modern industries to locate within Brockton. Such environment-friendly industries would not only shore-up the city's commercial tax base but also provide good and sustainable jobs at decent-wages as efforts to revitalize our great city continue.

During this time, however, it has become crystal clear to me, and many others, that the power plant isn't the key to 're-inventing' Brockton. Siting the power plant within the City would actually undermine recent progress made to move the city forward, and impose inherent environmental health and public safety risks to Brockton, West Bridgewater and many other communities throughout the region. Although I'm all for bringing more jobs and industries to Brockton, I feel that it is unconscionable to balance our budgets and grow the economy based on such risks that threaten the future of me, my family and grandkids, all of my constituents, and the entire Greater-Brockton region.

With regard to the specific issues I have with the plant, I first want to touch upon the proposed site for the energy plant, as well as the environmental and air quality impacts of such a plant. It deeply concerns me that Advanced Power began the first of many attempts to abandon any sense of due diligence in this process by conducting a so-called 'nationwide search' – within Massachusetts of course – that only included four sites previously proposed to and permitted by the EFSB².

Further, because there is an EJ area located within a half mile from the proposed site, I strongly agree with ACE's argument that the company should have had to "include (EJ) implications of locating the facility in each of the four sites considered"³.

The potential threats from this power plant to the environmental health and the air quality of the region are very disturbing. Although MEPA did give Brockton Power a green light earlier this year to move ahead with the project, I want to mention, as the Board stated in its recent bench memo, that "[c]ompliance with other agencies' standards does not establish that a proposed facility's impact would be minimized"⁴.

² Ibid, pg.3.

³ Ibid, pg. 4.

⁴ Ibid, pg. 6.

As I mentioned earlier this year to Secretary Bowles, there are many homes, several schools – one 1600 ft away, a public housing complex, two manufactured housing communities whose residents are predominantly over 55, and a number of daycare centers all within one mile of the proposed site⁵.

Although I'm no expert on environmental and air quality issues, I do not believe Brockton Power has submitted nearly enough information to describe the immediate and cumulative impacts of the emissions that would be released from the plant. As the board knows, there are no clear guidelines for PM 2.5 levels and emissions. On its website, the EPA acknowledges that particles "less than 10 micrometers in diameter pose a health concern because they can be inhaled into and accumulate in the respiratory system," and, also states that PM 2.5 levels "are believed to pose the greatest health risks...(because) fine particles can lodge deeply into the lungs"⁶.

Along these lines, I wholeheartedly agree with the City of Brockton's concern that these emissions would trigger an increase of asthma rates within the City. In recent years, Brockton's legislative delegation and city leaders have been working hard with our local hospitals to address the prevalence of asthma, and heart disease, rates within the City. As a Registered Nurse, I fear the impact of these high levels of particulate matter on the continued efforts to ensure that city residents – children in particular – can breathe easier.

Further, because of these concerns, I do not believe the air quality tests performed with data from Logan Airport are suitable for application to Brockton. I would have expected Brockton Power to factor in data from the Taunton Regional Airport or a location closer to the proposed site to better determine how these emissions would impact the already overburdened air quality in the area. I hope the Board determines that the tests performed are inconclusive, and should be rejected.

I am also opposed to Brockton Power's proposed water sources for the plant. To operate their plant, the company has proposed to use water from the AWRF and the City of Brockton. First, as the city councilors here today will probably mention in their testimony, the use of wastewater from the AWRF requires 2/3 approval from the council, which – to my knowledge – has not yet been approved.

Also, as ACE argued to you, Brockton Power's use of the AWRF would reduce discharge to the Salisbury River by "8% on a monthly basis", sometimes "as much as 13.4%"⁷. I am very

⁵ Canavan, State Representative Christine E., *Letter dated March 19, 2008 to Secretary Ian A. Bowles*, pg.2.

⁶ United States Environmental Protection Agency. *Fine Particle (PM 2.5) Designations: Frequent Questions*. 09 December 2008, <http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/faq.htm>.

⁷ Energy Facilities Siting Board, pg. 18.

concerned about this effect on the water and drinking supply wells in the town of West Bridgewater in particular. I do not believe that this plan of Brockton Power is one that is feasible.

As we all know, Brockton Power has requested a number of specific exemptions, as well as a blanket exemption, from local zoning laws. As the Board's bench memo from last week noted "the Company asserted that each exemption would be necessary in order to avoid the delay that would result from seeking zoning relief from the City"⁸. Members of the board, no one ever said that democracy would be an easy or efficient process. Checks and balances, specifically local controls, are put in place for a reason, and I believe that this process should also be respected and acknowledged.

Lastly, I also want to touch on the inherent public safety and infrastructure concerns as they relate to this process. As you know, there are issues with the public safety risks of the aqueous ammonia holding tank and the 750,000 diesel fuel holding tank – both on-site and with the transportation of such liquids. It greatly concerns me that there has not yet – to my knowledge – been a dialogue established by Brockton Power with public safety officials throughout the region in terms of addressing an ammonia or diesel leak or spill in close proximity to the Salisbury River and the West Bridgewater aquifer.

Again, thank you for giving me and many others here today the opportunity to offer final comments before the Board. From my testimony, that of my colleagues, and everyone here today, I hope you understand the concerns and the real opposition that exists to the proposed Brockton Power Plant. So, on behalf of myself, Senator Brian Joyce, and Selectman Matt Albanese, and the men, women and children that we are all elected to represent, thank you.

⁸ Ibid, pg.53.