

# Application for Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need

## Central Hudson Gas & Electric A and C Lines

Towns of Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Wappinger, and East Fishkill  
Dutchess County, New York

### Respectfully Submitted To:

New York State Department of Public Service  
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**BEFORE THE  
NEW YORK STATE  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Application of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation For a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need Pursuant to Article VII of the Public Service Law for the A and C Line Rebuild Project, Approximately 10.85 miles of 115 Kilovolt Transmission Lines in the Towns of Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Wappinger and East Fishkill, in Dutchess County

Case No.: 13-T-\_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION**

Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation ("CHG&E" or "Central Hudson" or "Applicant"), pursuant to Public Service Law § 122 and the Public Service Commission's implementing regulations, hereby applies for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need under Article VII of the New York State Public Service Law to construct and operate 10.85 miles of rebuilt 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line in the Towns of Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Wappinger and East Fishkill, all in Dutchess County. These facilities are referred to collectively in this application as the "A and C Line Rebuild Project" or the "Project." In support of its Application, Central Hudson submits the attached exhibits and testimony.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

Central Hudson is proposing to rebuild the existing 115 kV A and C transmission lines located between Pleasant Valley and East Fishkill in Dutchess County, New York. The A and C Line Rebuild Project is located within an existing 150 foot wide right-of-way (ROW), and spans approximately 11 miles through four towns; Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Wappinger and East Fishkill. The existing ROW has been held by Central Hudson and used for transmission purposes since 1948. The existing transmission corridor includes the existing A and C transmission lines, which are currently carried on H-frame wood pole structures with an average height of 51 feet. Significant portions of the corridor also include a Central Hudson gas transmission line and two existing Consolidated Edison ("ConEd") 345 kV transmission lines that are carried on steel lattice structures. The existing corridor is maintained in early successional vegetation (i.e., old field herbaceous and shrub species), and traverses a variety of landscapes from undeveloped forest land and agricultural fields, to areas of medium-density residential development.

## LOCATION OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY

As noted above, the A and C Line Rebuild Project will be constructed within existing Central Hudson ROW or ROW shared by Central Hudson and ConEd.

## SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED FACILITY

Central Hudson will comply with all applicable state, federal, and local laws, ordinances, and policies addressing construction, operation and maintenance impacts of the proposed electric transmission system on the environment (physical conditions, land uses, and biological resources). The electric transmission line was designed and sited, and will be constructed and operated, in a manner which seeks to minimize or avoid impacts to the environment within and adjacent to the ROW and associated off-ROW access to the maximum extent practicable.

The proposed electric transmission line is subject to 16 NYCRR Part 86, which requires that an Article VII Application include studies of the expected environmental impact of the electric line and identifies changes that the construction and operation of the facility might induce. These required studies of anticipated environmental impacts are addressed in this section.

Field evaluations, existing data review, and agency consultations were conducted to identify, quantify, and describe existing environmental conditions within the Project area. Field evaluations, which were conducted during the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013, addressed physical conditions (e.g. geology, surface waters), biological resources (e.g. vegetation, wildlife), cultural resources (e.g. historic, archaeological), and land use (e.g. agriculture, scenic areas). Data collected and analyzed included, but were not limited to, the Dutchess County Soil Survey, recent aerial photography, USGS topographic quadrangle maps, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ("NYSDEC") Freshwater Wetland Maps, NYSDEC mapped streams, and Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") Flood Insurance Rate Map ("FIRM") floodplain mapping. In addition, consultations with local municipalities, the Public Service Commission ("PSC"), NYSDEC, New York Natural Heritage Program, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were also conducted, and included letters, telephone and electronic communication, off-site meetings and on-site field reviews (see Appendix D).

The results of these existing conditions investigations are presented in Exhibit 4 by resource type. The descriptions of existing conditions are followed by an assessment of the potential impacts to each resource that may result from Project construction or operation. Measures to reduce impacts are described, and where impacts have been determined to be unavoidable, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed.

The A and C Line Rebuild Project has been conceived and will be designed, constructed and operated in a manner that avoids or minimizes impacts to environmental resources within the Towns of Pleasant Valley, LaGrange, Wappinger and East Fishkill, all in Dutchess County.

Exhibit 4 summarizes the results of environmental impact studies prepared for Central Hudson under the following categories:

- Land Use;
- Topography, Geology and Soils;
- Vegetative Communities;
- Fish and Wildlife Resources;
- Hydrology;
- Aesthetics, Visual and Recreational Resources;
- Cultural Resources; and
- Electric and Magnetic Fields.

The impact studies describe existing conditions, methodologies used in the investigation, the anticipated environmental effects of the transmission facilities, and, where appropriate, recommended mitigation measures to avoid or minimize any adverse impacts.

### **NEED FOR THE PROPOSED FACILITY**

The 115 kV Pleasant Valley to Todd Hill Road C line and the 115 kV Todd Hill Road to Fishkill Plains A line were built in 1948, and currently, the poles and conductors are in disrepair. The A and C Lines have been identified as part of Central Hudson's ACSR (conductor) Replacement Program. In addition, approximately 60 structures have spar arms instead of traditional crossarms, which have the potential to fail catastrophically without warning. Central Hudson is systematically replacing spar arms on the system as part of the High Priority Replacement ("HPR") Program. The proposed plan is to replace the majority of structures and conductors along the existing ROW (excepting some that have been recently replaced). There are currently 123 structures with 262 existing poles within the Project Site; 112 structures and 139 poles are proposed for the Project. A total of 14 structures (29 poles and 1 tower) from previous replacements will be retained. Existing structures are primary wood H-frame pole structures with an average height of 51 feet. Replacement poles are anticipated to be single pole self-weathering steel structures with an average above-ground height of 64 feet. Angle structures are currently swing angle suspension, three-pole structures and will be replaced with swing angle suspension, two-pole structures. Existing strain insulator, three-pole deadend structures and will be replaced with strain insulator, two-pole deadend structures. Two static wires (0.461" dia.) associated with the A and C Line Rebuild Project will be replaced with one wire (0.7" dia.). The three existing conductors (0.783" dia.) will be replaced with three new larger conductors on the rebuilt A and C Lines (1.212" dia.). The newly replaced transmission poles will remain entirely within the current ROW and no new ROW or significant

areas of the additional tree clearing are required. There will be no changes to the existing Con Ed 345 kV transmission lines that currently occupy the southern portion of the transmission corridor.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The conductor on the A and C Lines is nearing the end of its useful in-service life. The preferred alternative is to replace most of the structures and all of the conductors within the existing ROW. Exhibit 3 provides information on the alternatives considered by the Applicant. Potential alternatives that can meet Project goals include the use of different equipment and/or pole structures, and different construction techniques. Other alternatives considered that do not meet Project goals include alternative routes and leaving the A and C Lines in their current state (the no-action alternative).

## **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Exhibit 7 of the Application provides information on relevant local ordinances and requests that the Commission grant waivers of specified provisions of those local ordinances that the Applicant believes would be unduly restrictive if applied to the Project.

Appendix M of the Application provides information on the public outreach efforts associated with the Project, which included meetings with municipal supervisors, a news release in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, creation of a website with Project information, letters to all adjacent property owners, informational open house sessions, and correspondence from and to concerned property owners.

**WHEREFORE**, Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation respectfully requests that the Public Service Commission issue an order pursuant to Article VII of the Public Service Law granting:

1. A Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the proposed A and C Line Rebuild Project; and
2. Such other and further authorizations, consents, permissions, approvals, waivers and permits, as necessary, for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Project described herein, including but not limited to, the issuance of a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, 33 USCA section 1341 and the waivers of local ordinances described in Exhibit 7 of the Application.

Dated: October 10, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

CENTRAL HUDSON GAS & ELECTRIC CORPORATION

By:

  
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