

April 7, 2010

Dear First Selectman Herbst and Residents of Trumbull, Connecticut:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed construction and operation of a natural gas-driven power plant on the Primrose Drive/Huntington Turnpike area in Trumbull, Connecticut.

While I have always been a supporter of clean, renewable energy and green energy technology, that support is grounded on the prerequisite that such facilities should be built only in non-residential areas.

The neighborhood that would surround the proposed Fuel Cell Energy power plant in Nichols is home to children playing, a high school, working families, beautiful homes, churches, and even an herb farm. In light of the Kleen Energy Power Plant explosion in my home town of Middletown on February 7 that caused six deaths and over twenty injuries as well as damage to several homes, building the Fuel Cell Energy power plant in this residential neighborhood is not appropriate and should not be approved. The Kleen Energy Power Plant was located in a mostly-rural, isolated non-residential area, which explains why there were no casualties outside of the explosion site. Most would agree that an accident such as the one in Middletown would be far more devastating and tragic were it to occur in a residential area such as the proposed power plant site in Trumbull. If approved, that plant would be within 150 feet from the nearest homes, placing the residents at great risk should the unthinkable occur as it did in Middletown. This is the more troubling considering the fact that this would be the first such power plant built in a residential community by a company with no prior safety record. Furthermore, by being located in such a densely-populated residential area, and by not having any security personnel on site, the power plant could become a homeland security risk for the town and our state.

I share the views of many local and state elected officials that transparency, public safety, and the weight of public opinion should be a part of the Connecticut Siting Council's review of proposals as sensitive as the Fuel Cell Power Plant siting certificate application. Under current rules, the Council is required to consider only environmental impact in its decisions and not required to hold public hearings to allow for communities affected by its rulings to voice public safety concerns. The Connecticut General Assembly is currently considering legislation—HB 5213-- that will penalize applicants, certificate holders, or petitioners that omit or misrepresent a material fact in its application or petition for declaratory ruling. This is a step in the right direction. Lastly, I also support SB 462 – *An Act Concerning Power Plant Safety*, additional legislation in the

Connecticut General Assembly that would strengthen safety measures at power plants that use natural gas as energy sources. This bill would require the Siting Council to consider and evaluate, as part of its environmental impact review of siting applications, environmental factors that include "...the natural environment, ecological balance, public health and safety, scenic, historic and recreational values, forests and parks..." This legislation would indeed ensure that any environmental impact does not conflict with state policies regarding public health and safety, criteria that is currently lacking in siting considerations.

Connecticut can achieve its clean, renewable energy goals without sacrificing public safety, the environment, and the quality of life of its residential neighborhoods. Clean energy is good for our state, but more important is the safety and well-being of our citizens.

I join you in urging the Connecticut legislature and the Connecticut Siting Council to pay attention to the concerns of the citizens of Trumbull and the residents of Primrose Drive.

Please feel free to call me at (860) 509-6200 if I may be of assistance to you regarding this important matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State

cc. State Senator Anthony J. Musto