

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO PURA DOCKET #: 12-01-10 March 5, 2014**

I am a member of the Vegetation Management Task Force but speak as Executive Director of the Greenwich Tree Conservancy. Over 500 strong, our non-profit group’s mission is to preserve and enhance the tree and forest resources to benefit the community, its health and its quality of life. We write in opposition to the plan of **E**nhanced **T**ree **T**rimming and **E**nhanced **T**ree **R**emoval. You have received many letters from our concerned residents.

I participated in the March 5 hearing in New Britain. At the presentation CL&P stated that, “We are in the business to remove trees.” Aren’t they in the business of delivering electrical power? They also answered that “We do not plan to change our program because of tree refusals.” They added that they were going to go after individuals who refused to allow them to cut their trees, if the tree subsequently came down on a wire. When did they become so removed from the citizens they serve?

We know that trees have brought down power lines but the utilities’ data does not show that clearing trees 8’ on both sides of wires, ground to sky, will alleviate those “problem” trees or curtail power outages. In Greenwich, a CL&P town, we have had several outages in the past 18 months, none of which have been due to tree failure but rather to CL&P failure. We have also seen in recent storms that the trees that have felled power lines have come from a distance. How can PURA permit such drastic measures without the data to support them? How can PURA permit CL&P and UI to fail to take into account other community needs and desecrate our towns, which will decrease our health, real estate values and environment?

We agree that reducing the threat from hazardous trees will increase safety and power reliability. The town of Greenwich is entering the 4th year of a 4 year capital campaign to remove hazardous trees. We believe this will result in fewer outages due to trees. We believe CL&P should be removing hazardous trees near the wires and pruning trees in close proximity to wires. We do not believe clear cutting ground to sky will benefit our state. We believe, where appropriate, undergrounding of wires should be seriously considered.

We are so fortunate to have a natural resource that can clean carbon dioxide from our air, reduce flooding, provide constant filtration of air and water pollution, provide wind abatement, support a diverse wildlife and bring aesthetic beauty to our daily lives. We implore the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to refer to the prudent measures of the Vegetation Management Task Force and reject the current proposed plans of CL&P and UI.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

**JoAnn Messina, Executive Director**

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