

VERBATIM PROCEEDINGS

UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT

ALGONQUIN GAS/ISLANDER EAST PUBLIC HEARING
TESTIMONY TAKEN OUTSIDE OF HEARING

AUGUST 5, 2003

BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL
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BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06405

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HEARING RE: ALGONQUIN GAS/ISLANDER EAST
AUGUST 5, 2003

1 . . . Verbatim Proceedings of Speakers in a
2 Public Hearing before the United States Army Corps of
3 Engineers, in Re: Algonquin Gas/Islander East Public
4 Hearing, held on August 5, 2003 at 7:10 p.m., at the
5 Branford High School, Branford, Connecticut . . .

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7
8
9 MS. VIRGINIA MacDONALD: All set? My name,
10 Virginia MacDonald. I'd like to just mention a couple of
11 things. One is that I'm very concerned about the
12 possibility of a pipeline causing an industrial corridor
13 through one of the natural preservation areas in Stony
14 Creek. And I'm also concerned about the financial
15 complications or consequences that could arise down the
16 road from that in say, five or 10 years, as there
17 sometimes are with environmental damage.

18 And another issue for me is that some
19 people have been confused and informed that they will be
20 paid for their shell and fish bars as if they are being
21 coerced or prompted to vote for the Islander East and the
22 pipeline. So maybe that needs to be looked into. That's
23 been a rumor that's been going around. Thank you.

24 MS. TRACEY MACULAITIS: My reasons for

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1 opposing the pipeline are more personal foremost than for
2 the town. The town environmentally will be impacted
3 negatively. However, the pipeline is going to be about 20
4 feet from the back of my house. Actually, it'll be about
5 20 feet from my swimming pool, about 35 feet from my four-
6 year-old daughter's bedroom. So Algonquin gas line has
7 the right-of-way and they want to enlarge that pipeline
8 and I'm against it.

9 You know, I'd like to ask anyone on the
10 panel who has children if they would like their child
11 living next to a gas line. The end.

12 MS. HELEN HERGET: My name is Helen Herget.
13 We live at 36 Park Place. My husband feels the same as I
14 do, he's at work tonight. And we wish to have a written
15 statement go in to the Army Corps of Engineers. We are
16 also the owners of a home at 196 Totoket Road, which is
17 adjacent to Juniper Point Road and adjacent to where the
18 pipeline would be going through.

19 I'm very, very concerned about this because
20 of it's -- in truth the environmental impact. I just
21 heard what Islander East said about modifications and how
22 it won't happen that way. I have been through hearings
23 like this over my almost 40 years of being involved in
24 politics and development and homeowning, and I have heard

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1 such statements in the past and they have not proven to be
2 the case. The impact has proven to be much more
3 detrimental and long-lasting than what has been stated by
4 the developers.

5 I'm very, very concerned about the fact
6 that one, they do not hold any liability from what has
7 been stated and that concerns me because there are
8 people's lives, there's our homes and there's the future
9 development of that area. The truth is that in the past
10 there have been explosive accidents, quote, unquote, with
11 the building of gas lines. It is not the safest way to
12 get energy to a home.

13 At the present they are able to get gas to
14 Long Island to that end, which this relatively new company
15 has been doing through purchasing the gas from the
16 Algonquin line. The Algonquin line was put in at the time
17 that the gas line was put in along the shore. I remember
18 when it happened. My present brother-in-law helped to
19 earn money for his college by working in that gas tunnel.

20 And it was set up and it's adequate. The difference is
21 that the head people, the financial gainers at Islander
22 East have a lot of money to gain by having their own
23 pipeline and not paying the tariffs to the Algonquin
24 people.

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1 The Long Island residents will not gain
2 anymore in terms of gas availability, nor in reduction in
3 prices. All of the money that's been spent by Islander
4 East has to be made up in profits and that's the way it's
5 going to happen.

6 So this group, which has been in
7 conjunction with ENRON at visits to the White House and to
8 Senators and Congressman, and I'm sure has been courting
9 Rowland at the State of Connecticut, is simply doing this
10 for their own financial gain. And it's to the detriment
11 of the homes, the families that are taxpayers and
12 community residents in this area.

13 We are very, very upset that once again the
14 major powers, like ENRON, are being able to make money for
15 their top people and walk off with it and they will leave
16 the disastrous results with us in the community, the
17 average person, to have to try to pick up our pieces and
18 live with. This is totally unacceptable.

19 MS. KATHRYN TEMPLETON: My name is Kathryn
20 Templeton. I'm at 24 Averill Place in Branford,
21 Connecticut. I live there with my husband and my three
22 children. And we are constant visitors and chose to live
23 in the town of Branford specifically because of its
24 location next to the water, the beauty of the Thimble

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1 Islands and the historical relevance of this town to our
2 country.

3 I'd like to see that the Corps considers
4 the words that are spoken here tonight in Branford and
5 they agree to oppose the Islander East project, not only
6 as it's proposed currently, but in it's entirety for this
7 particular area. Thank you so much.

8 MR. PATRICK LOWE: Okay. My name is
9 Patrick Lowe. I live on Stony Creek Road, quite close to
10 where the proposed pipeline is going to be going through.
11 It makes me very nervous to have such a potential bomb so
12 close to my house with my beautiful daughters and wife.

13 An act of terror or a train derailment
14 would probably kill or disfigure everyone in the house.
15 So of course, I'm going to be against this. We've seen
16 these people before, the Islander East people are the same
17 people as the ENRON group. They don't give a damn about
18 the environment, you know, these guys up here are speaking
19 now saying they've changed their methodology of how
20 they're going to dig this thing only because they came
21 under pressure.

22 If there was nobody trying to regulate
23 these guys they'd just dig a hole, they'd put the pipeline
24 on top of the ground because it's the cheapest way and

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1 they're going to make the most profit on it. They are
2 strictly in it for the profit and they don't care about
3 the environment, they don't care about the Sound, they
4 don't care about the children at Whitewood School, which
5 is literally a stone's throw from the proposed path of the
6 pipeline. I mean, it is one stone's throw. If that
7 pipeline gets punctured there they are going to be
8 responsible for the deaths of hundreds of children.

9 You know, they don't -- how could they have
10 chosen such a route? Anyway, we know why they chose it,
11 because it's the cheapest way and they're going to make
12 the most money there. So once again, Patrick Lowe. I am
13 adamantly opposed to this pipeline. I have a, you know, I
14 have a God-given right to protect my family and if the
15 authorities that be do allow the pipeline to go through so
16 close to my house I will lay down in front of the
17 machinery. They call that civil disobedience and I'm sure
18 I'm not the only one who will lay down.

19 Thank you very much for taking my statement
20 and thank you very much Army Corps of Engineer for
21 listening to all of this stuff and hopefully you're going
22 to make the right decision for our community, for the
23 environment and pick one of the alternative routes,
24 please. Thank you very much.

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1 MS. NAOMI LOWE: Hi. My name is
2 Naomi Lowe and I live at 159 Stony Creek Road. And I'd
3 like to say that I go fishing with my dad at Brown's Reef
4 a lot and I don't want Islander East to hurt the reef.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. JEANNE BENNY-WAKNINE: My name is
7 Jeanne Benny-Waknine and I reside at 8 Juniper Point Road
8 and my obvious concern is that this pipeline is going to
9 go right through my neighborhood. And I'm concerned with
10 the property value as well as just the destruction of the
11 land and the Sound. And the future playground for my son
12 and I obviously oppose any idea of this pipeline being put
13 in place, an intrusion on Connecticut. Thank you.

14 MR. THOMAS McGLASHAN: Okay. My name is
15 Thomas McGlashan. I live at 20 Ridge Road in Stony Creek,
16 Connecticut. I've lived on the shore now for a little
17 over 10 years and moved here because of the shore, because
18 of the Sound, the marshlands and the wetlands.

19 I think this project certainly holds some
20 grave liabilities to the Sound, to the wetlands
21 especially. I'm a physician by profession and when I have
22 to prescribe medication I have to consider the benefit and
23 the risk ratio. My sense in this situation is that the
24 risks far outweigh the benefits, particularly to residents

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1 of Connecticut, who stand to achieve very little on this.

2 So I strongly oppose the pipeline. Thank you very much.

3 MR. JOHN JOSEPH HERGET: Good evening. My
4 name is John Joseph Herget. I live at 196 Totoket Road,
5 Branford. A landowner and a taxpayer.

6 I represent myself. I would like to put
7 forward the question in terms of the practicality of
8 natural gas in the future. I work in the trash station,
9 Maritime Industry, and am very much exposed to the
10 realities of transportation of natural gas to the United
11 States. Simply put Chairman Greenspan in recent comments
12 put forward the vulnerability of the United States to
13 natural gas and the future prices that will be causing
14 problems to our nation and that the proposed pipeline,
15 which simply plans to distribute more natural gas could
16 lead to that dependency and cause greater problems in the
17 future.

18 My wife is a seventh grade science teacher
19 and in discussions with her students they have talked
20 about a small company in Connecticut called General
21 Electric, which has incredible new technology that
22 incorporates hydrogen use in the production of
23 electricity. These technologies are the future and it is
24 proposed in different economic papers from my industry

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1 that the value of hydrocarbons will be lessened due to the
2 future use of hydrogen electric, through what is commonly
3 known as fuel cell and fuel cell technology.

4 I believe many of the millions of dollars
5 that will be spent in promulgating this project, the
6 Islander East project, and the money spent against it and
7 the future maintenance of the project it may not be cost
8 effective in terms of the profit -- the profitability of
9 the project long-term versus the localized production of
10 unlimited hydrogen, which is clean, versus the
11 hydrocarbons in localized areas on Long Island seeing that
12 they have a unlimited amount of water to incorporate into
13 this endeavor.

14 Thank you for your time and I appreciate
15 the opportunity to be heard. Good night.

16 MR. RICH BONZANI: Members of the Army
17 Corps of Engineers, my name is Rich Bonzani. I'm here to
18 testify in support of the Islander East gas pipeline
19 project on behalf of the 3,200 active members of the
20 International Union of Operating Engineers. I am here to
21 encourage you to support this project because I believe
22 that it will good for the working men and women of the
23 State. It has the potential to create over 300 jobs, form
24 a cleaner energy resource and will create energy supply

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1 competition for stability and reduce consumer cost. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. KEVIN MCGUIRE: Hi. My name is Kevin
4 McGuire. I'm from 32 Wellsweep Road and I'm here to voice
5 my opposition towards the Islander East project, as I have
6 over the last three or four years, however long it's taken
7 this thing to get to this point, for all the reasons that
8 everybody else is opposing it. I just think there's a
9 better alternative out there and I just think that the
10 Islander East needs a little bit more pressure to explore
11 the alternative options. And that's all.

12 MS. BARBARA GORDON: My name is Barbara
13 Gordon. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut
14 Seafood Council and the coordinator for the Long Island
15 Sound Action Coalition, a group of concerned Connecticut
16 citizens who share a common goal, that is the protection
17 of Long Island Sound. I live in West Hartford, so I
18 certainly can't be accused of being a NIMBY. I love the
19 Sound and I probably some day will move down here.

20 The fifth annual report of the Bureau of
21 Labor Statistics of the State of Connecticut for the year
22 ending November 30th, 1889 printed by order of the
23 Legislature stated that the fisheries of Connecticut are
24 old and important. In 2003 the fisheries of Connecticut

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1 are a little older, but no less important. In 1889
2 according to the report, the best fishing grounds included
3 those in Long Island Sound. In 2003 that importance has
4 not diminished. Long Island Sound still is home to a
5 superior fishing industry.

6 Long Island Sound is a treasured source of
7 both shellfish and fin fish. It should not be intruded
8 upon. The Islander East Pipeline is an affront to an
9 industry which depends economically on clean waters in
10 which to fish and it is an affront to everything we hold
11 dear environmentally.

12 Plans for Islander East are a blatant
13 violation of the intent of the Public Trust we have
14 inherited from those who came before us. It is now our
15 turn to watch over that trust. Long Island Sound must not
16 become a victim of corporate greed, self-serving untruths
17 and scare tactics.

18 The Connecticut Seafood Council will be
19 represented tonight by shellfisherman Larry Williams, who
20 will expound upon specific threats to the wellbeing of our
21 industry from the Islander East proposal. He speaks for
22 the true fisherman who want to continue their time-honored
23 dedication to the fishing industry, which as it was in the
24 year 1889 is an important part of Connecticut's economy.

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1 The true fisherman does not want to be bought out or
2 bought off. He or she is committed to the continuation of
3 a difficult but honorable life upon the Sound, providing
4 not only a livelihood, but a wonderful source of food and
5 a future for generations of fishermen to come.

6 Please help us to preserve Long Island
7 Sound and our industry. Please deny the petition of
8 Islander East. Thank you very much.

9 MR. MATTHEW GORNEMAN: My name is Matthew
10 Gorneman and I represent the Long Island Association, the
11 region's largest business and civic association.

12 We appreciate the opportunity to appear
13 before you today to register our support for the
14 completion and operation of the Islander East pipeline
15 from Connecticut to Long Island. As you know, the Federal
16 Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, awarded this project a
17 certificate of public convenience and necessity in
18 September 2002. We agree with the Commission's conclusion
19 that the pipeline is needed to benefit the public interest
20 by increasing the reliability and flexibility of the
21 interstate pipeline grid.

22 Because Islander East will ensure a more
23 fully integrated regional pipeline system, the Commission
24 clearly recognizes that both Connecticut and Long Island

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1 will benefit from this project. Islander East will help
2 sustain our continued ability to move energy supplies
3 between the two regions when necessary. Such a rational
4 integrated system helps resolve the energy challenges
5 faced by the entire northeast portion of the country.

6 The Islander East Pipeline will also help
7 address national and regional energy needs in other
8 positive ways. Long Island's energy shortage is at a
9 critical stage. The New York Independent System operator,
10 which administers the State's wholesale energy market, has
11 determined that the only way to address Long Island's
12 long-term energy needs is to develop an online generation
13 capabilities. The organization has concluded that new
14 sources of natural gas are needed immediately to power
15 electric plants proposed to meet this need. These sources
16 will also reduce dependency on fossil fuels that generate
17 vastly greater amounts of pollution than that created by
18 natural gas.

19 Islander East will also meet Long Island's
20 growing need for power and help replace aging and obsolete
21 generating facilities. The power situation on Long Island
22 has deteriorated significantly over the past few years.
23 Despite the implementation of extensive energy
24 conservation measures the existing generation and

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1 transmission infrastructure is no longer adequate to meet
2 the growing demand for power. The Chairman of the Long
3 Island Power Authority has issued dire warnings of
4 blackouts if new power facilities are not brought online.

5 The Chairman of the New York State Public Service
6 Commission has also indicated that the power supply
7 situation has deteriorated and that it is imperative that
8 new power facilities be brought online on an urgent basis
9 in the near future to avoid power supply outages.

10 Twice within the past three summers Long
11 Island came perilously close of rolling blackouts because
12 the reserve margin between available supply and the demand
13 for power is simply too low. The members of the Long
14 Island Association are committed to preserving
15 environmental quality and we recognize and acknowledge
16 environmental concerns expressed by public officials in
17 Connecticut. We understand that proper environmental
18 conservation practices play an essential role in promoting
19 public health, sustaining our national resources and
20 maintaining long-term economic growth.

21 It is clear to us that the Islander East
22 meets all appropriate environmental standards. Its
23 sponsors have an excellent record in environmental
24 sensitivity. They have completed an exhaustive and

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1 exacting siting and analysis of local conditions. Upon
2 scrutinizing the pipeline plan FERC concluded that it's
3 construction and operation would had minimal adverse
4 impact on the environment.

5 The pipeline sponsors have pledged to
6 comply with State and Federal wetland protection rules to
7 ensure protection of shellfishing beds in Long Island
8 Sound. Furthermore, Islander East will employ minimally
9 invasive horizontal direct drilling technology that
10 minimizes the need to dig a trench in portions of the
11 pipeline route. HDD technology, which would be used for
12 the maximum feasible distance of approximately 4,000 feet
13 from the Connecticut shoreline, allows Islander East to
14 dig a single hole and tunnel underground horizontally.
15 This technique has been embraced by such distinguished
16 environmental conservation organizations as the Long
17 Island -- I'm sorry, Long Island Pine Barrens Society and
18 the Nature Conservancy for help to significantly reduce
19 the pipeline's impact upon the Pine Barrens core
20 preservation area.

21 Furthermore, offshore construction activity
22 will take place during winter months when shellfish are
23 less active and less susceptible to disturbance.
24 Connecticut's own recent study of the project's impact

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1 acknowledge that the State has an obligation to be a good
2 neighbor to Long Island. And the report concluded that
3 potential pipeline related environmental issues could be
4 resolved by establishing special marine protection areas.

5 Also, as noted above, expanding natural gas
6 supplies on Long Island also helps meet natural
7 environmental goals by helping to reduce dependence on
8 oil, which pollutes far more than natural gas and which is
9 less efficient than natural gas. By promoting the use of
10 clean safe supplies of continental natural gas the
11 pipeline also helps our area decrease it's dependence on
12 imported oil. The promotion of energy independence helps
13 our region to fulfill our vital natural interest,
14 especially during these times of major international
15 tensions.

16 Finally, allowing me to emphasize our
17 organization's responsibility for promoting the economic
18 vitality of Long Island. I know that you well understand
19 the critical role played by energy reliability and
20 maintaining a stable economy. That is why all of us in
21 both the public and private sectors must do everything
22 within our power to bolster energy reliability in our
23 region and in Connecticut as well. We need to make
24 informed balanced judgments about our energy supplies and

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1 we need to make sure our energy decisions deliver benefits
2 in a responsible way for the long run.

3 The Long Island Association believes we can
4 achieve this critical goal through the completion and
5 operation of the Islander East conduit. Thank you for
6 your consideration of our views.

7 MR. DAN BULLARD: My name is Dan Bullard. I
8 live in Stony Creek, Connecticut and I'm on the Stony
9 Creek Association. I am vehemently opposed to this
10 project as is the Stony Creek unanimously -- the Stony
11 Creek Association.

12 We feel the environmental impact has not
13 been properly considered. There is no economic benefit to
14 Connecticut and to our local area at all. My neighbor is
15 Jonathan Waters, who harvests oysters and I had to laugh
16 when he came up there with one oyster. I wanted him to
17 come in with a truck load.

18 We feel that we also have not proven the
19 need for the natural gas on Long Island and I don't
20 believe you've looked into alternative programs. And what
21 really irks me quite frankly, as a Republican, is that I
22 feel that Islander East is being an arrogant son of a gun
23 and feels that they can get this through Washington
24 regardless of what we feel here at the local level.

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1 Our Senators, our Representatives, our
2 State Representatives and our local government, as well as
3 all the citizens are opposed to this project and we've
4 cited the reasons and I just want to cast one more vote to
5 say I'm opposed. Thank you.

6 MR. BART MANSI: My name is Bart Mansi. I
7 am a commercial lobsterman. I've been lobstering off the
8 coast of Branford since 1978. The proposed pipeline is
9 designated to go right through my fishing grounds. We
10 feel that it's going to do irreversible damage to our
11 lobster grounds. The sediments will not only kill the
12 baby lobster, but the pregnant female lobsters.

13 And myself and all the other commercial
14 fishermen that I fish with are strongly opposed to this
15 pipeline. Thank you.

16 MR. DONALD J. KING, II: State my name and
17 stuff? This is Donald J. King, II. I am a commercial
18 lobsterman, fisherman and live at 275 Linden Avenue in
19 Branford, Connecticut.

20 I run a commercial lobster boat and am
21 involved in fin fishing, gill netting off the coast of
22 Branford and the Thimble Islands. And this pipeline would
23 be detrimental to our fishing and lobstering industry in
24 the area. We're just starting to see some of the smaller

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1 lobsters, we had a die-off, and we're just starting to see
2 some of the smaller lobsters come back now and we don't
3 need a pipeline to come through and stir up all the mud
4 and possibly do more damage to the lobstering industry
5 that has been devastated in the last few years here.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. TOM CLEVELAND: Start any time? Do I
8 have to push the button to start it?

9 COURT REPORTER: You're all set.

10 MR. CLEVELAND: I'm Tom Cleveland. I live
11 at 26B School Street in Branford and I want to go on
12 record as opposing the pipeline.

13 I'm a member of the Branford Land Trust and
14 have been a trustee of the Land Trust for the last two
15 years and feel a strong need to weigh in against the
16 pipeline since I feel it will be impacting the land, which
17 has been given to the Land Trust in perpetuity and it's
18 our job to protect and preserve. And I oppose it for all
19 of the reasons already said by many other people more
20 eloquent than I, but it seems very much that there is
21 certainly an easier more -- less environmentally damaging
22 alternative. And there is no good reason whatsoever to
23 put another corridor through the Sound in Branford or any
24 other place at the moment.

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1 There hasn't been -- it just boggles my
2 mind that there is still any question about whether or not
3 there should be -- Islander East should be granted a
4 permit for this undertaking. There doesn't seem to be any
5 reason other than their own economic gain and I really
6 think they're trying to make an economic gain by
7 privatizing a, you know, a public good, which is the
8 environmental and socioeconomic benefits of a wonderful
9 part of the Sound and the town that we have for their own
10 good.

11 And I strongly oppose it. That's it.

12 MR. NICHOLAS BERKUN: Okay. My name is
13 Nicholas Berkun, resident of Guilford, Connecticut. And I
14 went to Whitewood School back in the day and I remember
15 watching the railroad train go by there, the Tilcon train.

16 We all liked to stand by the tracks and watch the train
17 and so I know that speaks very close to home to me to hear
18 that they're going to, you know, one, alter the
19 environment there because it's just grown to be a very
20 picturesque neighborhood and they're going to have to cut
21 some trees down invariably to fix that.

22 But my main comment is that as far as I'm
23 concerned, and I'm no expert, I'm pretty sure that the
24 duty, or one of the duties of the Army Corps of Engineers

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1 is to make sure that all projects that impair or have the
2 potential to do damage to the waters of the United States,
3 including the adjacent wetlands, are reviewed. And that
4 damage to these waters is prevented or that impacts are
5 minimized when no reasonable alternative is available.

6 Well, there is a reasonable alternative in
7 this case. There is a crossing that comes out off of Nova
8 Scotia and runs parallel to the shoreline and it's about a
9 couple hundred thousand dollars cheaper than the Stony
10 Creek alternate. And I'm just curious why they're not
11 going to choose to use the ocean crossing, maybe it's not
12 as lucrative from a financial standpoint, but I'll bet
13 they'll still make money on the deal.

14 So it's important for the Army Corps of
15 Engineers to act professionally and to uphold their
16 official duty to protect these waters of the United States
17 and in so doing they should prevent the Stony Creek
18 alternate for the Long Island Sound pipeline project, the
19 Islander East Pipeline Project. In fact, they should
20 refuse to give Islander East any of these permits or any
21 Section 401 or 404 discharge permits because they don't
22 have to. There is an alternative and there's no logical
23 reason why that alternative is not being used. However,
24 there may be a financial motive. But I don't know, I'm

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1 just speculating.

2 I do know that people of the community and
3 the businesses of Connecticut and the government of
4 Connecticut have voiced a very intelligent and eloquent
5 opposition to any irresponsible or poorly planned,
6 sketchy, i.e. questionable projects proposed by companies
7 that will have serious environmental impacts and that are
8 somewhat heralded in mystery. It's a big mystery why
9 they're not going to use a different alternate.

10 And it blows my mind that anyone has to
11 listen to all these tapes. Thanks.

12 (Whereupon, the hearing adjourned at 11:20
13 p.m.)

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