



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

March 10, 2003

Mr. James R. Walpole
General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel for Ocean Services
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Islander East Pipeline Company, L.L.C. Appeal

Dear Mr. Walpole:

The Connecticut Business and Industry Association (hereafter "CBIA") supports the appeal of the Islander East Pipeline Company, L.L.C. (hereafter "Islander East") pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq. to override the objection of the State of Connecticut to the company's proposed pipeline extension.

CBIA is the state's largest business organization, with 10,000 member companies. CBIA is dedicated to encouraging a healthy economic climate that favors growth and job creation. Among our highest priorities are identifying and addressing the needs of technology –and information-driven businesses, including the manufacturing and financial services sectors, both of which have been core industries in Connecticut.

Energy is fundamental to a healthy Connecticut economy. As Connecticut's economy grows, so does our demand for energy. Our state and region's competitiveness is greatly influenced by the availability of affordable energy. Developing a regional infrastructure that can supply Connecticut's energy demands is critical to maintain reliability and price stability for state consumers.

Over the next two decades, natural gas will become a dominant primary fuel in almost every sector of our economy. The proliferation of natural-gas fired-electric generation in our state, and its continued siting throughout New England, ensures that natural gas will play an even more dominant role in the region's fuel mix than petroleum did in the early 1970s. The Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control estimates that by 2019, natural gas will account for more than 60 percent of our electric generation fuel mix. In 1999, natural gas accounted for only 10 percent of that generation mix. In sum, more natural gas transmission is needed to support escalating demand.

CBLA supports the development of a 21st century gas and electricity infrastructure to ensure state consumers have access to stable and reliable power. Increasingly, gas and electricity are transported across numerous states and regions to end-users. Regional markets have supplanted the 1980s vertical, state planning models in the Northeast. Today, we rely on private companies to invest in and deliver our energy reliability. We urge the department to support Islander East's appeal and allow further enhancement and integration of our region's pipeline capacity to meet our growing natural gas demand.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Earley
Staff Attorney