

Oblong Land Conservancy

June 17, 2010

Christopher M. Hogan, Project Manager
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Permits
625 Broadway 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1750

RE: Cricket Valley Energy
Scope Comments

This proposed energy project will have a profound growth inducing impact on the Route 22 Corridor, as well as providing its benefits: The Harlem Valley is the heart of the service area of the Oblong Land Conservancy, and we encourage the highest level of mitigation to ensure that this treasure that we currently possess is not compromised needlessly. For example, the entire Taconic Ridge, that spine of land on the NYS/CT border is listed in New York State's Open Space Plan, the West Mountain hills are listed, and so is The Great Swamp. These places are listed due to their rare species habitat, their remarkable surviving unique natural environments, and the limited development that has taken place to date, which makes these areas potential candidates for preservation.

The Coalition to Save the Highlands, a coalition of member organizations in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, of which Oblong is a member, has a goal of protecting the lands in this "highland" area, which provide critical clean water supplies to countless thousands of people. Within The Highlands, certain areas have been designated as "Critical Treasures", these include The Great Swamp and the Quaker Brook Watershed, a pristine tributary of The Great Swamp. The Taconic Ridge is also officially recognized.

Specific Areas of Concern that Oblong requests to be addressed are as follows:

1. HYDROLOGY AND WATER SUPPLY:

The Swamp's existing hydrology must not be altered. Groundwater levels must remain stable, baseline studies of existing hydrology must be established, and maintained by periodic monitoring of well levels, withdrawals, and replenishment. The surface water hydrology should likewise be monitored, to protect the very vulnerable Swamp River from further degradation.

The means of achieving a no alteration goal, should be reviewed by an independent competent hydrologist, chosen by the Town of Dover.

2. WATER QUALITY

Should address potential pollution and particularly potential discharges of heated water.

3. TRAFFIC STUDIES:

Should include the entire Rt. 22 Corridor.

4. NOISE:

An adequate projection of potential noise from the plant, and mitigation proposals.

5. IMPACTS ON WETLANDS:

Mitigation of and potential restoration of on site wetlands, and disposition and protection of other wetland parcels in The Great Swamp.

6. AIR QUALITY:

Potential Impacts on air quality and proposed mitigation. Include consideration of the cumulative impact of the proposed "Rasco" site, which would process petroleum contaminated soils, which volatilize.

7. OUTDOOR LIGHTING:

Extent of lighting required for security and maintenance, and design of fixtures, to ensure that lights are directed to provide the required function and do not produce glare to the night sky. Lighting should be designed to prevent interference with night migrations of birds. The Great Swamp is a known corridor (flyway) for bird migration, and is also an listed "Important Bird Area in New York State".

OTHER ISSUES:

8. "Fracking" in Marcellus Shale Deposits: This issue is becoming more controversial, as the public raises more concerns about potential groundwater pollution. The Cricket Valley Energy Plant could tap into this additional supply of natural gas. However, it seems that public concern may shelve the process the NY until further research determines how the gas can be recovered in an environmentally acceptable methodology.

Can the CVE operate without the additional supply from the Marcellus shale?

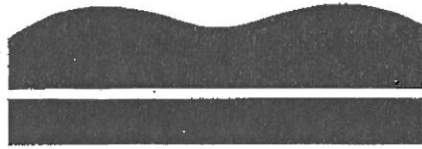
9. The deadly explosion that took place at the Middletown, CT, plant raises the issue of having this take place at CVE. A discussion in the EIS should therefore include an explanation of what went wrong at Middletown, and how CVE's design and maintenance would avoid such a disaster from taking place in Dover.

10. Growth Inducing Impacts. A reasonable analysis should be provided.

Thank you for taking these issues into inclusion in the scope of the CVE DEIS review.

Very truly yours,

Sibyll Gilbert, Vice Chair
Oblong Land Conservancy



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