

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 540

Approved July 15, 2003

WHEREAS, The relocation of Route I-195 will cost on the order of \$450 million over the next decade; and

WHEREAS, Said relocation requires also that the overhead transmission lines on the Providence waterfront be moved; and

WHEREAS, The \$1.5 million dollars that would be required to finance the above-ground relocation of the transmission lines could be applied to their burial; and

WHEREAS, The burial of the wires can be financed with specialized funds, including money from RIDOT, state and city bond money, a negligible charge on electric bills, and perhaps federal appropriations, which would not otherwise be available to the city, and could not be used to address other social and economic concerns; and

WHEREAS, The presence of the overhead transmission lines detracts from the beauty of India Point Park and obstructs views of Narragansett Bay; and

WHEREAS, This water vista underscores Rhode Island's appeal to visitors which has produced a \$4.8 billion tourism industry that employs 65,000 Rhode Islanders; and

WHEREAS, Route 195's water view, the best from the state's interstate system, is seen by approximately 10 million travelers a year; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's official travel guide lists the Providence waterfront as the top attraction for visitors to the city; and

WHEREAS, A stated reason for moving Route I-195, rather than rebuilding it in place, is to encourage tourism along the waterfront; and

WHEREAS, The park is used by an estimated 75,000 people a year from throughout the city, state, and region, representing the most diverse population of any city park; and

WHEREAS, The implementation of the India Point Park Master Plan will likely result in the extension of the riverwalk through the park, and many other improvements, increasing patronage thereof; and

WHEREAS, The new state-of-the-art playground in the park is packed with a diverse group and is located virtually in the shadow of the power lines; and

WHEREAS, City parks are "the primary green spaces of the majority of Americans," according to former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt; and

WHEREAS, Ten years ago the Children's Museum rejected the city's offer to relocate at India Point Park because of concerns about the possible adverse health effects of the electro-magnetic field (EMF) produced by the overhead transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, Narragansett Electric states that EMF levels at the new playground would be approximately 8.06 milliGauss, or double the 4 mG level at which epidemiology studies suggest "an association" between EMF and childhood leukemia, according to Narragansett Electric's summary of those studies; and

Councilman Segal, Councilman Luna, Councilwoman Williams

WHEREAS, The magnitude at ground-level of the EMF produced by the power lines would be negligible were the lines buried; and

WHEREAS, The burial of the power lines would improve the city's attitude toward the waterfront, yielding further improvements, while allowing the wires to remain would reinforce the view of the shoreline as a backwater; and

WHEREAS, The people of Providence's First Ward, in which the power lines rest, are unified in their support of the burial of the wires, as are their elected representatives; and

WHEREAS, Burying the power lines has been supported in writing by Mayor Cicilline, the City Plan Commission, the Superintendent of the Parks Department, and 35 city and statewide organizations, including Brown, RISD, the Providence Tourism Council, the Providence Journal, and neighborhood organizations from different parts of the city such as Fox Point, College Hill, Summit, West Broadway, and South Providence; and

WHEREAS, The burial of the power lines would benefit the entire city, through increased tourism, economic development, and the beautification of a public greenspace frequented by residents city-wide; and

WHEREAS, The waterfront is the signature landscape of the Capital City of the Ocean State and a cornerstone of its economic future; and

WHEREAS, Other cities such as Chattanooga, TN, Annapolis, MD, Louisville, KY, and San Antonio, TX, have found that ridding their waterfronts of obtrusive power lines has reaped major economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, The Transportation Department's waterfront projects of building the new Route 195 bridge, a new pedestrian bridge, and a new linear park on the Washington Bridge will significantly enhance the waterfront area, creating a continuous waterfront greenway from East Providence to Waterplace Park; and

WHEREAS, These waterfront improvements will create vantage points that will feature the power lines, making them far more prominent than they are now, if they are not buried; and

WHEREAS, If the power lines are not buried today, they will remain a blight on Providence's cityscape for generations to come.

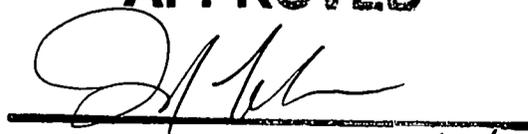
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council strongly supports efforts to bury the India Point Park transmission lines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council urges the City Solicitor to join Attorney General Lynch in intervening with the Energy Facilities Siting Board and testifying in support of burying the wires at the Board's hearing; Urges Governor Carcieri to direct RIDOT Director Capaldi to contribute \$4.1 million to burying the wires and to direct Public Utilities Division Director Ahern to draw up plans for a small (on average, approx. 10 cents per month) charge on electricity bills statewide, raising \$2.5 million dollars and endorses, and urges the Mayor to endorse, the Providence Parks Department's applications for state bond funds to help pay for burial.

IN CITY COUNCIL
JUL 8 2003
READ AND PASSED

PRES.
CLERK

APPROVED



MAYOR

7/15/03

Claire Bestwick

From: david@votesegal.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2003 2:10 PM
To: Claire Bestwick
Subject: resolutions

Claire-

I'd like to introduce these two for next week. I've introduced different versions of each in the past, but they've been stuck in committee, so I'm changing the language.

Thanks,

David

A Resolution in Opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act.

A Resolution in support of the burial of the transmission lines on Providence's Waterfront.