June 26, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Scott A. Jordan
Executive Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer

RE: Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)
Record of Decision for the Northwest Science Quad

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the Record of Decision, including its Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE), for the STEM Research Center 1 (Science 1) and Supplemental Utility Plant (SUP) projects, collectively known as the Northwest Science Quad. The Administration recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the Resolution below.

RESOLUTION:

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees approve the Record of Decision for the Northwest Science Quad as required by CEPA for transmittal to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.”

BACKGROUND:

The University of Connecticut plans to mobilize construction of the Northwest Science Quad in March 2020 on the Storrs Campus – an approximately 22-acre site consisting of surface parking and undeveloped land bounded by Hillside Road, Alumni Drive and King Hill Road.

As initially conceived in the 2015-2035 Campus Master Plan and a subsequent feasibility study, the Northwest Science Quad has been in design since 2017 and now includes the following primary elements:

**Science 1** – An approximately 198,000 gross square foot research facility to house new STEM teaching and research facilities, including the Institute of Materials Science and Materials Science and Engineering programs.

**Supplemental Utility Plant & Tunnel Extension** – An approximately 56,300 square foot facility which at full build-out of Phases 1 and 2 will consist of four chiller units, emergency power generators, a dual-fuel steam boiler, two dual-fuel combustion turbines, cooling towers,
and an electrical substation, and extending the existing utility tunnel for domestic and reclaimed water, chilled water, steam, condensate and various electrical and communication cables.

**Roadway & Site Improvements** – Development of a pedestrian “woodland” corridor to link the Northwest Science Quad to the North Eagleville Science District while providing green infrastructure for storm water management, realignment of Hillside Road and Alumni Drive to improve pedestrian safety and relieve traffic congestion, new sidewalks and energy-efficient lighting along King Hill Road, and surface parking for approximately 170 vehicles.

The CEPA process for developing the Northwest Science Quad (“the Proposed Action”) began in November 2017 upon posting a Notice of Scoping in the *Environmental Monitor*, as published by the state’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). A public comment period ended 30 days later and included a public meeting in December 2017. Comments from the scoping period informed our decision to prepare an EIE in 2018. A second public meeting was held in January 2019 and additional comments were received at the end of its 45-day review period.

The Record of Decision is based upon a careful consideration of development alternatives and potential environmental impacts. All practicable means to avoid, minimize, mitigate or offset associated environmental impacts identified in the EIE, and in response to comments on the EIE, have been adopted and will be implemented as part of the Proposed Action.

The Executive Summary of the Record of Decision is attached for your information and the full report may be found at [https://updc.uconn.edu/?p=2064](https://updc.uconn.edu/?p=2064).

Attachment
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Attachments

A Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE), Executive Summary (Fuss & O’Neill, Inc., December 2018)
B Early Public Scoping Notice
C EIE Public Review Period Notices
D Public Hearing Presentation
E EIE Comments and Responses
F Wetland Report
1 Decision

The University of Connecticut intends to continue with the implementation of the Northwest Science Quad (the Proposed Action), which consists of the following elements on an approximately 22-acre site on the Storrs Campus:

- **Science 1** – construction of a new ~198,000 gross square foot (GSF) STEM Research Center to house new STEM teaching and research facilities, including the Institute for Materials Science and Materials Science and Engineering programs.

- **Supplemental Utility Plant (SUP)** – phased construction of a ~56,300 square foot (SF) utility plant which at full build out will consist of four chiller units, emergency power via two 2-MW diesel generators, dual fuel 100,000 lb/hr steam boiler, two dual fuel combustion turbines, cooling towers, and the associated auxiliary equipment needed to operate the utility generating units, as well as an approximately 50 megawatt electrical substation and above and below ground storage tanks.

- **North Woodland Corridor** – development of a landscaped corridor to serve as a connector between the Northwest Science Quad and the rest of the science district and provide an area to implement green infrastructure for stormwater management.

- **Improvements to King Hill Road and realignment of Hillside Road and Alumni Drive** which surround the site.

- **Utility Tunnel from current Central Utility Plant (CUP) to proposed SUP** – extension of the existing tunnel on Auditorium Road to contain domestic, reclaimed, fire protection, and chilled water; condensate; steam; and a cable tray system to support electrical cables.

- **Stormwater and Utilities to serve the Northwest Science Quad** – to include direct burial sanitary sewer, electricity, emergency power, and stormwater utilities.

- **Surface Parking** – approximately 174 parking spaces in a lot parallel to King Hill Road and adjacent to the SUP, to be constructed on an existing parking lot or other currently developed surface.

The Proposed Action is needed to replace aging STEM space, add STEM facility space to meet demand, attract top-notch faculty and students, increase utility production and distribution capacity, and to support the Next Generation Connecticut initiative to expand the University of Connecticut’s STEM programs to provide qualified individuals for Connecticut’s industries.

This decision is based upon a careful consideration of alternatives and potential environmental impacts as documented in the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) (Fuss & O’Neill, Inc., December 2018) that was prepared for the Proposed Action, as well as comments received during the public review period for the EIE (December 18, 2018 – February 8, 2019). A copy of the Executive Summary that was included in the EIE is attached (see Attachment A).

2 Statement of Environmental Impact

Potential direct adverse effects resulting from the Proposed Action are those associated with the loss of an approximately 4,500 SF isolated inland wetland area. Alteration of the wetland area will be permitted under the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) consistent with the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act and
implementing regulations. Appropriate mitigation will be identified through the permitting process. Limited unavoidable temporary impacts are anticipated during the construction phase, including construction-related impacts to traffic, air quality, noise, hazardous materials, solid waste, and stormwater. These impacts will be mitigated through the use of best management practices during construction and are not anticipated to result in permanent adverse effects.

No adverse indirect effects associated with encroachment-alteration are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action. Foreseeable indirect impacts associated with induced growth (or growth influencing) are limited to potential increases in utility capacity, which will enable growth, especially in the northern portion of the Storrs Campus. However, the construction of a Supplemental Utility Plant (SUP) was specifically identified an important element in the 2015 Storrs Campus Master Plan, and its impact as a growth influencing factor is therefore consistent with responsible planning for campus growth. Further, future construction that is enabled by the SUP will be subject to environmental review and permitting, as appropriate, and appropriate mitigation would be identified for any associated future impacts.

Short-term utility demand will increase as a result of the Proposed Action, but increases are expected to be met through existing capacity for campus-supplied utilities and ultimately offset by the phased construction of the SUP which will provide additional utility capacity for electricity, steam, and chilled water, with a cumulative benefit to campus utility capacity. Cumulative impacts to air quality inherently linked to the expansion of large fuel-burning equipment that will foreseeably occupy the SUP will be mitigated through the University’s commitment to maintaining emissions below the critical thresholds identified in the campus Title V permit, effectively limiting the potential for cumulative air quality impact by placing a cap on emissions that is specifically intended to avoid direct and cumulative air quality impacts.

All practicable means to avoid, minimize, or offset any associated environmental impacts that are identified in the EIE will be adopted. The mitigation measures identified in the EIE, and in the responses to comments on the EIE, have been adopted and will be implemented as part of the Proposed Action.

3 Summary of Consultation with Agencies and Other Persons

A Notice of Scoping for the Proposed Action was published in the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Environmental Monitor on November 21, 2017, beginning the 30-day scoping period. The scoping period ended on December 22, 2017 (Attachment B). During the scoping period, a public scoping meeting was held on the University campus on December 7, 2017. No public oral comments were received during the public meeting. During the scoping period, written comments were received from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), the Town of Mansfield, and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH).

Preparation of the EIE involved coordination with Federal and State agencies and municipal officials, including CTDEEP and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A Notice of Availability for the EIE was advertised in the CEQ Environmental Monitor and made available to the public on December 18, 2018 and again on January 8, 2019 and February 5, 2019. The notice
also appeared on the University of Connecticut Office of University Planning, Design and Construction website on December 12, 2018, and in the Willimantic Chronicle on December 18, 2018, December 24, 2018, and December 31, 2018. The public review and comment period began on December 18, 2018 and ended on February 8, 2019. Copies of the EIE public review period notices and advertisements are provided in Attachment C.

The EIE was made available for inspection during the comment period at the Mansfield Town Clerk’s Office, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building, 4 South Eagleville Road, Mansfield, Connecticut and the Mansfield Public Library, 54 Warrenville Road, Mansfield, Connecticut. The document was sent to the following agencies and entities for review and comment:

- Council on Environmental Quality
- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Connecticut Department of Public Health
- Connecticut Department of Transportation
- Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism
- Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
- Town of Mansfield

The EIE was also made available for review on the Council on Environmental Quality website (https://www.ct.gov/ceq/lib/ceq/Final_NW_ScienceQuad_EIE_20181206_EnvMon.pdf) and the University of Connecticut Office of University Planning, Design and Construction website (https://updc.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1525/2018/12/Final_NW_ScienceQuad_EIE_20181206_reduced.pdf)

4 Summary of the Public Hearing Record

A public hearing on the EIE was held on January 30, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Konover Auditorium at the University of Connecticut Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, 405 Babidge Road, Unit 1205, Storrs, Connecticut. The public hearing was livestreamed and can be viewed at the following link: https://kaltura.uconn.edu/media/NW+Science+Quad+Project+-30+Jan+2019/1_jo7pabxg

A copy of the presentation provided at the hearing is included in Attachment D.

5 Response to Comments on the EIE

This Record of Decision contains all comments submitted on the EIE, including oral testimony provided during the public hearing. Copies of comments received on the EIE and their responses are provided in Attachment E. Comments were received from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Town of Mansfield, Ms. Meg Reich of Mansfield Center, CT, and Dr. Anji Seth, Department of Geography, University of Connecticut.