

House Republican Press Release

September 30, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

REP. HOVEY: RESIDENTS CAN APPEAL UNSIGHTLY 'UVERSE' CABINETS ON LOCAL UTILITY POLES



Sept. 29 Ruling Rebukes AT&T For Poor Siting Process

HARTFORD - State Rep. DebraLee Hovey (R-Monroe, Newtown) applauded Monday's state Department of Public Utility Control's (DPUC) decision to allow property owners to appeal the siting of the large, new Uverse cabinets. The cabinets have been placed on telephone poles to facilitate AT&T's Uverse television service. Rep. Hovey has received numerous complaints from Monroe residents who were opposed to the refrigerator-sized cabinets from being placed in their neighborhoods.

According to DPUC's decision, the video ready access device (VRAD) cabinets will only be placed on less than one percent of the approximately 800,000 utility poles AT&T owns in Connecticut. Also, AT&T cannot place the cabinets higher than they are because they are already at the height recommended by the manufacturer.

DPUC noted that AT&T should have acted in a more responsible manner by providing full and complete notice to the public officials and requested informed consent from adjoining proprietors prior to the placement of its facilities. The decision added that by providing detailed information to the affected adjoining proprietors, state and local officials and entities, before facility installations, the AT&T would have received greater feedback and acceptance of the VRAD cabinets.

DPUC will entertain requests from adjoining property owners objecting to existing VRAD cabinets or those about to be placed by AT&T. In those cases, objecting property owners, after unsuccessfully negotiating with AT&T, will be permitted to present evidence and offer argument as to why the project should not go forward as proposed or why the existing VRAD cabinet should be removed. DPUC expects to intervene on these matters only as a last resort after all other options have been exhausted and when all reasonable attempts to secure the property owner's consent have failed.

"Understandably, people in Monroe who recently came home to find one of these large cabinets in their yard are upset," said Rep. Hovey. "DPUC acknowledged that AT&T could have handled this situation far better. I'm very pleased that the state will now give residents an avenue to appeal the siting of the Uverse cabinets."

Residents can contact DPUC at 800-382-4586 or via e-mail at:

dpuc.information@po.state.ct.us

DPUC's website is: www.ct.gov/dpuc

In the decision AT&T is ordered to: 1.) establish a formal working group to resolve any other outstanding issues or disagreements with municipalities affected relative to the application of municipal guidelines, 2.) file quarterly reports detailing adjoining proprietor owners' consent including the number of notices sent, the number of objections received and a description of the Company's response to resolve those disputes, 3.) report any safety issues or concerns occurring in Connecticut or in other states relative to the VRAD cabinets, 4.) adopt "best practices" by the Company's affiliates in other states that could enhance the VRAD installation in Connecticut and 5.) provide to the respective municipalities specific locations, including utility pole numbers and street addresses for the proposed VRAD cabinet installations.