



State of Connecticut

Office of Consumer Counsel

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The Energy and Technology Committee
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S.B. 597 AAC The Timely Removal Of Double And Bare Utility Poles

Testimony of Mary J. Healey, Consumer Counsel

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The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) has carefully reviewed S.B. 597, *An Act Concerning the Timely Removal of Double and Bare Utility Poles*, a bill that would establish uniform procedures and time schedules for the timely removal of double and bare utility poles. The OCC would recommend that this proposed bill be temporarily withheld and that the DPUC should reopen its original docket investigating this problem to determine the status of double poles across the state and for further compliance orders be issued to accomplish the complete elimination of these dangerous obstructions in the public rights of way.

Reference is made to a DPUC decision, dated September 29, 2004, in Docket No. 03-03-07, DPUC Review of Public Utility Structures and Poles within Municipal Rights of Way, which was opened at the request of the Capital Region Council of Governments concerning the installation of public utility company facilities in the public rights-of-way. In addition to the OCC, parties to the docket included the utility companies, certified telecommunications service providers, cable television companies and all of the state's regional councils of government.

The Department conducted a thorough review of the regulation of public utility facilities to be installed in public rights-of-way and the removal of utility poles being replaced by new poles. The DPUC ordered a series of deadlines by which the complete elimination of double poles in the state was to be accomplished. Pertaining to future double poles in the public rights of way, the DPUC ordered that:

each pole custodian should remove, under normal conditions, all double poles within 18 months starting from the time a new pole was installed or within six months after all facilities have been shifted, whichever is earlier. Furthermore, old double poles that are located along high traffic roadways should be removed within twelve months of installation of a new pole or six months after transfer of facilities, whichever is earlier. (DPUC Decision at 17)

It is readily apparent from driving the roads of this state that double poles have once again flourished. As noted above, the OCC recommends that the DPUC reopen its docket on this matter and issue such orders as will completely eliminate the current backlog of double poles, while instituting regular compliance reporting to verify that this situation does not repeat itself.