

2/28/10

To: Environment Committee: Co-Chairmen Senator Meyer and Representative Roy and Members of the Environment Committee for March 1, 2010 Public Hearing

Testimony of Susan Payne, Chair of the Conservation Commission of the Town of Washington, in support of **Senate Bill 206: An Act Concerning Local Land Use Agencies and the Siting of Telecommunications Towers.**

Who is better equipped to assess the "environmental compatibility" of a proposed cell tower than local land use officials?

The Town of Washington's primary value is the preservation of its rural character and all that that embraces in quintessential rural New England. The Town's 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development, its 2000 Natural Resource Inventory Report and Recommendations, the Conservation Commission with its Cell Tower Committee, and its current Zoning Regulations Section 13.19 document this.

Siting is particularly challenging in Washington with its very hilly topography, deep river valley, extensive land preservation, many scenic roads thus designated, historic village centers (3), spectacular natural viewsheds and traditional, scenic New England qualities.

The Town's Zoning Regulations in Section 13.19 are very clear on the concerns of the Town regarding the impact of a cell tower site and very detailed in the information required of an applicant. SB 206 would validate these Town regulations and return decision-making to those who will be impacted.

I respectfully request approval of Senate Bill 206 to return the siting of towers and assessment of environmental compatibility to local land use authorities.

Susan Payne, Chairperson
Conservation Commission, Town of Washington