



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 461

Representative Nardello, Senator Fonfara and Members of the Energy and Technology Committee;

My name is State Representative Pat Widlitz of the 98th District which includes the towns of Branford and Guilford. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of SB 461, AAC Siting Council Proceedings and Decisions.

Branford's First Selectman, Anthony "Unk" DaRos, is here with me this afternoon to explain why this legislation is necessary to protect the character and quality of life in our towns along the Connecticut shoreline.

Recently we participated in a Siting Council hearing regarding a proposed 125' T-Mobile tower to be located at 123 Pine Orchard Road in Branford. During the afternoon hearing we learned from the representatives of the applicant that Amtrak has a "master" plan (through T-Mobile) for a network of towers all along the shoreline, specifically Branford to Old Saybrook. Because of the terrain, some are proposed in Branford to be slightly more than 800 feet apart!

This is an assault on the shoreline towns, degrading some of the most valuable, ecologically sensitive and scenic property in the state, all for the benefit of Amtrak riders to have 90 seconds of uninterrupted wireless service.

SB 461, lines 131-134, requires the Council to consider the "latest technological options designed to minimize aesthetic and environmental impacts", before issuing a certificate for such a facility. You will hear testimony this afternoon regarding the availability and use of such technologies in other states. The bill also requires the Council to consider public safety issues in siting such a facility.

I would respectfully request one change in the language. On line maybe 215 "ought to be changed to "shall" to require the Council to consider regional location preferences from neighboring municipalities. Amtrak already has a master plan. Our communities should have a voice in developing a plan as well.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and for raising SB 461.