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*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
MARCH 18, 2010*

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 461, An Act Concerning Siting Council Proceedings and Decisions.

This legislation prohibits the Siting Council from granting a certificate to construct a cell tower or other facility unless the Council has considered whether the facility or tower would comply with manufacturer safety standards. The proposal also requires that the Siting Council, in reviewing a cell tower application, consider whether there are technological alternatives that would lessen its aesthetic and environmental impacts and whether there are regional location preferences.

My office receives numerous complaints from residents affected by proposed cell towers. While serving a very useful purpose for our communications network, these towers are huge structures that pose potential dangers. Locations of these towers must be carefully chosen.

When there is proper preparation and discussion with local officials, siting of these towers can be completed expeditiously and without controversy. Too often, tower owners fail to communicate with local officials, so that proposed locations are completely unacceptable to town residents. These objectionable sites may be inappropriate for a number of reasons -- including aesthetics and permitted zoning uses.

Senate Bill 461 ensures that sites of cell towers comply with manufacturer safety standards and are the best alternative when comparing aesthetic and environmental impacts and alternative sites regionally.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 461.