



OCC Participates in Siting Council Docket Regarding Back-up Power for Wireless Telecommunications Towers

On December 4, 2012, the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) participated in a hearing in Connecticut Siting Council (Council) Docket No. 432. Pursuant to Public Act 12-148, the Council is required to study the feasibility of back-up power requirements for telecommunications towers and antennas in consultation and coordination with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA).

Through its participation in the Council docket, OCC is advocating for the interests of Connecticut residents in having adequate and reliable back-up power at wireless telecommunications towers and antennas. In the wake of three historic storms in the past fifteen months in Connecticut, the importance of reliable and resilient wireless telecommunications infrastructure has risen to the forefront as a critical public safety issue given that first responders, utility workers, and Connecticut residents rely heavily on wireless devices as their primary form of communication. When wireless telecommunication towers lose access to commercial power, a form of back-up power should be utilized where feasible so that wireless customers can access the wireless networks.

On or before January 10, 2013, after the hearing conducted by the Council, PURA must submit a report of its findings and recommendations and a proposed plan for deploying back-up power to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly related to energy, public safety, and planning and development.