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September 16, 2007

VRAD Dangers

The Office of Consumer Counsel, the state's advocate for consumers of public-utility services, was pleased to see Linda Case's Sept. 2 article in The Courant's Place section "Down To The Wire: Towns Balk At Electronic Clutter" and the thoughtful letter [Sept. 9, "Eyesores Mushrooming"] by Joe Mehan of Wethersfield.

The time is overdue for a public outcry against the spread of hundreds of AT&T's high-voltage VRAD cabinets across the landscape. Not only because they are graffiti-covered eyesores that reduce property values, but because they are manifestly dangerous.

Ms. Case's well-researched article noted the Bridgeport, Danbury and Stamford cases currently being heard by the state Department of Public Utility Control, in which our office introduced evidence of the grave dangers posed by having these boxes in public rights of way.

The hazards aren't limited to the fact that they intrude into sidewalks and have sharp edges. Our office introduced into evidence two instances in the United States of these boxes exploding and shooting shards of steel more than 50 feet. We also discussed the risk of a school bus striking one of these boxes.

Regulations exist not to prevent competition or the growth of business, but to protect public safety. We call upon all Connecticut communities to contact the DPUC and state legislature to prevent the continued spread of this dangerous equipment.

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