



State of Connecticut

Office of Consumer Counsel

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The Energy and Technology Committee
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H.B. 6608 AAC Consumer Protection In Telecommunications Companies
Testimony of Mary J. Healey, Consumer Counsel

The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) supports H.B. 6608 *Consumer Protection In Telecommunications Companies*, a bill that would promote service quality for retail and wholesale telecommunications in the state. The OCC recognizes the need for improved telecommunications service quality for customers in our State.

Why HB 6608?

The OCC petitioned the DPUC last July to open what became Docket No. 08-07-15, Petition of The Office of Consumer Counsel for Enforcement of Quality of Service Standard for the Southern New England Telephone Company d/b/a/ AT&T Connecticut, to enforce the existing quality of service standards for AT&T. Of particular concern are the out-of-service repairs as the standard for same has not been met once by AT&T in over eight years. The OCC was responding to a situation that has been left unaddressed for too long. This bill is about what the customers are NOT getting: good customer service that they are paying for and are entitled to, including timely repair when the phone stops working.

What HB 6608 will do?

The current process is not working. It is time for the legislature to provide measures to ensure customer service needs are a top priority for telecommunications companies. HB 6608 will set mandatory standards in several key areas:

Section (a) adds the following new statutory requirements for Retail Service:

- Requires monthly reporting on service quality performance by the companies
- Defines a mandatory Out -Of- Service repair standard
- Requires a regulatory standard for average speed of answer by service reps
- Requires the listing of the DPUC Customer Service Unit contact information on monthly bills

Section (b) adds the following new statutory requirements for Wholesale Services:

- DPUC adoption of wholesale service quality regulations by August 2009
- DPUC enforcement of wholesale quality regulations
- Obligates the DPUC to take actions necessary to prevent anticompetitive behavior

Section (c) adds the following new statutory requirements:

- Requires a fine for repeated service quality failures based on a standard percentage of company revenues earned in the state. Fines will be deposited into the General Fund.

The OCC believes that the modifications to the existing statute contained in this bill will enable the DPUC to do its job better and in a more streamlined and transparent way.

The net impact of this bill is that it promotes good quality of service for retail customers and wholesale telecommunications companies. In doing so, it promotes customer safety, good quality service, the economic development of our State, and customer goodwill for the companies. It is a win/win for everyone.