

State of Connecticut

SENATE

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SENATOR EDWARD MEYER

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Chair

Environment Committee

Vice Chair

Select Committee on Children

Government Administration & Elections Committee

Member

Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee

Judiciary Committee

Legislative Aide: Darcy Jones

To the Environment Advocates and Other Interested Persons:

Several Environment Committee bills came before the Planning and Development Committee yesterday, and two of the more important bills were killed. Those bills were SB 123 relating to the preservation of vegetation adjacent to wetlands and watercourses and SB 206 relating to the location of cell phone towers. The relevant facts are as follows:

1. P and D took up 18 bills that had been referred to that committee. The cell phone tower bill was the first bill on the written agenda and the vegetation preservation bill was the last one on the agenda.
2. The meeting was conducted by the House Chair, Representative Brendan Sharkey. He elected to bring up the cell tower bill at the end of the meeting even though it was first on the agenda. The committee meeting, under the rules, was to end when the House or the Senate went into session.
3. Toward the end of the meeting, Representative Sharkey began to talk about the cell tower bill, disclosing that he had worked for T-Mobile, the largest cell tower company in the country. According to people present at the meeting, he talked about the bill for approximately ten minutes until Senator Fasano informed him that the Senate was in session. Representative Sharkey then ended the meeting without taking a vote on either the cell tower or vegetation preservation bills. Those bills were the only bills on which no vote was taken.
4. Thereafter, I spoke to Representative Sharkey. He told me several things. He said that he had polled the committee and that the two bills did not have sufficient support for committee approval and that he had so

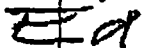
informed Representative Dick Roy, the House Chair of the Environment Committee. I then talked with members of P and D as well as committee staff who informed me that Representative Sharkey had never taken any poll or straw vote with respect to the two bills. Further, Representative Roy advises that he never had any discussion with Representative Sharkey concerning the absence of support for the bills in the P and D Committee.

5. Representative Sharkey also told me that formerly cell phone towers were under the jurisdiction of the towns and not the Siting Council and that this had been a major impediment to the cell tower companies.
6. Later in the day yesterday, at a reception hosted by the Non-Profit Organizations, Representative Sharkey spoke to me and stated that if I questioned his "bona fides" about his handling of the two bills, I "would regret it" and he "would get" me.

Based upon the above, I have reached several obvious conclusions. First, while Representative Sharkey has been an outspoken advocate in Connecticut for Smart Growth, his advocacy is highly inconsistent because in killing the vegetation preservation and cell phone tower bills, he was opposing two important forms of Smart Growth. Secondly, I discovered that Representative Sharkey is seeking to be the next House Majority Leader. His selection would be disastrous for environmental legislation, and I urge all environment advocates to oppose any further leadership position of Representative Sharkey. Third, I had viewed Representative Sharkey as a stand-up legislator, but my judgment was clearly wrong.

Please do communicate with me if you want to discuss the above sad developments in any greater detail.

Sincerely,



Ed Meyer
State Senator

cc: Representative Brendan Sharkey
Representative Richard Roy
Senator Eric Coleman