

The Telco TV Boxes Are Coming!

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Telco TV boxes may be coming to a sidewalk near you - and there is likely nothing you will be able to do about it! The loss of local control of 'right of way' under new state and national video franchising laws (HR.5252 and S.2686) means that your local city will have to yield control of public spaces to telephone and cable companies operating under those franchises.

Cities and municipalities will have little or no say in the placement, size and the oversight of these hulking giants. Should one appear overnight on your doorstep, calling the city will be fruitless, you will need to contact the federal government and the FCC to seek recourse.

As reported in [The Record](#), the boxes AT&T proposes would be 5 feet 3 inches tall, 43 1/2 inches deep and nearly 21 inches wide and be placed in the public utility easement, typically 10 feet in from the sidewalk. The Verizon boxes appear to be shorter but much wider, at least two sizes appear to be in use (see: [Kramer Firm](#)). Cities typically have a say about such 'street furniture', partly out of public safety concerns but also because these boxes are graffiti and vandal magnets as well. When a handful of Illinois cities balked at letting AT&T install similar boxes, the phone company sued (see [Beacon News](#)). The cities simply wanted more time to study the situation, AT&T responded shrilly that "moratoriums violate their business rights under federal telecommunication law, as well as First Amendment rights." If cities have little recourse under these franchises, how will individuals fare? You probably already have older cable/telco boxes like these in your communities, now imagine even larger ones populating your sidewalks. We've taken the creative liberty of imagining some possible 'telco box' placements for your aesthetic enjoyment. Begin [here](#) or [below](#).