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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### D.C.'s low-fiber diet

I was enthralled by the Washington Business Journal's candid discussion of the issues stalling the deployment of the advanced telecommunications technology, Fios, in D.C. (March 14-20 issue). But I was appalled to learn Verizon may have the temerity to link its statutory obligations to D.C. consumers with its ongoing efforts to persuade the council to "deregulate" VoIP [Voice Over Internet Protocol, or Web-based phone service].

Verizon has a statutory obligation to provide advanced telecommunication services, such as Fios, to District consumers in a timely and equitable manner. This does not include the notion that Verizon will comply with the law "only if" Verizon "gets what it wants" from the council. After all, these lawmakers are prudently weighing whether deregulation of VoIP is in the public interest, and such deliberation is their statutory duty.

In response to our request for information concerning its plans, Verizon replied "[t]he deployment of Fios in the District will be based on whether it is a prudent business decision for Verizon." Surely, Verizon could not possibly mean to suggest its "business plan" is to hold hostage the timely deployment of Fios to its efforts to convince the city's lawmakers to deregulate VoIP. As the statutory representative of D.C. utility consumers, I submit the interests of 550,521 residents of the District of Columbia should not be marginalized by such shameful shenanigans.

Verizon must reaffirm its commitment to deliver both quality telecommunications services and to the timely deployment of Fios fiber-optics technology.

Like the little boy in the Verizon's Fios commercial, I, too, want to "see what's in the Fios guy's truck!"

— Elizabeth A. Noel, D.C. People's Counsel