



September 11, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, District of Columbia 20554

RE: Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WC Docket No. 17-84; Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WT Docket No. 17-79

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Municipal Association is writing to formally express its grave concerns about the Federal Communications Commission's proposed Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order regarding state and local governance of small cell wireless infrastructure deployment.

While we share the Commission's goal of ensuring the growth of cutting-edge broadband services for all Americans, we remain deeply concerned about several provisions of this proposal. Local governments have an important responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents, and we are concerned that these preemption measures compromise that traditional authority and expose wireless infrastructure providers to unnecessary liability.

- **The FCC's proposed new collocation shot clock category is too extreme.** The proposal designates any preexisting structure, regardless of its design or suitability for attaching wireless equipment, as eligible for this new expedited 60-day shot clock. When paired with the FCC's previous decision exempting small wireless facilities from federal historic and environmental review, this places an unreasonable burden on local governments to prevent harms to the historic preservation, environmental, and safety interests of the community. The addition of up to three cubic feet of antenna and 28 cubic feet of additional equipment to a structure not originally designed to carry that equipment is substantial and may necessitate more review than the FCC has allowed in its proposal.
- **The FCC's proposed definition of "effective prohibition" is overly broad.** The draft report and order proposes a definition of "effective prohibition" that invites challenges to long-standing local rights-of-way requirements unless they meet a subjective and unclear set of guidelines. While the Commission may have intended to preserve local review, this framing and definition of effective prohibition opens local governments to the likelihood of more, not less, conflict and litigation over requirements for aesthetics, spacing, and undergrounding.

- **The FCC's proposed recurring fee structure is an unreasonable overreach that will harm local policy innovation.** We disagree with the FCC's interpretation of "fair and reasonable compensation" as meaning approximately \$270 per small cell site. Local governments share the federal government's goal of ensuring affordable broadband access for every American, regardless of their income level or address. That is why many cities have worked to negotiate fair deals with wireless providers, which may exceed that number or provide additional benefits to the community. Additionally, the Commission has moved away from rate regulation in recent years. Why does it see fit to so narrowly dictate the rates charged by municipalities?

Cities and Towns across the Commonwealth have worked with private business to build the best broadband infrastructure possible for their residents. The MMA opposes any efforts to restrict local authority and stymie local innovation, while limiting the obligations providers have to our communities. We urge you to oppose this declaratory ruling and report and order.

If you have additional questions or need further information on this matter, please do not hesitate to have your office contact me or MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Brittney Franklin at 617-426-7272 at any time. The MMA is prepared to work closely with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey C. Beckwith
Executive Director & CEO

cc: The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Edward Markey
The Honorable Richard Neal
The Honorable James McGovern
The Honorable Niki Tsongas
The Honorable Joseph Kennedy III
The Honorable Katherine Clark
The Honorable Seth Moulton
The Honorable Michael Capuano
The Honorable Stephen Lynch
The Honorable William Keating