



September 18, 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,

The City of Gaithersburg would like to express its concerns with the Federal Communications Commission's proposed Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order regarding state and local governance of small cell wireless infrastructure deployment.

The City of Gaithersburg has actively engaged our residents and the provider community over a yearlong process to develop appropriate guidelines and regulations regarding small cell wireless deployments. We held numerous public meetings and met with industry providers to try and reach a consensus on the various issues of concern to all stakeholders. The City has adopted these regulations and continues to work the industry and strongly believe we need to retain the ability to address local concerns and changes in the marketplace.

While we appreciate the Commission's efforts to engage with local governments on this issue and 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

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov • www.gaithersburgmd.gov

MAYOR
Jud Ashman

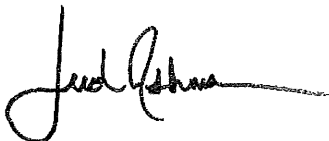
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Neil Harris
Laurie-Anne Sayles
Michael A. Sesma
Ryan Spiegel
Robert T. Wu

CITY MANAGER
Tony Tomasello

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 historic preservation, environmental, or safety harms to 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. The City has concerns that the regulations are not addressing the true market conditions that can vary greatly from community to community.
- **The City of Gaithersburg has worked with the industry to build the best broadband infrastructure possible for our residents while balancing the issues raised by the community.** We oppose this effort to restrict local authority and stymie local innovation, while limiting the obligations providers have to our community. We urge you to oppose this declaratory ruling and report and order.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jud Ashman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jud Ashman, Mayor
City of Gaithersburg