

# MONTEREY COUNTY



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September 18, 2018

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch

Secretary

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, D.C. 20554

**RE: Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment  
– WC Docket No. 17-84 and WT Docket No. 17-79**

Dear Secretary Dortch:

On behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, I'm writing to express our opposition to several features of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order regarding state and local governance of small cell wireless infrastructure deployment. While we support the deployment of new and forthcoming telecommunications technology, including high-capacity 5G and related technologies, we oppose efforts that would limit necessary local discretion and public review as it pertains to the siting of new infrastructure in the public domain.

For example, in Monterey County, Route 1 along the Big Sur Coast is designated a scenic highway. Local plans and ordinances, as well as polices of the California Coastal Commission, have carefully designated scenic view sheds and sensitive environmental areas designed to conserve and protect key assets such as the Bixby Bridge and Point Sur. Infrastructure such as power poles and directional signs are carefully regulated as to size, mass and location. Oftentimes the community is intensely interested and involved in infrastructure permitting, generally yielding positive outcomes. However, local review requires entitlement processes, including California Environmental Quality Act compliance that will exceed 60 days.

We are concerned that the FCC's new collocation shot clock category is too extreme. The Commission's proposal designates any preexisting structure – regardless of its design or suitability for attaching wireless equipment – as eligible for a 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 harm 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.

In addition, the FCC's proposed definition of "effective prohibition" is overly broad. The draft report and order proposes a definition of this particular term that invites challenges to longstanding 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.

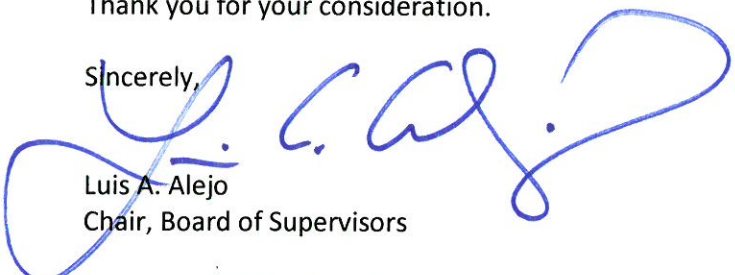
We would encourage the FCC to authorize local governments to establish their own design guidelines, within FCC established criteria, addressing these issues and require that small cell installations comply with the local guidelines. Legislation in the State of Texas recently authorized localities to adopt such regulations to address local aesthetic, spacing, and structure loading and massing objectives.

Finally, we believe that the FCC's proposed recurring fee structure represents an unreasonable overreach that will harm local policy innovation. Specifically, we disagree with the FCC's interpretation of "fair and reasonable compensation" as meaning approximately \$270 per small cell site. Local governments share the Commission's goal of ensuring affordable broadband access for every American, regardless of their income level or address. That is why many local governments 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, so it would be inconsistent for the FCC to attempt to narrowly dictate the rates that can be charged by local governments.

In closing, the County of Monterey wants to be a partner in the successful deployment of next generation infrastructure. An approach that tries to preempt or remove local authority, however, would create tremendous conflict and would only serve to hinder local efforts aimed at closing the digital divide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Luis A. Alejo  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Kamala Harris  
Congressman Jimmy Panetta