



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

DARCIE ANTLE
CLERK OF THE BOARD

501 Low Gap Rd. Room 1010
Ukiah, CA 95482

Email: bos@mendocinocounty.gov
Website: www.mendocinocounty.gov

Office: (707) 463-4221
Fax: (707) 463-5649

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 470 - Telephone Corporations: Carriers of Last Resort - OPPOSE
As Amended March 17, 2025

Dear Chairwoman McKinnor,

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors is writing to express opposition to Assembly Bill 470, permitting a Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) provider to abandon essential responsibilities and gradually eliminate reliable and affordable access to basic telephone service for all Californians.

Under AB 470, a provider can automatically relieve itself of its COLR obligations by notifying the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) when it claims to have no customers or population in a specific area and believes that residents are "well-served" by alternative voice services. This bill creates a process entirely outside of any oversight framework, allowing for-profit monopolies to make self-interested decisions and determine the truth and accuracy of their claims without accountability.

Additionally, the customer challenge process established in AB 470 lacks a neutral venue, like the CPUC. Since a COLR's notice to the CPUC is automatically deemed approved, any successful customer challenge becomes meaningless. AB 470 restricts successful customer challenges to two years of continued service. It does not guarantee that service will be available to customers after that time due to the absence of COLR protections.

The CPUC's primary role is to balance procedures and safeguards to protect consumers while ensuring the delivery of safe, reliable utilities and infrastructure at reasonable rates. AB 470 prioritizes the interests of the telecommunications industry over the needs of California's diverse population. COLR regulations are crucial and must continue to focus on consumer protection and universal access while facilitating the transition to modern networks.

Mendocino County supports the shift toward technologies that ensure reliable, redundant, and widespread access to both internet and voice services. However, AB 470 does not provide a genuine process for rural communities to access these modern telecommunications options. In Mendocino County, many residents still rely on 'Plain Old Telephone Service' (POTS) as their only dependable and

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affordable service option. POTS also remains one of the most reliable communication tools in the safety net for rural counties. Instead of promoting positive advancements, this bill allows companies to phase out essential services, jeopardizing public safety and consumer protections.

For these reasons, the County of Mendocino opposes AB 470.

Sincerely,



John Haschak, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members of the Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Member of the California State Senate
The Honorable Chris Rogers, Member of the California State Assembly
Tracy Rhine, Senior Policy Advocate, Rural County Representatives of California