

Chairman Haschak and Fellow Members of the Board,

Before rendering a decision on our appeal, please carefully read and consider the documents and data we are submitting today challenging the need for this tower; permit flaws regarding a coverage gap, limited service area guarantees, aesthetics, seismic factors, the need for an EIR, misleading information regarding the benefits of this tower during an emergency, procedural flaws in the planning commission hearings and AT&T's misstatements. Please note: On our current petitions and Location Study Map(pg. 13)there is a majority of taxpaying, Pine Mountain, residents in the proposed service area who do NOT want this tower.

The June 3, 2020, Mendocino County 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury Report addressing The Emergency Communications System (ECS) in Mendocino County, documented numerous recommendations which will require significant funding to upgrade to a new Motorola radio system, a Microwave Replacement Project, replace the sheriff's dispatch, as well as upgrade and maintain various communication facilities.

[redacted]

"ClientFirst recommended a five-year, three phase replacement schedule for the ECS which has an estimated cost of \$11.3 million (p1)

"Phase 1 replaces microwave repeaters to improve communication resiliency and stability. The BOS at its April 20, 2020, meeting (agenda item #20-03.02) approved \$1,600,500 for the Public Safety Microwave Phase 1 Repeater Replacement Project. Phase 2 includes replacing microwave radios and ethernet routers to increase the speed of communication. Phase 3

includes completion of redundancies in the sixteen site County system to reduce the likelihood of communications failures”, ultimately creating “a reliable and redundant radio communication network”.(Grand Jury Report,p. 4)

The Board of Supervisors’ Response to the Grand Jury, dated 9-1-2020, stated a funding schedule for Phase 2, Phase 3 and the sheriff’s dispatch console (F1, F5, F10) would be documented. The BOS have committed to completing this expensive project with an updated, maintained and robust Emergency Communication System, by responding to the Grand Jury recommendations (Response pp 3-4), to ensure the life, health, safety, and welfare of Mendocino County Residents and its first responders.

Nowhere in this ClientFirst designed plan or the Grand Jury recommendations, is FirstNet mentioned in the future of upgrading the County ECS for first responders. The cost of FirstNet [redacted] subscription rate plans and contracts to the county and first responders would add significant expense to the current funding schedule projected for committed ECS upgrades and other higher priority County financial obligations. The current economic climate due to COVID-19 and the recent wildfires has added stress to an already overburdened county budget. FirstNet funding from Mendocino County seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. Is there even a current Mendocino Co. plan to fund and incorporate FirstNet?

The stated objective that this project and AT&T will provide FirstNet services for first responders on the proposed tower (pgs. 2, 9 of permit) is misleading and a false statement. If the Board of Supervisors supports

and approves this cell tower facility based on the above stated permit objective by AT&T, and the fact that it will improve county emergency services, your decision will lack sufficient evidence to support it. FirstNet will not be a guaranteed service provided by AT&T without a contracted subscription at significant cost to Mendocino County.

During the 2017 Mendocino Co. fire, cell towers were shut down. Land lines and satellite phones were the only communication option because cell towers expose fire risks. This fact was supported by FirstNet representative Chris Baker who told me that “the aerial route and commercial antennas on cell towers are shut down during wildfires because fiber burns up”. This tower will sit in a “donut hole” on the Nixon property in a very high fire danger area. Dead Pines and unabated dry grasses are visible from both county roads near the site. AT&T indicated in their Coverage Map Analysis “anticipated coverage” will likely be “estimated and not guaranteed” beyond a very tight ring into Pine Mountain Estates, to the west of my property. The 12 antennas’ maximum height will be level with my home. Rising topography on and above my property is covered in pines that extend west/northwest to and beyond Ridgewood Rd. These 90 ft pines will likely block coverage to properties nestled further below the trees, on Chinquapin and Ridgewood, where some petitioners want a tower citing “safety” reasons. Topography and vegetation, specifically pine trees, are noted impediments to cell phone reception. As noted on our Location Study Map, AT&T would offer potential “in transit” coverage to these properties. These residents would be better served by one of the other broadband/cell service providers successfully functioning on Pine Mountain’s west side: Verizon, ViaSat, US Cellular. The tower’s proposed site will not reliably cover a broad “in building” LTE service ring.

The County Emergency Services Microwave loop system surrounding the county, on the 4 existing mountain towers reportedly reaches all but a very few remote places. When committed upgrades occur, its redundancy will manage safety needs. Recently, County ECS effectively, notified Pine Mountain residents when an emergency “shelter in place” order was given by the Sheriff.

There has been a considerable amount of seismic activity on Pine Mountain in the last three months. 18 or more earthquakes ranging from 2.0 to 4.0 magnitude, with multiple aftershocks, have been registered by the USGS with an epicenter on Bear Canyon Road, in Pine Mountain, less than a mile from the proposed facility site. [redacted], who lives .42 miles from and in direct line with the tower site had a water pipe break during the October 7, 2020, series of earthquakes. The risk factor seismic activity might have on a cell tower placed in the proposed location, less than a mile from the epicenter of these recent earthquakes, should be evaluated with an EIR. (See seismic activity chart below)

This facility would be a harmful broadband/wireless alternative for my family and my Pine Mountain neighbors’ visual aesthetic; “peace, comfort and general welfare”. Please deny the Major Use Permit U_2019-0011 (Nixon) and reject its Negative Declaration (ND).

Linda Cardana-Gabrielson