



SPECIAL FAIRFAX TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 6, 2024
PREPARED FOR: Mayor and Town Council
PREPARED BY: Heather Abrams, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Authorize the Mayor to Draft and Send a Letter to the California Public Utilities Commission Regarding Opposition to AT&T's Applications A23-03-003 and A23-03-002 for Targeted Relief from its Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) Obligation, and to Relinquish its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) Designation

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Mayor to draft and send a letter to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in opposition to AT&T's Applications A23-03-003 and A23-03-002 for Targeted Relief from its Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) Obligation, and to relinquish its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) Designation

BACKGROUND

On March 3, 2024, AT&T submitted two applications to the CPUC, one for targeted relief from its carrier of last resort obligation and certain associated tariff obligations ([A23-03-003](#)), and the other to relinquish its eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation ([A23-03-002](#)).

Landlines have historically been a reliable source of communication and a lifeline for individuals without access to cellular or internet services. They are particularly important for the elderly, disabled, and residents in areas with poor cellular coverage. AT&T's proposal to discontinue these services poses a significant risk to these vulnerable populations.

DISCUSSION

If the CPUC approves AT&T's request to relinquish its status as the "Carrier of Last Resort" (COLR), meaning it would no longer be the sole carrier required by law to offer service to any requesting resident within its service area, and consequently discontinues landline services, a portion of Fairfax's residents will be left without a reliable communication method. This is especially critical in areas of Fairfax where cell phone reception is either unavailable or inconsistent, emphasizing the vital need for continued access to landline services for dependable connectivity.

Given the significance of this matter and its potential impacts on the Fairfax community, staff recommends the Town Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter of opposition to the CPUC for AT&T's applications. The Town's opposition stresses the need for comprehensive communication services that cater to all residents' needs.

Mayor Barbara Coler has requested that the Town send a letter to the CPUC in opposition to AT&T's applications listed above, and Mayor Coler has offered to draft the letter. Letters representing the Town are typically signed by the Mayor.

FISCAL IMPACT

Postage costs and staff time needed to send the requested letter.