

The County of Yuba

Community Development and Services Agency



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Community Development and Services Agency, Ian Scott

SUBJECT: Community Development and Services: Board Approve Chair's Signature on Letter of Opposition to AT&T's Application with California Public Utilities Commission to Withdraw as Carrier of Last Resort Statewide

DATE: February 27, 2024

NUMBER: 67/2024

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve Chair's signature on Letter of Opposition to AT&T's Application with California Public Utilities Commission to withdraw as Carrier of Last Resort statewide.

Background & Discussion

American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) has recently filed an application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), otherwise known as Proceeding A2303003, to request permission to withdraw as the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) for the vast majority of its service territory within California. As COLR, AT&T is required to offer Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) upon request to all residential and business customers. POTS has a uniform set of minimum service standards and regulations that does not extend to new technologies that provide similar service, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). While it is not unusual for one company to replace another as a COLR, AT&T is requesting permission to abandon its COLR obligation without finding a replacement.

If approved by the CPUC, over 580,000 affected AT&T customers would be left with fewer options in terms of choice, quality, and affordability. Alternative services, such as VoIP and wireless, have no obligation to serve a customer or to provide equivalent services to AT&T landline customers, including no obligation to provide reliable access to 9-1-1 or LifeLine 2-1-1 programs. The County relies upon these service options to facilitate emergency response, countywide. The exhibit included in this agenda item is a map of AT&T's proposed COLR withdraw within Yuba County. This map leaves little area unaffected, with the vast majority of local territory vulnerable to residential and business service

cancellation in as little as six months. The map also includes a second color code that designates areas in which AT&T is attempting to receive permission to withdraw from at a later date without being subject to further CPUC approvals through a formal proceeding process.

It is the opinion of staff that AT&T COLR withdraw is inappropriate at this time, as replacement technologies for POTS are insufficient to replace the reliability and usefulness of this legacy technology to support County Office of Emergency Services and Sherriff's Office operations in times of emergency response. A CPUC decision approving AT&T's Application would have the effect of increasing the risks to life and property within Yuba County.

Committee Action:

None. This request is brought directly to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Attachments

AT&T Carrier of Last Resort Withdraw Letter of Opposition Yuba County