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**RE: POLLP01 - Pollock Pines - CUP24-0013 - 1/22/2026 Planning Commission Agenda Item 2 - 26-0095 - Letter from Site's Property Owner**

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**From** Douglas Baxter <douglas.baxter@sbcglobal.net>  
**Date** Tue 1/20/2026 11:45 AM  
**To** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>  
**Cc** Steven C. Osborn <Craig.Osborn@edcgov.us>; 'Frank Schabarum' <frank.schabarum123@gmail.com>

 1 attachment (4 MB)

2026 Jan 19comments to Planning Commision on cell tower.docx;

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Please replace the letter I sent in the below email with the attached letter from Kay and Doug Baxter dated January 19, 2026. We updated some comments to reduce visual impacts.

I, Doug Baxter, still want to speak to the Planning Commission for the subject agenda item.

Doug and Kay Baxter

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**From:** Douglas Baxter <douglas.baxter@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 19, 2026 12:07 PM  
**To:** planning@edcgov.us  
**Cc:** Craig.Osborn@edcgov.us; 'Frank Schabarum' <frank.schabarum123@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: POLLP01 - Pollock Pines - CUP24-0013 - 1/22/2026 Planning Commission Agenda Item 2 - 26-0095 - Letter from Site's Property Owner

Hello,

We are the property owners for the site of the proposed cell tower.

Please make sure our comments in the attachment are provided to the Planning Commissioners for the subject agenda item.

We also desire to speak at the 1/22/25 meeting. What do we need to do to sign up to speak?

Thank you for your help.

Doug and Kay Baxter  
5005 Loch Leven Dr.  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726  
530-644-4311

El Dorado County  
Planning Commission  
Building C  
2850 Fairland Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

January 19, 2026

Subject: Conditional Use Permit CUP24-0013/AT&T Monopine and Related Waiver  
5005 Loch Leven Dr., Submitted by Public Safety Towers, LLC.

Planning Commission,

We are the property owners for both the proposed site and the Alternate Site. We need to work together on a solution because the project is needed and we, the site owners will not approve the recommended Staff Alternative site because of the extreme impacts to us and our neighbors.

We request that during the process of discussing this permit, that we do not forget that the underlying purpose of this project is to significantly improve the public safety and communication capabilities in our neighborhood and the Sly Park area. Currently, over 90% of the area in and around Sly Park Hills has poor or no wireless communication from Verizon, AT&T, or T-Mobile. AT&T, who handles the FirstNet system for fire and emergency responses for this area has 98.45% poor or no service, i.e. no reliable service in this or our nearby areas. A cooperative response to these problems is essential for our safety and wellbeing. The requested approvals of the setback waiver and the Conditional Use Permit are essential to solving this public safety problem.

An important and very strong letter of support from the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association, dated October 7, 2025 was not read, considered, or addressed by the Planning Department in the preparation of their staff report and analysis. The staff report doesn't mention or analyze the importance of this cell tower to overcoming safety concerns for this part of the County. This attached critical letter of support for addressing public safety was received by the County in an email sent to them in October, 2025, but inadvertently was not opened and read until January 14, 2026. As such, the following critical information in the Fire Chiefs Association (FCA) letter was not addressed in the Staff Analysis, including items like:

1. "FCA support for these projects stems from the recognition that a lack of wireless coverage is a public safety issue."
2. "Gaps in wireless coverage limit or prevent routine communication and access to critical services. Without reliable wireless networks, people struggle to contact 911 during emergencies, resulting in delayed response times for medical, fire, or law enforcement assistance." Our area has huge gaps in wireless coverage.
3. "The local fire districts, USFS and CalFire all rely on robust cellular coverage for everything from routine matters to major emergencies and disasters."
4. "In summary, wireless coverage is a critical resource that our personnel rely on daily. El Dorado County has an extensive wildland fire history. Most recently, the Caldor Fire burned up to and around the southern side of Jenkinson Lake - the area that this proposed FirstNet project is designed to provide vital wireless coverage."
5. "As demonstrated in (FCA letter) Image 1, there is a significant gap in the wireless coverage. As a result, there is either very poor or no coverage whatsoever in the Jenkinson Lake and Sly Park

Recreation Area. Image 2 shows the quality of coverage in Sly Park. It is essential to acknowledge that none of the three major wireless carriers has reliable ("good") coverage in this area. Most importantly, AT&T/FirstNet currently has the worst coverage, **making this project all the more crucial for public safety.** Note: AT&T is the authorized sole carrier for the FirstNet safety system.

The support, help and Planning Commission approval is essential in advancing the solution for these crucial public safety issues.

Section 130.40.130(F)(2), of the Development Standards and Design Guidelines, states that ... "Setback waivers may be considered by the discretionary permit authority, as needed, to allow flexibility in landscaping and siting the facility in a location that best reduces the visual impact on the surrounding area and roads." That is what we are proposing.



Throughout the last year and a half, we have worked towards solving the critical telecommunication problems within our area while achieving the absolute minimal visual and other adverse impacts from this project. The applicant's proposal does just that. However, the Staff's Alternative site would greatly increase visual impacts.

The proposed telecommunications facility site is clearly the best site to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area and roads compared to the staff proposed alternative location. The proposed site makes

best use of existing tall trees to screen the project facilities from being seen directly by nearby homes. Moving the proposed facilities even a few feet or even 100 feet to the north causes a huge increase in their visual impact to homes to the west. A home on southside of Rainbow Trail would have their view to the northwest somewhat impacted and we, the property owners, would be open to shifting the proposed site somewhat to the south-southeast so that existing trees can better screen this visual impact. The shift would also move the monopine somewhat further back from Rainbow Trail. In contrast, Staff proposes



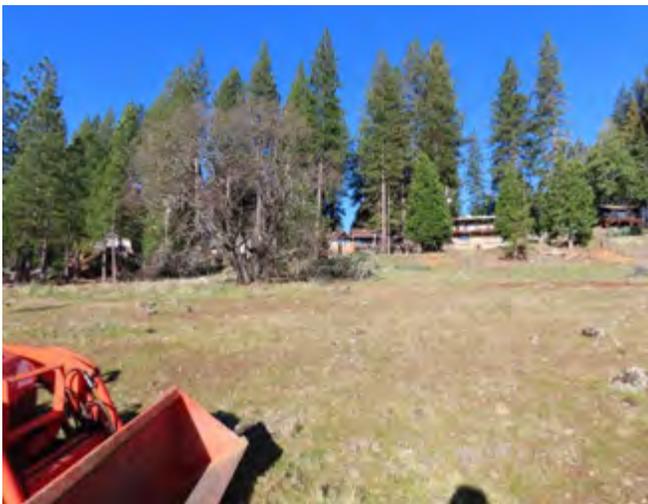
to put the cell tower in the middle of the above meadow next to 12 homes on Loch Leven that now have great views of this meadow and mountains. The above pictures are looking directly at Staff's Alternate site as viewed from Loch Leven Drive and a residence at the far north end of the potentially affected meadow. The Alternate site's long access road during winter heavy snow conditions would delay making any need repairs or maintaining diesel fuel for the backup generator.

We, the property owners and the applicant have taken all potential impacts to the neighbors and neighborhood very seriously and have tried to eliminate problems where possible or at least minimize them. The proposed site is the only location where nearby trees provide major screening of the site facilities.

The three photos were taken by me as I stood at the staff's proposed alternate site for the cell tower facility. These homes are on Loch Leven next to staff's proposed alternate site. Note, that there is little or no visual screening of the home entrances, primary view windows, decks, or porches which all face the staff's proposed alternate site. From these homes, the unspotted views of the meadow and the mountains beyond them would be ruined.



Next to Loch Leven is a 12-foot-high steep road embankment. Getting to the Alternative site off of Loch Leven would mean importing a lot of fill to build the elevated transition section for the access road. An equally unsightly several hundred-foot-long access road with a turnaround area would be needed. All of this would greatly increase the visual impacts to the road and residences for the Staff Alternate site. It would also cause impacts to drainage patterns for the meadow which have not had an environmental review.



The staff alternative site massively increases the visibility to residences as compared to the proposed project. The staff alternative may be good for just having a comparative discussion, but it is impossible to implement due to discussions with neighboring property owners along Loch Leven Drive that would be looking at it through their front room view windows. The alternate site would also be unacceptability to us, the land owner, for these same reasons. (see photos – tractor marks the location of Staff Alternate site).

As such, we as **the property owners will not approve this alternative due to the massive impacts to both us and at least 11 close neighbors along Loch Leven.**”

The view to the east along the section of Loch Leven Road is spectacular. People walking or driving on this section of Loch Leven love the view. Last year this view along Loch Leven was enhanced even more by opening up the view as PG&E removed a dozen large trees and also by our neighbors helping to remove large manzanita bushes and brush to reduce the threat of fires. A cell tower in the middle of this Loch Leven meadow would now especially stick out and be a gross eye sore to the neighborhood. In comparison, the Rainbow view is brief, common, obstructed by numerous power poles, sagging communication lines, guy wires, transformers, and homes with numerous cars and trailers in their front yards. The Rainbow view also includes a large manmade fill area,



The picture to the right shows the view that would be impacted by the Alternate site as viewed from my (property owner’s) deck looking north. In the center of the picture is where the cell tower facility would be located under the staff’s alternative proposal. Again, we won’t approve the staff’s proposal alternative due to huge visual view impacts to us and our neighbors.

“Staff Analysis” is in conflict with findings in the CEQA Initial Study environmental document. The Initial Study for the CEQA Negative Declaration, says there are no significant impacts for the visual aesthetics. Section 3.1.2 c) says,

“Based on the photo simulations of the view looking east from the west intersection of Loch Leven Dr. and Rainbow Tr. Shows the tower blending in with existing tall pine trees. The view looking north from the clearest view along Cayuga Rd. shows only the top portion of the tower blending in with the tops of other pine trees. This tower is most visible when looking at the site from the nearest point along Rainbow Tr. However, **there is not an expectation of high-quality scenic views on this roadway and the monopine would not be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area.**”

However, the Staff Analysis continually pushes the false narrative that the Rainbow Road visual impacts are a major thing and very significant. These visual impacts are primarily significant from the perspective of needing to show that the proposed project visual impacts are less than alternatives, such as the Staff Alternative. This letter and the Applicants submittal on visual impacts does just that, the proposed project has the least visual impacts. Alternatives have been considered and the proposed site has the least visual impacts on residences and roads. Interesting, the Staff Alternate site would still be seen from Rainbow (to a lesser degree) plus have extreme visual impacts to the beautiful view from Loch Leven Drive. AND the staff alternative would also have grossly unacceptable visual impacts to Loch Leven Drive and at least 12 more residences along Loch Leven which would be of a magnitude many times greater than the proposed site.

As one reads the staff report for the consideration of the proposed waiver and Conditional Use Permit, it is clear that the report lacks balance. It lacks any discussion on public safety needs. Repeatedly the material is presented from a justification perspective for staff recommendation and do not present the information in a neutral perspective for the Planning Commission to have a fair look at both sides of the



The photo that shows the Staff Alternate site (the meadow), also shows that there is not enough approvable area to have “multiple variations”. Staff Alternative is proposing to tie up 3 to 4 more acres of my property for bureaucracy even with great impacts to Loch Leven road and residences.

- d) “The location would minimize visual impact for those residents of this single ingress/egress neighborhood.”

COMMENT: Inaccurate. From Rainbow you will still be able to see the monopine from both the proposed site and the Staff Alternate site since there are no trees between the proposed site and the alternate site. As stated before, we are open to a slight shifting of the proposed site to avoid any significant visual impact to nearby residences. Again, staff’s environmental document states less than significant road views, i.e. “there is not an expectation of high-quality scenic views on this roadway and the monopine would not be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area.” However, the visual impacts from the Staff Alternate site are massive when looking from homes and the Loch Leven Drive, especially since there is very little screening and most homes would see all of the access road, monopine, wood fence and support facility.

- e) “Tree canopy at the Applicant Proposed location is not meaningfully more than canopy at the Staff Analyzed Alternative Siting Area.”

COMMENT: This comment lacks perspective. The limited trees near the proposed site have been strategically considered and utilized to block the residential views of the proposed facilities, especially if site is shifted somewhat to the SSE. However, the alternate site just used an outdated aerial photo, drew a circle and put an X in the middle without considering tree location or the fact that there are now far fewer trees along Loch Leven due to the PG&E tree removal work. “The applicant did not include a rationale for not considering this alternative location.”

COMMENT: This is not a fair or accurate statement. There is correspondence from the applicant discussing their efforts to consider other sites. The Staff Alternate site was considered at the very beginning of negotiation with PST, Inc and we all agreed that the visual impacts were too great.

The County’s General Plan itself gives guidance on keeping relevant factors in perspective. In its section entitled “USING THE PLAN” it says,

“In implementing the General Plan, it must be applied comprehensively. No single component (map, goal, objective, policy, or map) can stand alone in the review and evaluation of a development project.” ... “It is the task of the decision makers, consistent with State law, to weigh project benefits and consequences up against the General Plan as a whole. The merits of a project should ultimately be determined by its consistency with goals, objectives, and policies of all the elements and the land use map.”

We have provided the documentation needed for a fair and balanced analysis to obtain the waiver and the Use Permit. These approvals are needed to address the critical public safety communication needs for this area as articulated in the October 7, 2025 letter from the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association. The Staff Report does not even mention these critical safety needs and obviously does not consider them in balance with other aspects of this project.

El Dorado County’s goals and objectives to obtain and improve public safety need to be a powerful part of the decision-making process and in deciding what is a reasonable level of documentation of visual impacts.

The endless search for a perfect site needs to come to an end. The proposed site clearly, “best reduces the visual impact on the surrounding area and roads.” The proposed site has been configured to have minimal

visual impacts and far less visual impacts than does the Staff Alternative site. The Staff Alternative site is not acceptable to the property owner or those living on Loch Leven. It is time to move forward so that all the hundreds of residences in the area can have improved public safety and to bring us out of cellular darkness. Please approve the waiver and permit to improve safety and our quality of life. Thank you.

Doug and Kay Baxter  
(Property owners for both sites)  
5005 Loch Leven Drive  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726

Sent by email

Attachment: El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association letter – 3 pages



## EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

501 Pleasant Valley Road, Diamond Springs, CA 95619

October 7, 2025

El Dorado County – Planning Division  
Building C  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

SUBJECT: Letter of Support – FirstNet Wireless Telecommunications Tower in Sly Park

Planning Commission,

The purpose of this letter is to express the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association (FCA) support for projects that enhance the wireless connectivity within the County. We understand that you are evaluating a proposed FirstNet/AT&T wireless telecommunications facility located at 5005 Loch Leven in Pollock Pines. While we understand that there are many planning and community issues that you must work through when approving a specific cell site, we wanted to make sure that the El Dorado County Planning Commission understands that the FCA supports the "global concept" of enhancing the wireless connectivity within the County.

The FCA support for these projects stems from the recognition that a lack of wireless coverage is a public safety issue. As of 2023, 76.0% of adults and 86.8% of children live in wireless-only households<sup>1</sup>, and approximately 90% of 911 calls are made from wireless devices<sup>2</sup>. Gaps in wireless coverage limit or prevent routine communication and access to critical services. Without reliable wireless networks, people struggle to contact 911 during emergencies, resulting in delayed response times for medical, fire, or law enforcement assistance. It also limits access to real-time alerts about natural disasters, severe weather, or other threats, leaving communities vulnerable.

Poor wireless coverage also impedes coordination among first responders. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission identified that public safety agencies struggled with interoperable communications, as their radio systems often operated on different frequencies, and the wireless networks were completely saturated by the public, preventing effective coordination. Major disasters since then have further exposed these gaps, with first responders often unable to communicate reliably due to network congestion and a lack of dedicated infrastructure.

To address this, in 2012, the US Congress created the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN), also known as FirstNet, by adopting the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, Public Law 112-96. This action created the FirstNet Authority within the US Department of Commerce and dedicated wireless spectrum in Band 14 solely for public safety use. In 2017, the FirstNet Authority

entered into a public-private partnership with AT&T to build and operate the network. This one-of-a-kind partnership exists to deliver a secure, scalable, and resilient communication system tailored to the unique needs of first responders, improving coordination and response effectiveness during disasters and routine operations<sup>18</sup>.

The local fire districts, USFS and CalFire all rely on robust cellular coverage for everything from routine matters to major emergencies and disasters. The fire service relies on wireless coverage to distribute and receive dispatch information, pre-arrival information, and intelligence; GPS routing to emergencies; emergency notifications; evacuation management; medical device telemetry connections with medical facilities; and medical orders and reporting. In summary, wireless coverage is a critical resource that our personnel rely on daily.

El Dorado County has an extensive wildland fire history. Most recently, the Caldor Fire burned up to and around the southern side of Jenkinson Lake – the area that this proposed FirstNet project is designed to provide vital wireless coverage.

As demonstrated in Image 1, there is a significant gap in the wireless coverage. As a result, there is either very poor or no coverage whatsoever in the Jenkinson Lake and Sly Park Recreation Area.

Image 2 shows the quality of coverage in Sly Park. It is essential to acknowledge that none of the three major wireless carriers has reliable (“good”) coverage in this area. Most importantly, AT&T/FirstNet currently has the worst coverage, making this project all the more crucial for public safety.

For the reasons outlined above, the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association supports projects that enhance the cellular coverage for all our firefighters.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Cordero

10/07/2025  
Date

El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association,  
Chair

Image 1 – Existing Coverage

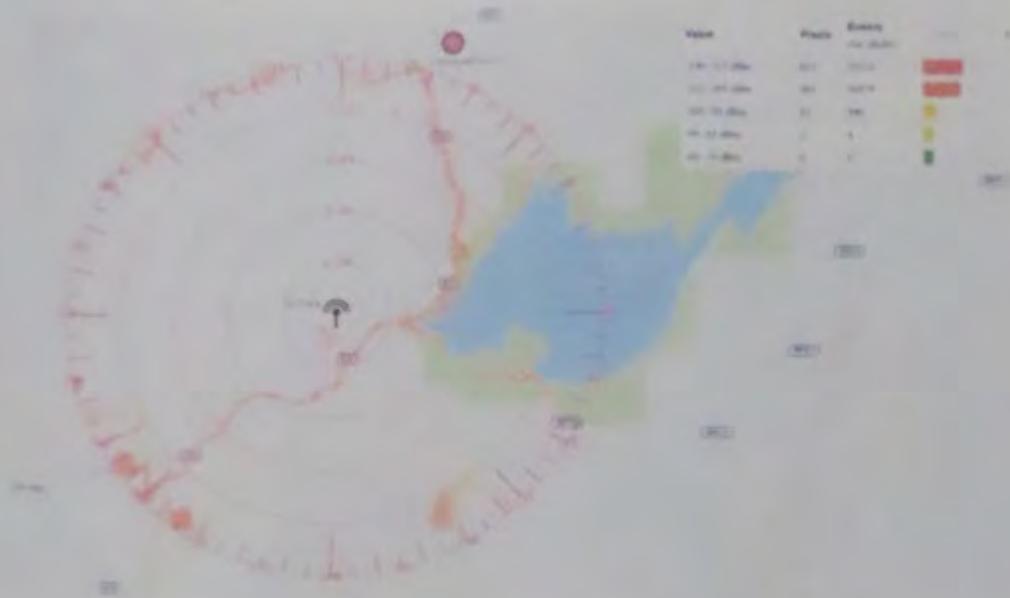
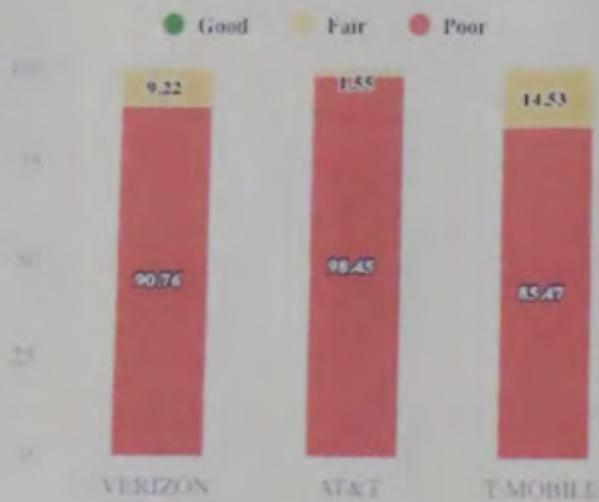


Image 2 – Coverage Quality

Situation in the area by carrier



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless202406.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Emergency Number Association, <https://www.nena.org/page/911Statistics>

<sup>3</sup> FirstNet Authority, <https://www.firstnet.gov/network>



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**Re: POLLP01 - Pollock Pines - CUP24-0013 - 1/22/2026 Planning Commission Agenda Item 2 - 26-0095 - Letter from Site's Property Owner**

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**From** Douglas Baxter <douglas.baxter@sbcglobal.net>  
**Date** Mon 1/19/2026 12:10 PM  
**To** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>  
**Cc** Steven C. Osborn <Craig.Osborn@edcgov.us>; 'Frank Schabarum' <frank.schabarum123@gmail.com>

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Doug and Kay Baxter  
5005 Loch Leven Dr.  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726  
530-644-4311

El Dorado County  
Planning Commission  
Building C  
2850 Fairland Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

January 15, 2026

Subject: Conditional Use Permit CUP24-0013/AT&T Monopine and Related Waiver  
5005 Loch Leven Dr., Submitted by Public Safety Towers, LLC.

Planning Commission,

We are the property owners for the proposed site for the cell tower. We request that during the process of discussing this permit, that we all remember that the underlying purpose of this project is to significantly improve the public safety and communication capabilities in our neighborhood and the Sly Park area. Currently, over 90% of the area in and around Sly Park Hills has poor or no wireless communication from Verizon, AT&T, or T-Mobile. AT&T, who handles the FirstNet system for fire and emergency responses for this area has 98.45% poor or no service, i.e. no reliable service in this or our nearby areas. A cooperative response to these problems is essential for our safety and wellbeing. The requested approvals of the setback waiver and the Conditional Use Permit are essential to solving this public safety problem.

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2. "Gaps in wireless coverage limit or prevent routine communication and access to critical services. Without reliable wireless networks, people struggle to contact 911 during emergencies, resulting in delayed response times for medical, fire, or law enforcement assistance." Our area has huge gaps in wireless coverage.
3. "The local fire districts, USFS and CalFire all rely on robust cellular coverage for everything from routine matters to major emergencies and disasters."
4. "In summary, wireless coverage is a critical resource that our personnel rely on daily. El Dorado County has an extensive wildland fire history. Most recently, the Caldor Fire burned up to and around the southern side of Jenkinson Lake - the area that this proposed FirstNet project is designed to provide vital wireless coverage."
5. "As demonstrated in (FCA letter) Image 1, there is a significant gap in the wireless coverage. As a result, there is either very poor or no coverage whatsoever in the Jenkinson Lake and Sly Park Recreation Area. Image 2 shows the quality of coverage in Sly Park. It is essential to acknowledge that none of the three major wireless carriers has reliable ("good") coverage in this area. Most

importantly, AT&T/FirstNet currently has the worst coverage, **making this project all the more crucial for public safety.**” Note: AT&T is the authorized sole carrier for the FirstNet safety system.

The support, help and Planning Commission approval is essential in advancing the solution for these crucial public safety issues.

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Throughout the last year and a half, we have worked towards solving the critical telecommunication problems within our area while achieving the absolute minimal visual and other adverse impacts from this project. The applicant’s proposal does just that. However, the Staff’s Alternative site would greatly increase visual impacts.

The proposed telecommunications facility site is clearly the best site to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area and roads compared to the staff proposed alternative location. The proposed site makes best use of existing tall trees to screen the project facilities from being seen directly by nearby homes. Moving the proposed facilities even a few feet or even 100 feet to the north causes a huge increase in their visual impact to homes to the west.



The Alternate Site will damage this unspotted beautiful view.

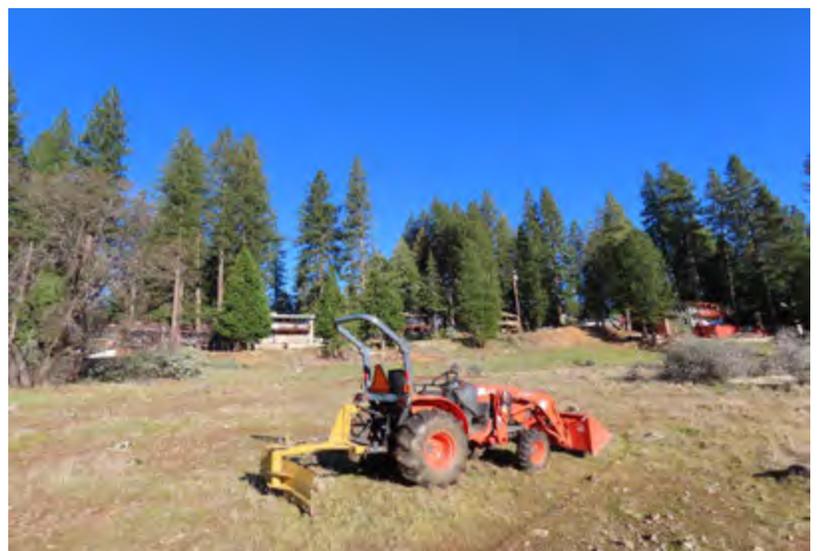
Staff proposes to put the cell tower in the middle of the above meadow next to 12 homes on Loch Leven that now have great views of this meadow and mountains. The above pictures are looking directly at Staff’s Alternate site as viewed from Loch Leven Drive and a residence at the far north end of the potentially affected meadow. The Alternate site’s long access road during winter heavy snow conditions would delay making any need repairs or maintaining diesel fuel for the backup generator.

We, the property owners and the applicant have taken all potential impacts to the neighbors and neighborhood very seriously and have tried to eliminate problems where possible or at least minimize them. The proposed site is the only location where nearby trees provide screening of the site facilities.

The three photos to the right were taken by me as I stood at the staff's proposed alternate site for the cell tower facility. These homes are on Loch Leven next to staff's proposed alternate site. Note, that there is little or no visual screening of the home entrances, primary view windows, decks, or porches which all face the staff's proposed alternate site. From these homes, the unspotted views of the meadow and the mountains beyond them would be ruined.

Next to Loch Leven is a 12-foot-high steep road embankment. Getting to the Alternative site off of Loch Leven would mean importing a lot of fill to build the elevated transition section for the access road. An equally unsightly several hundred-foot-long access road with a turnaround area would be needed. All of this would greatly increase the visual impacts to the road and residences for the Staff Alternate site. It would also cause impacts to drainage patterns for the meadow which have not had an environmental review.

The staff alternative site massively increases the visibility to residences as compared to the proposed project. The staff alternative may be good for just having a comparative discussion, but it is impossible to implement due to discussions with neighboring property owners along Loch Leven Drive that would be looking at it through their front room view windows. The alternate site would also be unacceptability to us, the land owner, for these same reasons. (see photos – tractor marks the location of Staff Alternate site). As such, we as **the property owners will not approve this alternative due to the massive impacts to both us and at least 11 close neighbors along Loch Leven.**



The view to the east along the section of Loch Leven Road is spectacular. People walking or driving on this section of Loch Leven love the view. Last year this view along Loch Leven was enhanced even more by opening up the view as PG&E removed a dozen large trees and also by our neighbors helping to remove large manzanita bushes and brush to reduce the threat of fires. A cell tower in the middle of this Loch Leven meadow would now especially stick out and be a gross eye sore to the neighborhood. In comparison, the Rainbow view is brief, common, obstructed by numerous power poles, sagging communication lines, guy wires, transformers, and homes with numerous cars and trailers in their front yards. The Rainbow view also includes a large manmade fill area,

The picture to the right shows the view that would be impacted by the Alternate site as viewed from my (property owner's) deck looking north. In the center of the picture is where the cell tower facility would be located under the staff's alternative proposal. Again, we won't approve the staff's proposal alternative due to huge visual view impacts to us and our neighbors.



“Staff Analysis” is in conflict with findings in the CEQA Initial Study environmental document. The Initial Study for the CEQA Negative Declaration, says there are no significant impacts for the visual aesthetics. Section 3.1.2 c) says,

“Based on the photo simulations of the view looking east from the west intersection of Loch Leven Dr. and Rainbow Tr. Shows the tower blending in with existing tall pine trees. The view looking north from the clearest view along Cayuga Rd. shows only the top portion of the tower blending in with the tops of other pine trees. This tower is most visible when looking at the site from the nearest point along Rainbow Tr. However, **there is not an expectation of high-quality scenic views on this roadway and the monopine would not be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area.**”

However, the Staff Analysis continually pushes the false narrative that the Rainbow Road visual impacts are a major thing and very significant. These visual impacts are primarily significant from the perspective of needing to show that the proposed project visual impacts are less than alternatives, such as the Staff Alternative. This letter and the Applicants submittal on visual impacts does just that, the proposed project has the least visual impacts. Alternatives have been considered and the proposed site has the least visual impacts on residences and roads. Interesting, the Staff Alternate site would still be seen from Rainbow (to a lesser degree) plus have extreme visual impacts to the beautiful view from Loch Leven Drive. AND the staff alternative would also have grossly unacceptable visual impacts to Loch Leven Drive and at least 12 more residences along Loch Leven which would be of a magnitude many times greater than the proposed site.

As one reads the staff report for the consideration of the proposed waiver and Conditional Use Permit, it is clear that the report lacks balance. It lacks any discussion on public safety needs. Repeatedly the material is presented from a justification perspective for staff recommendation and do not present the information in a neutral perspective for the Planning Commission to have a fair look at both sides of the issues. A good example of this bias is in Staff's presentation today and specifically the slide that read at the end of the Staff Report, “Staff Analysis”. This is shown below with my comments.

### “Staff Analysis”

- 1) “An alternative location appears to exist within the site that meets all setback requirements; and”  
COMMENT: The Staff Alternative site would have extreme visual impacts Loch Leven views and to

at least 12 residences, including us (the property owners) who will not approve the Alternate site location. Property owner and Loch Leven residences were never contacted except for the general public notices which did not mention this alternative was being considered.

- 2) “The Staff-Analyzed Alternative Siting Area location includes the following considerations:  
a) The location similarly does not have tree canopy.”

COMMENT: Not even remotely true!!!



Proposed Project

Staff's Alternate Site

Which Site Location Would Have the Most Visual Impact?

The Proposed Site is carefully situated within the limited tree canopy resulting in essentially no visual impacts to nearby homes and the limited visual impact to Rainbow Trail, which per the environmental document is a limited view where, **“there is not an expectation of high-quality scenic views on this roadway and the monopine would not be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area.”** In contrast, the view from Loch Leven Drive is amazing and the Staff Alternate site would have a huge negative visual view impact to both the road and to many homes that look down on the meadow.

- b) “The location is potentially 60’ to 100’ higher in elevation.”

COMMENT: Page 19 of the staff report says the Staff Alternate site would be only 40-60 higher in elevation. We believe that the Staff’s Alternate site would likely be only around 40-50 feet higher. Top of tower would likely be the same elevation at both sites. A 100-foot +/- tower at the alternate site would still have a huge esthetic and visual impact to Loch Leven drivers and to its residences.

- c) “The location has ample space capable of hosting the proposed leasing area dimensions in multiple variations.”

COMMENT: Again, staff seems to have tunnel vision on finding a site that does not need a waiver. The photo that shows the Staff Alternate site, also shows that there is not enough approvable area to have “multiple variations”. Staff Alternative is proposing to tie up 3 to 4 more acres of my property for bureaucracy even with great impacts to Loch Leven road and residences.

- d) “The location would minimize visual impact for those residents of this single ingress/egress neighborhood.”

COMMENT: Inaccurate. From Rainbow you will still be able to see the monopine from both the proposed site and the Staff Alternate site since there are no trees between the proposed site and the alternate site. The proposed site has carefully been located so that no homes see any significant part of the proposed facilities and there would be only brief view from Rainbow. Again, staff’s environmental document states less than significant road views, i.e. “there is not an expectation of

high-quality scenic views on this roadway and the monopine would not be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the area.” To the contrary, the visual impacts from the Staff Alternate site are massive when looking from homes and the road, especially since there is very little screening and most homes would see all of the access road, monopine, wood fence and support facility.

- e) “Tree canopy at the Applicant Proposed location is not meaningfully more than canopy at the Staff Analyzed Alternative Siting Area.”

COMMENT: This comment lacks perspective. The limited trees near the proposed site have been strategically considered and utilized to block the residential views of the proposed facilities. To the contrary, the alternate site just used an old aerial photo, drew a circle and put an X in the middle without considering tree location or the fact that there are now far fewer trees long Loch Leven due to the PG&E tree removal work. The tree just north of the Alternate site is not there anymore. The reduced tree canopy and lack of tree location was not used to consider comparative visual impacts.

- 3) “The applicant did not include a rationale for not considering this alternative location.”

COMMENT: This is not a fair or accurate statement. There is correspondence from the applicant discussing their efforts to consider other sites. The Staff Alternate site was considered at the very beginning of negotiation with PST, Inc and we decided by all that the visual impacts were too great.

The County’s General Plan itself gives guidance on keeping relevant factors in perspective. In its section entitled “USING THE PLAN” it says,

“In implementing the General Plan, it must be applied comprehensively. No single component (map, goal, objective, policy, or map) can stand alone in the review and evaluation of a development project.” ... “It is the task of the decision makers, consistent with State law, to weigh project benefits and consequences up against the General Plan as a whole. The merits of a project should ultimately be determined by its consistency with goals, objectives, and policies of all the elements and the land use map.”

We have provided the documentation needed for a fair and balanced analysis to obtain the waiver and the Use Permit. These approvals are needed to address the critical public safety communication needs for this area as articulated in the October 7, 2025 letter from the El dorado County Fire Chiefs Association. The Staff Report does not even mention these critical safety needs and obviously does not consider them in balance with other aspects of this project.

El Dorado County’s goals and objectives to obtain and improve public safety need to be a powerful part of the decision-making process and in deciding what is a reasonable level of documentation of visual impacts. The endless, search for a perfect site needs to come to an end. The proposed site clearly, “best reduces the visual impact on the surrounding area and roads.” The proposed site has been configured to have minimal visual impacts and far less visual impacts than does the Staff Alternative site. The Staff Alternative site is not acceptable to the property owner or those living on Loch Leven. It is time to move forward so that all the hundreds of residences in the area can have improved public safety and to bring us out of cellular darkness. Please approve the waiver and permit to improve safety and our quality of life. Thank you.

Doug and Kay Baxter  
(Property owners for both sites)  
5005 Loch Leven Drive  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726

Attachment: El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association letter – 3 pages



## EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

501 Pleasant Valley Road, Diamond Springs, CA 95619

October 7, 2025

El Dorado County – Planning Division  
Building C  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

**SUBJECT:** Letter of Support – FirstNet Wireless Telecommunications Tower in Sly Park

Planning Commission,

The purpose of this letter is to express the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association (FCA) support for projects that enhance the wireless connectivity within the County. We understand that you are evaluating a proposed FirstNet/AT&T wireless telecommunications facility located at 5005 Loch Leven in Pollock Pines. While we understand that there are many planning and community issues that you must work through when approving a specific cell site, we wanted to make sure that the El Dorado County Planning Commission understands that the FCA supports the "global concept" of enhancing the wireless connectivity within the County.

The FCA support for these projects stems from the recognition that a lack of wireless coverage is a public safety issue. As of 2023, 76.0% of adults and 86.8% of children live in wireless-only households<sup>1</sup>, and approximately 90% of 911 calls are made from wireless devices<sup>2</sup>. Gaps in wireless coverage limit or prevent routine communication and access to critical services. Without reliable wireless networks, people struggle to contact 911 during emergencies, resulting in delayed response times for medical, fire, or law enforcement assistance. It also limits access to real-time alerts about natural disasters, severe weather, or other threats, leaving communities vulnerable.

Poor wireless coverage also impedes coordination among first responders. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission identified that public safety agencies struggled with interoperable communications, as their radio systems often operated on different frequencies, and the wireless networks were completely saturated by the public, preventing effective coordination. Major disasters since then have further exposed these gaps, with first responders often unable to communicate reliably due to network congestion and a lack of dedicated infrastructure.

To address this, in 2012, the US Congress created the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN), also known as FirstNet, by adopting the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, Public Law 112-96. This action created the FirstNet Authority within the US Department of Commerce and dedicated wireless spectrum in Band 14 solely for public safety use. In 2017, the FirstNet Authority

entered into a public-private partnership with AT&T to build and operate the network. This one-of-a-kind partnership exists to deliver a secure, scalable, and resilient communication system tailored to the unique needs of first responders, improving coordination and response effectiveness during disasters and routine operations<sup>®</sup>.

The local fire districts, USFS and CalFire all rely on robust cellular coverage for everything from routine matters to major emergencies and disasters. The fire service relies on wireless coverage to distribute and receive dispatch information, pre-arrival information, and intelligence; GPS routing to emergencies; emergency notifications; evacuation management; medical device telemetry connections with medical facilities; and medical orders and reporting. In summary, wireless coverage is a critical resource that our personnel rely on daily.

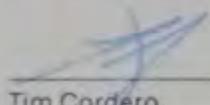
El Dorado County has an extensive wildland fire history. Most recently, the Caldor Fire burned up to and around the southern side of Jenkinson Lake – the area that this proposed FirstNet project is designed to provide vital wireless coverage.

As demonstrated in Image 1, there is a significant gap in the wireless coverage. As a result, there is either very poor or no coverage whatsoever in the Jenkinson Lake and Sly Park Recreation Area.

Image 2 shows the quality of coverage in Sly Park. It is essential to acknowledge that none of the three major wireless carriers has reliable (“good”) coverage in this area. Most importantly, AT&T/FirstNet currently has the worst coverage, making this project all the more crucial for public safety.

For the reasons outlined above, the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association supports projects that enhance the cellular coverage for all our firefighters.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tim Cordero

El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association,  
Chair

10/07/2025

Date

Image 1 – Existing Coverage

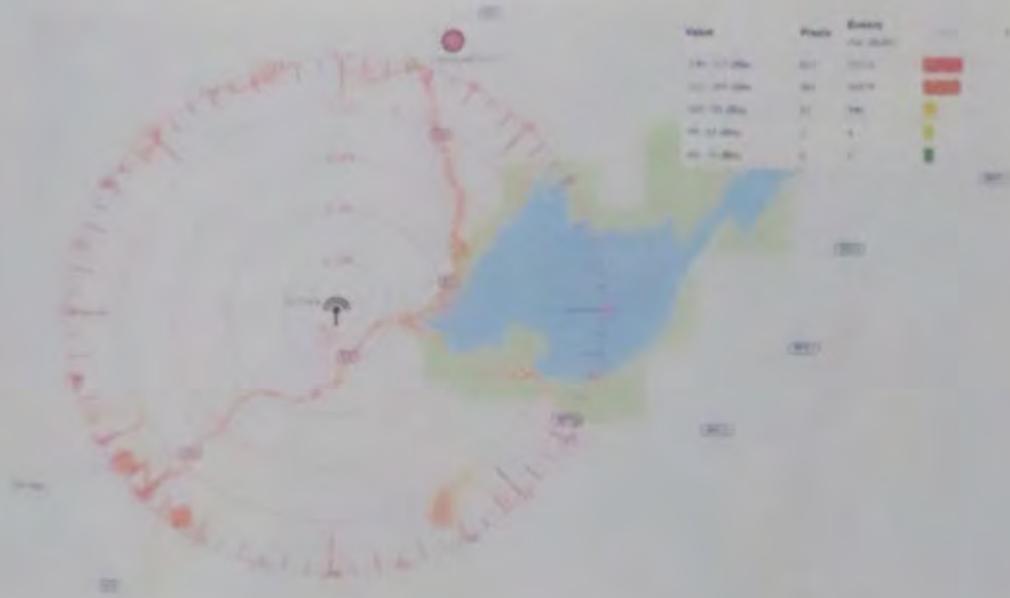
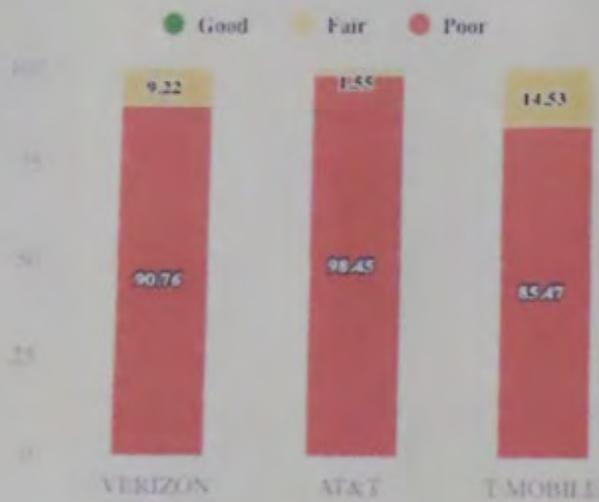


Image 2 – Coverage Quality

Situation in the area by carrier



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless202406.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Emergency Number Association, <https://www.nena.org/page/911Statistics>

<sup>3</sup> FirstNet Authority, <https://www.firstnet.gov/network>