



Carolin Wireless
ASSOCIATION

November 15, 2013

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Commissioner Walter Petty, Chair
P.O. Box 1809
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Commissioner Sally Kost
P.O. Box 1809
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Commissioner Brian Bock, Vice-Chair
P.O. Box 1809
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Commissioner Pam Steward
P.O. Box 1809
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Commissioner Allen Michael Cross
388 Cross Point Road
New Hill, NC 27562

Ms. Hillary Pace, Planner II
80-A East Street
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Re: Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance

Dear Commissioners and Ms. Pace:

PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association¹ and the Carolinas Wireless Association² write to urge your support for the proposed text amendment. This proposed amendment enacts new provisions into Chatham County’s laws to facilitate the deployment of the essential infrastructure that supports wireless broadband services. Wireless broadband is a major driver of economic development, particularly in rural areas.³ But wireless service providers face numerous challenges in the course of deploying their networks in response to a consumer demand that, by all projections, will continue to rise exponentially. By streamlining the process of siting wireless facilities, the proposed amendment paves the way for wireless providers to meet this demand while also improving public safety.

¹ PCIA is the national trade association representing the wireless infrastructure industry. PCIA’s members develop, own, manage, and operate towers, rooftop wireless sites, and other facilities for the provision of all types of wireless, telecommunications, and broadcasting services. PCIA and its members partner with communities across the nation to effect solutions for wireless infrastructure deployment that are responsive to the unique sensitivities and concerns of each community.

² CWA is a non-profit industry organization with a membership consisting primarily of individuals and firms who are involved with the deployment, operation, and maintenance of wireless networks, including cellular carriers, tower companies, project management consultants, and architecture and engineering firms.

³ Raul L. Katz, Javier Avila, Giacomo Meille, *Economic Impact of Wireless Broadband in Rural America*, TELECOM ADVISORY SERVICES, LLC (2011).

The overwhelmingly positive impact that wireless broadband has on our nation's economy is well-established.⁴ Reports estimate that the wireless industry is responsible for 3.8 million jobs directly and indirectly, the retention of 146.2 billion in GDP from 2010 to 2011, and is valued at approximately \$195.5 billion.⁵ PCIA estimates that the wireless industry will contribute \$1.2 trillion to the national GDP between now and 2017, and add 1.2 million jobs in the same time frame.⁶ This is larger than many other major sectors of the economy, including agriculture, hotels, air transportation, and automobiles.⁷ Nationwide, citizen adoption of wireless services is staggering. Last year, mobile data usage *doubled*.⁸ Wireless phone penetration exceeded 100% for the first time in 2012,⁹ and now more than half of Americans own smartphones.¹⁰

It is no secret that rural areas of the United States, such as areas of Chatham County, have less broadband availability than urban areas. This is not for lack of trying. Rural geographies are challenging—the cost of laying fiber and copper cable is prohibitive, and recovering those costs is difficult where there are low population densities. Yet, rural areas stand to benefit greatly from better broadband access. The proposed text amendment recognizes these challenges and provides a solution that will have an immediate impact: encourage the development of wireless broadband infrastructure, which can cover more people at lower cost.

Wireless services and the wireless infrastructure that supports them play a crucial public safety role as well. Currently, 32.8 percent of adults in North Carolina have “cut the cord,” relying entirely on wireless phones, up from just 14.8 percent four years ago.¹¹ That increase is

⁴ See, e.g., *id.*; *The Economic Benefits of New Spectrum for Wireless Broadband*, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS (Feb. 2012); James Prieger, *The Economic Benefits of Mobile Broadband*, PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY (May 2012); Roger Entner, *The Wireless Industry: The Essential Engine of U.S. Economic Growth*, RECON ANALYTICS (May 2012).

⁵ Entner, *supra* note 5, at 1.

⁶ Alan Pearce, J. Richard Carlson & Michael Pagano, *Wireless Broadband Infrastructure: A Catalyst for GDP and Job Growth 2013-2017*, INFORMATION AGE ECONOMICS (Sept. 2013), http://www.pcia.com/images/IAE_Infrastructure_and_Economy.pdf.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *2012 Mobile Year in Review*, MOBILEFUTURE (Dec. 18, 2012), http://www.mobilefuture.org/news/archives/2012_mobile_year_in_review/ (“Year in Review”).

⁹ *Wireless Quick Facts*, CTIA—THE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION, http://www.ctia.org/media/industry_info/index.cfm/AID/10323.

¹⁰ Aaron Smith, *Smartphone Ownership – 2013 Update*, PEW RESEARCH CENTER (June 5, 2013), http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Smartphone_adoption_2013_PDF.pdf.

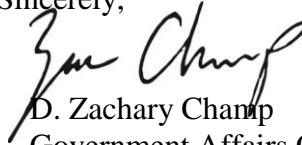
¹¹ *Compare Wireless Substitution: State-level Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2010-2011*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL NATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS REPORTS 5 (Oct. 12, 2012), available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr061.pdf>, with *Wireless Substitution: State-level Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, January-December 2007*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL NATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS REPORTS 5 (Mar. 11, 2009), available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr014.pdf>.

even more pronounced for children under age 18.¹² With more than 70 percent of all emergency calls placed with a wireless device,¹³ wireless capacity and coverage is essential to ensuring access to public safety agencies wherever citizens are, whenever they need it. Also, public safety agencies themselves will be able to take advantage of streamlined review processes as they construct and maintain their own telecommunications networks.

The proposed text amendment makes improvements to existing law that facilitate the application process for wireless facilities without negatively affecting the ability of Chatham County to evaluate such applications for compliance with building and other safety codes. In doing so, this bill paves the way for the citizens of Chatham County to enjoy better coverage, more robust public safety, and increased broadband capacity.

PCIA and the Carolinas Wireless Association strongly supports the text amendment and urges you to do the same. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



D. Zachary Champ
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Alexandria, VA 22314

¹² *Wireless Substitution: State-level Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2010-2011*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL NATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS REPORTS 5 (Oct. 12, 2012), available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr061.pdf>.

¹³ FCC.gov, *Guide: Wireless 911 Services*, <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/wireless-911-services>.